THÈSE DE DOCTORAT

Entre Récit et Relation :

Étude d'une Ontologie Relationnelle chez Thomas Hardy et D.H. Lawrence

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Présentée en vue de l'obtention grade de docteur
en **Etudes du Monde Anglophone** de **l'Université Paul Valéry – Montpellier 3**

Ecole Doctorale n°58 – Langues, Littératures, Cultures, Civilisations (LLCC)

Présentée par **Marie BERTRAND**

Dirigée par **la Professeure Christine REYNIER**

Soutenue publiquement **le 25 novembre 2024** devant le jury composé de

Georges LETISSIER Professeur émérite, Université de Nantes	Président du jury, rapporteur
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THÈSE DE DOCTORAT

The Art of Relating:
A Study of Thomas Hardy and D. H. Lawrence's Relational Ontology in their Novels

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RÉSUMÉ ET MOTS CLÉS

Cette thèse propose une étude comparative de six romans de Thomas Hardy et D. H Lawrence, motivée en premier lieu par l'essai que D. H. Lawrence consacra à Thomas Hardy. La présente étude adopte une démarche ontologique qui place l'être humain au centre de l'œuvre des deux auteurs, et part du postulat selon lequel exister, pour les deux auteurs, reviendrait à être connecté, dans le sens étymologique de ce verbe transitif, autrement dit être lié, attaché à quelque chose ou quelqu'un. Trois axes relationnels sont explorés : celui de la relation entre soi et Autrui, puis entre corps et esprit, et enfin entre soi et le monde. Pour chacun de ces axes, les stratégies qu'emploient les deux auteurs pour construire leurs personnages, leurs décors, ainsi que leurs intrigues, sont analysées et comparées. D'inspiration pluridisciplinaire, ce travail propose de lire les six romans à la lumière des théories provenant des sciences humaines et sociales, comme l'éco-critique, la phénoménologie et la psychologie, ou bien des sciences formelles ou naturelles, comme la neuro-psychologie, ou encore les théories de l'évolution. Les études de genre sont aussi au centre de ce travail et viennent éclairer chacun des axes relationnels évoqués ci-dessus, dans la mesure où les rôles attribués par la société aux femmes et aux hommes ont un impact direct sur le rapport à Autrui, au monde, mais aussi à soi-même. L'objectif de cette étude est d'identifier une ontologie relationnelle, chez Thomas Hardy et D. H. Lawrence, c'est-à-dire une philosophie reposant sur la conviction que l'humain n'est rien en lui-même mais qu'il est construit et défini par des relations pouvant prendre diverses formes. Cette ontologie relationnelle se manifeste elle aussi de différentes manières chez les deux auteurs et permet d'évaluer les disparités ou les similitudes entre une écriture victorienne et une écriture moderniste.

Mots clés : Littérature victorienne ; littérature moderniste ; fiction ; ontologie ; altérité ; matérialité ; éco-critique ; études du genre ; cognition incarnée ; phénoménologie ; éco-psychologie ; études environnementales ; Thomas Hardy ; D. H. Lawrence.

ABSTRACT AND KEY WORDS

This dissertation offers a comparative study of six novels by Thomas Hardy and D. H. Lawrence, inspired by the essay that Lawrence wrote about Hardy. The present study takes up an ontological approach which places the human at the centre of each author's writing and posits that living, according to the two authors, amounts to being connected, that is, etymologically speaking, to being related, or attached to someone or something. Three main relational dynamics are being explored: the relation between self and Other, between body and mind, and between self and world. For each of those relations, the strategies that are used by Hardy and Lawrence to create their protagonists, build their settings and plots, are being analysed and compared. This work is based on a multidisciplinary approach which aims at supporting close-readings of the six novels by various theories that may stem from the field of social science, like ecocriticism, phenomenology, and psychology, or from the field of formal and environmental science, like neuropsychology or evolution theories. Gender studies are also central to this study and are very useful to explore the three relational dynamics mentioned above, in that gender roles have a direct impact on one's mode of relating to the Other, to the world, and to oneself. The main objective of this dissertation is to pinpoint a relational ontology in the novels of Hardy and Lawrence, that is, a type of philosophy based on the belief that the human individual is nothing in himself or herself, and that he or she is being defined by a set of relations that may take different shapes and happen in different ways. The two authors may also have various ways to convey this relational ontology in their fictions, which allows an assessment of the similarities and dissimilarities between Victorian literature and modernist literature.

Key words: Victorian literature; modernist literature; fiction; ontology; alterity; materiality; ecocriticism; gender studies; embodied cognition; phenomenology; ecopsychology; environmental studies; Thomas Hardy; D. H Lawrence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I like to think that the genesis of this work lies in the very concept of relational ontology that I have attempted to identify in Hardy's and Lawrence's novels. While trying to prove that nothing exists in itself, in the two authors' fiction, I was actually writing a dissertation which would be the result of the various connections I was able to build over four fruitful years. In one way or another, those connections have fed into my work and have helped to shape the researcher that I am today.

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navigate the administrative intricacies of academia, and for being always available to make sure that our projects could see the light of day.

They say a PhD is a lonely adventure, yet I have so many colleagues to thank, for contributing to alleviate the pressure that inevitably comes with taking up such a long-term challenge. To my colleagues at Université Paul Valéry – Montpellier 3, Clémence and Constance in particular, thank you for listening to me, all those times that I doubted myself and needed your reassurance and advice. It has been a privilege to share this challenging adventure with you, and to complete it at the same time. To my colleague and friend, Léa, I want you to know that you have been a model of strength and resilience during those past four years, and that your presence, even though we could rarely be physically together, has helped me through this journey, in more ways than you know. To Benjamin, who has sat next to me throughout my graduate years and has witnessed the early days of my academic career, thank you for being there for me, even when our paths took different directions. To my colleagues at Sorbonne Université, thank you for making me feel at home from the first day I stepped in the staff room, and for always making things easy for me, so that I could find more time to work on my dissertation. Special thanks go to Caroline and Marie, for their precious support, and for taking the time to proof-read parts of my work.

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Among the connections that make you who you are, there is one which indeed literally does. I am eternally grateful to my parents, to whom I dedicate this work, for always giving me the means to achieve my goals and for never questioning my choices. Your faith in me has given me the strength that I needed to complete this work, and my greatest achievement will always be to have made you proud. You may not have transmitted the love of English literature to me, but you did pass on to me the type of love that everyone is looking for in books. To my sister, Mylène, thank you for always balancing my anxious thoughts with your steady guidance, and for being the kind and caring person that you are.

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NOTE ON THE TEXT

To offer a better reading experience to the reader, the primary sources will be referred to with the following abbreviations, in in-text citations:

- *JO*, for *Jude the Obscure*, by Thomas Hardy
- *Tess*, for *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, by Thomas Hardy
- *TRN*, for *The Return of the Native*, by Thomas Hardy
- *LCL*, for *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, by D. H. Lawrence
- *SL*, for *Sons and Lovers*, by D. H. Lawrence
- *WL*, for *Women in Love*, by D. H. Lawrence
- *Personal Writings*, for *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings : Prefaces, Literary Opinions, reminiscences,* edited by Harold Orel
- *The Life,* for *The life of Thomas Hardy, 1840-1928,* by Thomas Hardy and Florence Emily Hardy
- *Poems*, for *The Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy,* and *The Complete Poems by D. H. Lawrence*
- *PFU*, for *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious and Fantasia of the Unconscious*, by D. H. Lawrence
- *Letters,* for *The selected letters of D. H. Lawrence*, edited by James T. Boulton
- *Study,* for *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays,* by D. H. Lawrence

The MLA format (9th edition) has been adopted, and all references will be in parentheses. When possible, official translations of French works have been used, and when no official translation could be found, I chose to translate the quotations myself, and to add the original text in the footnotes.

In accordance with the multi-disciplinary dimension of this work, I have chosen to build the bibliography thematically. Each reference is therefore listed in one particular category, according to the field of expertise it belongs to.

To my parents

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INTRODUCTION

1. Relating Thomas Hardy & D. H. Lawrence: A Comparative Study?

As the First World War was breaking out over Europe and Thomas Hardy was still writing poetry in his Dorchester cottage, unaware of the impending cataclysm, D. H. Lawrence was working on a new essay meant to be a thorough critique of his predecessor's oeuvre. As it turned out, the posthumously published "Study of Thomas Hardy" (1936) became one of the most fundamental pieces in Lawrence's philosophy, a proper reflection on his aesthetic, and, in his own words, "a sort of Confessions of [his] Heart" (Lawrence, *Study* xxiii, letter to Amy Lowell, Nov). To this day, the essay, as a literary bridge from Hardy's art to Lawrence's heart, serves as a testimony of the younger author's ambivalence towards a writer he could refer to as a "bad artist" (Lawrence, *Study* 101), all the while recognising "his feeling, his instinct, his sensuous understanding" to be "deeper than that perhaps of any other English novelist" (Lawrence, *Study* 93). In fact, Bruce Steel, in his introduction to *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*, goes so far as to say that Hardy, more than a mere source of inspiration, "had therefore been the catalyst for Lawrence's philosophy" (Lawrence, *Study* xxix) and his study the opportunity for the two authors to enter into an artistic dialogue without ever meeting: "In his reading of Hardy it was as if he allowed Hardy to read him in turn, and he emerged from the experience with his earlier insights strengthened and clarified (…)" (Lawrence, *Study* xxix). The reciprocity that is being suggested by Bruce Steel is central to our present study which does not set out to be a one-sided assessment of the well-known influence of Thomas Hardy on the writings of D. H. Lawrence, but rather intends to open up a discussion on mutual resonances between the works of the two authors. If critical works such as Jeffrey Meyers' *D. H. Lawrence and Tradition* (1985) which includes a chapter on the Hardyan heritage in Lawrence's writings, have helped readers to understand the work of the latter, their unilateral approach has failed – or most likely never attempted – to explore such a literary kinship from a Victorian perspective, as a way to shed a new light on Hardy's work as well. Such "asymmetric comparison," in Catherine Brown's words, "has strong similarities with criticism which is not usually considered comparative" (Brown 2). The author of the chapter mentioned above, Robert Langbaum**,** starts by dwelling extensively on Lawrence's reading of Hardy, mainly referring to his "Study" which he calls "Lawrence's curious little book" (Meyers 69), and then sets out to prove how numerous scenes from Lawrence's writings are directly derived from scenes he had

read in Hardy's fiction. The whole point of Langbaum's essay is to draw the two authors together on general lines, at the risk of depriving both of them of their artistic peculiarities in the process, presenting Hardy as an early Lawrence, and Lawrence as a later Hardy: "Hardy, would, had he been born a generation later, have become a novelist very much like Lawrence" (Meyers 90). Along these lines, Di Gregorio's essay "Carbon Identity: A Lawrencian Reading of Thomas Hardy's Novels", though shifting the focus from Lawrence to Hardy, adopts a similar method to that of Langbaum in choosing to rely mostly on Lawrence's "Study" to prove how they address the issue of characterization in the same way in their novels. The difference between Langbaum's approach and my approach in this dissertation can be crystallised in the dichotomy between assimilating and relating: the former aims at "making [things, people] alike", while the latter seeks to "connect, to establish a relation between [things, people]" (OED). Choosing to relate Hardy and Lawrence rather than assimilate them allows me to offer an unbiased reading of them both and to entertain the possibility that their writings might be alike in some ways but very much different in others. This is not to say, of course, that the works mentioned above are not going to be helpful or enlightening in any way to my research – quite the opposite – but the nature and the scope of this study have naturally led me to look for innovative ways to engage with Hardy and Lawrence's texts, beyond the limits of assimilation.

And yet, can a "relative"[1] approach be considered a comparative study *per se*? The attempt to avoid the *prinum comparadum/secondum comparadum* dichotomy[2] naturally leads one to go beyond the likeness/difference dichotomy, despite its being originally at the core of the comparing process (Brown 2). Indeed, as theorised by Catherine Brown in *The Art of Comparison: How Novels and Critics Compare*, relating does not amount to comparing but is a "more complex process." To illustrate her argument, she engages in turn in a comparison of the process of relating and the process of comparing,

> First, whereas the latter [comparison] involves comparing things in relation to the same quality, the former [relation] may involve characterizing their different qualities. Second, the relations of things include not just the percept but the significance

[1] Here (as in the rest of this study), I am using the word "relative" in its philosophical sense which is defined in the *OED* as follows: "Of a term, or the concept to which it refers: involving or implying relation; dependent for meaning or significance on a relationship with another term or concept" (5.a). This term is particularly useful in the present study, so as to explain how my approach attempts to achieve a goal quite different from that of the comparative study.

[2] "In Latin, one may distinguish the prinum *comparadum*, one's primary interest, from the secondum *comparadum*, what one compares it to, and the tertiary *comparationis,* which is their similarity" (Brown 2).

> of their similarities and differences, understood in their separate and shared contexts. Third, relations may be described in terms of the comparer's responses to things as juxtaposed (…). Fourth, relations may be described in terms of influence: that is, the similarities and differences of objects may be coordinated with historical and biographical information which at least allows the possibility that the creator of one knew something of the other object. (Brown 2)

According to such a theory, the approach that will be taken up in this study falls into the "relation" category rather than the "comparison" one. Consequently, this work is not to be considered as a comparative study of Thomas Hardy and D. H. Lawrence, but rather as a "relative study" of the two authors – that is, a study in relation – in all the complexity this process and their respective works entail. In a nutshell, this work will not only be about what may be Victorian about Lawrence, but also what may be modernist about Hardy. It will not only be about what Lawrence did draw or did not draw from a past literary tradition but also about how Hardy's writings might have foreshadowed an upcoming literary movement. The focus will not be on either of the two authors but rather on both, as an attempt to read their works alongside one another and offer concurrent close-readings aiming at getting a deeper understanding of both. In this perspective, the framework of this dissertation has been built so as to create constant echoes and interactions between the two authors throughout the study and to invite my readers to embark on a circular, rather than linear, exploration of Hardy's and Lawrence's fictional worlds. To that end, each argument put forward will be supported by a parallel study of two works (or more) – one by each author – thus avoiding granting any special treatment to one or the other in regard to one specific point. In like manner, any conceptual tool used to inform my readings will be applied to the works of both authors so as to compare their respective responses to a certain concept or theory, or contrast the views such a theory may reveal in their writings.

2. A Corpus in Relation

In an attempt to offer accurate and relevant analyses of Hardy and Lawrence's works, I have decided to focus my research on three novels by each author, that is to say six novels in

total. My choice to work exclusively on their novels (rather than on their poems or their non-fiction) will be further clarified below, as I will investigate the connection between ontology and literature, and more specifically the genre of the novel, which proves particularly apt to explore human existence in all its diversity. If, in Lawrence's words, "in the novel, the characters can do nothing but live" (Lawrence, *Study* 197), then readers themselves can do nothing but reflect on the lives displayed in front of them, and can consequently engage more efficiently in metaphysical reflections. The very unbounded quality of the novel, as opposed, for instance, to the limited format of a short story, calls for larger-than-life narratives and allows its readers to slow down and take some distance from their own lives. In their novels, which can be up to five-hundred-page long, Hardy and Lawrence introduce us to characters, whom we usually follow from a young age up until their death, in the bildungsroman manner, and whom we get *to relate* to over the pages. Doris Lessing herself qualified Lawrence as an "intoxicator" and rhetorically asked: "has there ever been anyone like him for bringing places and people so vividly to life?" (quoted on the cover of Lawrence, *LCL*). It is precisely for the novelist's peculiar ability to "bring people to life" that I chose to look for Hardy and Lawrence's metaphysics in their novels.

Thus, an informed choice had to be made about the selection of novels that would be the focus of my research. If any of their novels might be mentioned or quoted in passing, according to relevance, the novels that constitute my corpus are the following: Hardy's *The Return of the Native* (1878), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the Obscure* (1895), and Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* (1913), *Women in Love* (1920), and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1927).[3] Several elements were taken into account as I selected these six novels, one of them being the chronological factor. I suggest that a study of the two authors' metaphysical beliefs needs to be done over the course of their careers as novelists, so as to reveal the evolution or the stability of their ontological reflections over time. Indeed, *Jude the Obscure* was written seventeen years after *The Return of the Native*, and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was first published fourteen years after *Sons and Lovers*, leading us to believe that their ontological views might have evolved within these intervals. Inserting these four novels in the corpus therefore allows to offer an efficient overview of Hardy and Lawrence's thinking throughout their careers. On the other hand, Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* was published only eighteen years after Hardy's

[3] As for the editions of the novels I will be analysing in this work, they were all chosen for their academic reliability and their production of uncensored texts by Hardy and Lawrence. For consistency purposes, I chose almost exclusively Penguin Books editions of the novels, with the exception of *Jude the Obscure* for which I chose the second Norton Critical edition that I found particularly informative.

Jude the Obscure, while the former is exclusively studied from the perspective of modernist literature and the latter stands as a landmark of Victorian literature. The concurrent study of these two autobiographic novels may consequently offer the opportunity to bridge the gap between Victorian and modernist studies, while confronting the views of a young Lawrence and an aging Hardy. The six novels I have selected are all very well-known and commented-upon works that I wish to read from the new perspective offered by a relative study of the two authors. They have been chosen to form a consistent whole through which I will navigate back and forth, without necessarily using Hardy as a starting point to get to Lawrence. Indeed, I would like to insist that the aim of this work is not to reveal the hardyan heritage in Lawrence's fiction, but rather to build a philosophical argument based on both authors' writings. I invite my reader to embark on a literary and philosophical journey, not to be experienced in a chronological way, but to be better appreciated in a thematical one.

This main primary corpus of six novels can be extended to the few non-fictional works by Hardy and Lawrence that I will be referring to throughout this work: Hardy's "The Science of Fiction" (1891), and Lawrence's two philosophical works, *Psychoanalysis and the unconscious and Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1921-1922), and *Study of Thomas Hardy* (1932-1933). Given the philosophical dimension of this work, these essays will be precious allies to help decipher the metaphysics hidden between the lines of their novels, and a better understanding of their approach to philosophy and literature will allow a perfected understanding of their ontological theory, as translated in their fiction.

3. Literature and Ontology

As stated earlier, I have tried to avoid turning the present study into a set of general comparative remarks about Hardy and Lawrence, or about Lawrence's own reading of Hardy, and I have therefore considered it necessary to find a focal point through which the two authors might connect. Other scholars before me have attempted this task and have chosen to study the writings of Hardy and Lawrence through very specific lenses. In 1971, Suman P. Brasad wrote a PhD thesis entitled "The Tragic Vision in the novels of Thomas Hardy and D. H. Lawrence," dedicating six chapters to Hardy's fiction, and six other chapters to Lawrence's fiction, without

ever discussing the two authors alongside one another.[4] Fifty years later, Fiona Fleming attempted to break the boundaries between the two authors in relation to that same topic in her article "Resisting Tragedy in D. H. Lawrence and Thomas Hardy" in *Etudes Lawrenciennes 52*. Fleming's essay constitutes a helpful contribution to the present study, mainly for the ontological perspective it uses to deal with the tragic in Lawrence's and Hardy's works but also for its choice of a comparative approach that is absent from Brasad's thesis. Such an approach can also be found in Mohammed A. A. Bulaila's PhD thesis on "Marriage in the novels of Thomas Hardy and D. H. Lawrence" (1992) which focuses, as the title points out, on the representation of matrimony in the works of the two authors and on the social comments they might have conveyed through such fictional representations. This work is probably the one that comes closer to the method I propose in that it offers concurrent readings of the two authors, dealing with both of them in each chapter, and because its focal point, marriage, is a topic I will inevitably touch upon when exploring the way Hardy and Lawrence connect their characters together in their narratives.

All the works that I have mentioned above share a common characteristic, that of choosing a very precise and topical point of entry into Hardy's and Lawrence's texts, which undeniably adds some depth to their research, while also preventing their authors from encompassing in their works other important features of Hardy and Lawrence's fiction that might help connect them further. In an effort to include in my work the different layers of connection that may exist between the two authors, I suggest a return to what Hardy defines as "the materials of fiction", that are "human nature and circumstances" (Hardy, *Personal Writings* 134). The well-known essay I am quoting from here is Hardy's "Science of Fiction" (1891;1967) that Brilmyer refers to as "one of several turn-of-the-century attempts to claim a fundamental stratum of ontology for literature at a time when the physical world was increasingly understood to be the province of the sciences" (Brilmyer 7). As he sets out to give his own definition of realist fiction – all the while recognising the impossibility to do so in "calculable pages" (Hardy, *Personal Writings* 138) –, Hardy suggests that his mission as a novelist is not to write about what human nature looks like or sounds like, but rather about what human nature *feels* like, thus giving his work a very specific ontological dimension. "At the turn of the twentieth century", Brilmyer suggests that the novel is being regenerated to become

[4] On a smaller scale, Rochelle H. Kim recently wrote a bachelor thesis entitled *The "Great Background" in Hardy and Lawrence* (2017) which aims at identifying the meaning of Lawrence's phrase and at exploring it in the novels of the two authors. This study, however, only focuses on the social and/or psychological understanding of "the great background" without referring to its material dimension, and deals with the two authors' works in separate chapters.

the form best fitted to offer "its own narrative science of human nature" (Brilmyer 4). At the time when Hardy and Lawrence were writing, philosophy and hard science were no longer the only fields through which readers might get to know more about themselves and their condition as human beings. As it happened, Lawrence found regrettable the separation between fiction and philosophy and argued for a reunion of the two fields that would create "modern kinds of gospels, and modern myths, and a new way of understanding" (Lawrence, *Study* 154). This "new way of understanding" found in novels from the mid-19th century onwards has been recently taken up and explored further by Ian Duncan in *Human Forms: the Novel in the Age of Evolution* (2019), in which he refers to the Victorian novel as "the *literary form* of the human" (Duncan 9, italics in the original) for its "general writing accessible to all readers, mediated not by specialist knowledge of technical language but by the shared sensibilities that constitute 'our common nature'" (Duncan 3). A similar argument has been put forward in modernist studies, mostly in relation to the exploration of the human psyche in early-twentieth century novels which aimed at rendering a shared inner experience of being human. Indeed, in *Dynamic Psychology in Modernist Fiction*, George M. Johnson states that "a particularly close, symbiotic relationship developed between the novel and a cluster of discourse pertaining to selfhood that were labelled 'the new psychology', or, more accurately, dynamic psychology" (Johnson 7). The emergence of this psychological school that will be helpful for us to better understand Lawrence's writings in particular, is yet another argument establishing that the aim of the novel is to write the definition of humanity, or more accurately, of humanness. A sense of universality undoubtedly comes out of the various definitions of literature, and especially of the novel, that I have quoted above. It is precisely this universal experience of living as humans that I have decided to explore in the novels of Hardy and Lawrence: what does it mean to be human, for Hardy and Lawrence? Do they differ or concur in their metaphysical reflections and beliefs? Do they choose to convey those beliefs in the same way in their writings or do they use different literary techniques? If the answer to the question "how to live" is to be found in the novel (Matthew Arnold quoted in Brilmyer 6), then studying the works of these two famous novelists may very well be the most fitting way to learn about past human experience, and more importantly, about a timeless human *feeling* which we, as 21st-century readers, may relate to.

4. The Art of Relating

At this point, we have mentioned the relation between two authors, Hardy and Lawrence, along with the relation between literature and ontology, making clear that a process of relating will serve as a guiding principle throughout this study. Here, it may be useful to have a closer look at the etymology of the noun "relation" and, by extension of the verb "to relate." The modern English "relation" comes from the French *relation* which itself was derived from the Latin *relātiō* which could be used to refer to various ideas such as: "the action of laying a matter before the Senate; (in rhetoric) the balancing of opposites; the reference (of a thing) to some standard or measure of comparison; the action of giving or sending in return; the action of narrating, narration, recital; (in philosophy) connection, kinship" (*OED*). Some of these acceptations sound particularly meaningful to the present research for they demonstrate how the study of a narrative comes hand in hand with a study of connections. In fact, to relate is not merely, as I have mentioned above, "to bring things or people in relation", but it is also, in earlier use, "to recount something", and ultimately, "to understand and have empathy for something or someone" (*OED*). In such a light, the work of the novelist takes up a whole new dimension; it goes beyond the traditional telling of stories meant to entertain readers, that is, keep them away from their daily worries, and it takes up the challenge of bringing readers together as he or she brings words together in his or her novel. If the novel, as evoked earlier, is the perfect form to explore the essence of humanity and if the process of narrating itself is the original medium through which connections are being made, then fiction as a whole becomes the place in which an author may reveal the different relationships that constitute humankind in all its diversity. Lawrence himself, as he reflects on his purpose as a novelist in his essay "Morality and the Novel", asserts in unambiguous terms: "The novel is the highest complex of subtle interrelatedness that man has discovered" since "in a novel, everything is relative[5] to everything else, if that novel is art at all" (Lawrence, *Study* 172; 179). I would like to suggest that this very unique quality, proper to the novel, is used by Hardy and Lawrence to convey their own unique understanding of humanity as they explore "the changing rainbow of our living relationships" (Lawrence, *Study* 172). If the art of writing and the art of living seem so inextricably linked in the two authors' perspective, it is precisely because they are connected by the supreme art of relating. Quite significantly, Lawrence chooses his "Study of Thomas Hardy" to state an idea that will be key to the study of the two authors' writings and that reveals

[5] Here, Lawrence uses the word "relative" in accordance with the philosophical definition of the term mentioned earlier in this introduction (see *OED* 5.a), and therefore in keeping with my use of the term throughout this work.

the ontological challenge they have risen up to in their novels: "I am I, but also you are you, and we are in sad need of a theory of human relativity" (Lawrence, *Study* 72). Whether or not Lawrence and Hardy, in their novels, were able to rise to the challenge of creating this "theory of human relativity" is left for us to determine, according to our individual experiences as readers and to our own understanding of this concept of relativity.[6] Lawrence's use of the term stems, in my view, from a desire to apply Einstein's theory of relativity to literature and humanity, that is, to write stories in which characters are dependent on one another, rather than leading self-centred and autonomous lives.[7] The aim of this work will precisely be to reveal the close dependence between Hardy's and Lawrence's works, their metaphysical affinities that participate in offering their readers what I will call a "relational ontology," between the lines of their novels. To be human, in Hardy and Lawrence's view, is to be in relation; and to be a novelist, is nothing but to put words, characters and – at a metafictional level – readers, in relation. In a similar way, this very work humbly invites its readers to keep in mind that "everywhere there is connection, everywhere there is illustration. No single event, no single literature is adequately comprehended except in relation to other events, to other literature"[8] (Matthew Arnold quoted in Brown 1).

5. An Overview

Thus, the outline of this work is built around the concept of relation and each part is dedicated to the exploration of a particular type of relational dynamic. First, I will try and demonstrate how Hardy and Lawrence's view on characterisation contributes to shape the first layer of their relational ontology, in presenting to their readers co-made heroes rather than self-made heroes. The various forces taking part in the growth of the characters will be analysed so as to reveal the centrifugal movement of their existence and prove that their ever-evolving identities are both challenged and nurtured by relationships of many different kinds. Then, a

[6] In her essay entitled "'Creep closer in, that I am more' –Is there a 'theory of human relativity' in the Poetics of *Look! We Have Come Through*?" (2020), Elise Brault-Dreux explores the way the concept of human relativity finds its expression in Lawrence's poetry.

[7] The *OED* defines relativity, as understood by Einstein, as follows: "The quantitative dependence of observations on the relative motion of an observer and an observed object, esp. as regards the nature and behaviour of light, space, time, and gravity". (Inter)dependence may be the key notion Lawrence finds lacking in the lives of modern humans.

[8] This quote is taken from Matthew Arnold's inaugural lecture at Oxford University in 1857, in which "he coined the term *comparative literature* as a translation of *littérature comparée*" (Brown 1).

second part will revolve around the idea that the body-mind relationship is central to the works of the two authors, making their novels non-dualist fictions. Both the form and the content of the novels will be examined, as examples of the psycho-organic foundation of Hardy and Lawrence's relational ontology. Finally, an ultimate layer of the authors' metaphysical reflections will be unveiled as I will try and make clear the intricate link between ontological and ecological issues. The outlines of an ideal ecological self will be drawn, as a final key to Hardy and Lawrence's unique theory of relativity.

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The first step towards writing a "relative study" of Thomas Hardy and D. H. Lawrence is to determine the types of relations that are being explored by both authors – not necessarily in the same way – and that ultimately perform the relational dynamic between them. Three main types of relations are being put forward in this work, each encompassing different variations of the concept of relational ontology I introduced above. The first main category of relation focuses on the relationship between one character's self and the Other, in its generic sense, and serves to argue that Hardy and Lawrence's fictitious characters are characterized by a centrifugal – rather than centripetal – movement. I draw this ontological dichotomy from philosopher and phenomenologist Jean-Paul Sartre's conceptualisation of the movement of consciousness as centrifugal, that is, turned outward rather than inward (Leroy, *La Phénoménologie* 133). Applying this concept to the metafictional process of characterisation allows me to suggest that, to Hardy and Lawrence, writing a relational ontology starts with creating characters who are nothing but the results of various external forces which they may welcome or struggle against. In that sense, both authors offer in their novels alternatives to self-made heroes and simultaneously encourage their readers to forget any self-righteous assumptions about their being in the world. In Hardy's words, "every error under the sun seems to arise from thinking that you are right yourself because you *are* yourself, and other people wrong because they are not you" (Hardy, *The Life* 169, emphasis in the original). Taking up a centrifugal approach to characterization is therefore to imagine characters whose identities are fluid rather than fixed, whose actions may sometimes surprise or strike the reader as incoherent or illogical, and whose very structures resemble that of a kaleidoscope, subjected to change throughout the novel. Such a conception of characterization has been the focus of Brilmyer's *The Science of Character: Human Objecthood and the ends of Victorian Realism* which was quoted earlier. Brilmyer's argument stems from John Stuart Mill's faith in a new science which

"he termed 'Ethology, or the Science of Character'" in 1843, and which "would investigate the forces – biological, environmental, and cultural – at work in the formation of character" (Brilmyer 1). If Brilmyer's argument focuses on Victorian literature and defines Hardy's writing as "an ethological account of the contingent encounters that make people who they are" (Brilmyer 128), I intend to show how Lawrence's writing is similarly in line with John Stuart Mill's "Science of Character" insofar as it produces characters "in genuine living relation to all [their] surroundings" (Lawrence *PFU* 89), who are directly affected by the specificities and alterations of these surroundings.

Creating a character therefore starts with choosing the background against which this character is going to grow. Such a background may be understood in its material dimension (the physical environment, the place in which a character evolves) or in its more abstract dimension, as the social or biological background a character is endowed with at birth. Those various acceptations of the term will be investigated in chapter one, dedicated to the assessment of the impact of environmental, social and genetic factors on the characters' ever-evolving identities and on the unfolding of their destinies. David W. de Villiers, in "Lawrence's 'Metaphysic' of the Heart: Destiny without Determinism?", points at the importance of looking at places while searching for the different influences characters are subjected to. He declares that "for Lawrence place is the point of contact, the location of the self as relational reality" (de Villiers 72, my emphasis). It is no coincidence that the term "relational" is used to determine the importance of place in Lawrence's works, just as it is not surprising that Hardy, in picturing the Wessex of his novels, shared Darwin's belief in the world being "full of the spirit of place" (Wilson 38). On that specific issue, critics of Hardy and of Lawrence seem to converge as Hardy is said to create characters who "emerg[e], spontaneously, in response to one's surroundings" (Brilmyer 133), while Lawrence's landscapes are described as "active shapers of human behaviour" (Janik 363). Not only do the two authors believe in their surroundings being animated, but they reflect and strengthen this belief in their writings by bringing to the fore the specific impact "the spirit of place" may have on the human spirit and body. This chapter on the construction of characters through the contact with the non-human will therefore be about the way getting in relation also means "getting back into place," in Edward S. Casey's words, since "to exist at all as a (material or mental) object or as an (experienced or observed) event is to have a place – to be implaced, however minimally or imperfectly or temporarily" (Casey *Getting back into Place* 13). Casey's book entitled *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-world*, along with other works pertaining to the field of

environmental philosophy will be helpful to better understand how authors might decide to perform characterisation not only through descriptions of their characters' thoughts, feelings or physical appearances, but rather through descriptions of their surroundings and, more significantly, through an account of the particular physical and mental changes such surroundings may trigger in them. More often than not, the place in which an individual is born does not merely determine his or her living environment but also his or her social status, the backdrop to one's life being inextricably linked to one's background. In a late-nineteenth-early-twentieth British society where class titles were traditionally inherited, sociology and biology became two intrinsically-related scientific fields just as science and literature were drawn closer together "because the revolutionary sciences, geology and evolutionary biology, were comprehensible to the layperson in a way that modern physics is not" (Gilmour 142). In such a context, it comes as no surprise that Hardy considered himself "among the earliest acclaimers of *The Origin of the Species*" (Hardy, *The Life* XVII) and that Lawrence took an interest in Darwin's half-cousin, Sir Francis Galton, whose new field of eugenics posited that "thoughtful, planned, genetically favourable breeding in human populations could improve humanity" (Cotton 2). To get a better understanding of what Hardy and Lawrence had respectively read and believed in allows for a better analysis of the way they approached characterization. Indeed, holding a 'Darwinian' or a 'Lamarckian' view of evolution will have different implications in the way characters will face their circumstances: a Darwinian approach to characterization would create characters unable to alter their genetic circumstances over their lifetime or, more significantly, over the lifetimes of the next in lines (Müller-Wille and Rheinberger 38), while a Lamarckian view would encourage the author to grant his characters the ability to directly transmit acquired traits to the next generation and therefore to rapidly change their family's social circumstances and genetic heritage (Rylance 223). If one option sounds more optimistic than the other, one is also less relational than the other: if a hero or a heroine can easily change his or her circumstances, then it means that the construction of his or her character does not depend so much on external factor but rather on a strong will (like that of a self-made hero). Then, the questions will obviously be: do Hardy and Lawrence have a Darwinian or a Lamarckian understanding of evolution? Do their views differ or concur and what consequences does it have on the way they perform characterization? As introduced earlier with Darwin and his cousin Galton, a closer look at the different theories encompassed within the field of evolution science allows a more precise understanding of Hardy and Lawrence's own views on the subject. The fields of philosophy and of biology have been studied concurrently in works

such as Müller-Wille and Rheinberger's *A Cultural History of Heredity* (2012) in which we are reminded that heredity was not even an issue dealt with in biology before the middle of the nineteenth century but was rather taken up by philosophers such as Harvey or Aristotle in "their speculations on generation" (Müller-Wille and Rheinberger 2; 24). Along with philosophers, Rylance, in his *Victorian Psychology and British Culture (1850-1880)*, also demonstrates that new psychologists tackled the subject, one of the most famous being Herbert Spencer who approached heredity from a Lamarckian perspective in an attempt to disturb "prevailing conceptions of an inevitable hierarchical order" (Rylance 224). Then, in 1900, at a time when Lawrence had begun reading, the work of German-Czech biologist, mathematician and Augustinian friar Gregor Mendel was rediscovered, thus triggering a renewal of the field and the establishment of the new science (Bowler 93). Along with this new field came much political debate, triggered by the discovery that science could actually nullify a social reform, on the grounds of "human abilities [being] rigidly determined by heredity" (Bowler 10). Indeed, common belief "at the turn of the century" was that "reform and the improvement of people's conditions could not produce any significant effect because the proportion of good and bad characteristics in the population [was] determined solely by inheritance" (Bowler 10). This naturally leads us to the last theory that is useful for us to understand the scientific and political context Hardy and Lawrence were writing in and that was central to the accusations made against Lawrence for his ambiguous political views – eugenics. In *Eugenic Discourse in the work of D. H. Lawrence*, Christopher Cotton distinguishes two types of eugenic thinking: "the encouragement of eugenically favorable breeding, either privately or governmentally", commonly referred to as "'positive' eugenics", and "the compulsory abortion, sterilization, and at its most extreme, genocide" that are encompassed by the name of "'negative' eugenics" (Cotton 4). If I could find no trace of 'negative eugenics' in the selection of Lawrence's novels I will be analysing, surely the issue of the author's affinities with eugenics cannot be overlooked and will be explored in keeping with his "concerns about class, and not necessarily racial or genetic vigo," which was what "motivated many supporters of eugenics in Britain" at the time (Cotton 6). Thus, in chapter one, science will meet philosophy and literature in order to enlighten Hardy's and Lawrence's processes of characterization, as the two authors seem to battle between determinism and indeterminism, between a centrifugal and a centripetal ontological conception of the human being, between allowing their characters to be anyone, to be independent, and instantly putting them back *in relation.*

Reading Hardy and Lawrence amounts to witnessing the evolution of characters through the building or the undoing of their relationships with others. Indeed, another element that leads to the definition of the two authors' view of characterization as centrifugal is the co-dependence that exists between self-construction and otherness in their novels. Echoing Paul Ricoeur's argument stating that "the character's identity is being built in relation with that of the plot" (Ricoeur 168; my translation)[9], I argue that, in Hardy and Lawrence's works, the character's identity is being built *in relation* with the *relationships* that make the plot. Analysing a protagonist's personality therefore involves taking a closer look at the different types of relationships that may impact it in any positive or negative way. For instance, Hardy's Clym (*The Return of the Native*) or Lawrence's Paul (*Sons and Lovers*) could not possibly be understood in all their complexities without a proper study of their relationships with their mothers. The potential of Lawrence's Ursula (*Women in Love*) could not be fully revealed to the reader without a particular attention paid to her love-hate relationship with Birkin, just as the wasted potential of Hardy's Jude (*Jude the Obscure*) could not be fathomed without an exploration of his ambivalent relationships to women. Then, how could Mrs Morel's (*Sons and Lovers*) and Tess's (*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*) fragmented selves be given meaning without our recognising them as victims of domestic and sexual abuse? These are among the great variety of relationships which can be found in Hardy and Lawrence's novels and which constitute an integral part of the characterization process. In that sense, the two authors fit the definition of the novelist given by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, as someone whose "task is not to expound ideas or even analyse characters, but to depict an inter-human event" (Merleau Ponty, *Phenomenology* 175). In order to get a better grasp of what is at stake in the writing of this "inter-human event" in my corpus, I will draw from different theories which will include studies in psychology (development psychology), gender studies (the way gender roles may impact one's identity), or trauma studies (namely the effects of psychological or physical violence on one's self-construction). As was hinted at with Merleau-Ponty, phenomenological studies will be key to my research, for their exploration of intentionality that presupposes a contact with the world and with otherness for any sense of self to be achieved (Leroy, *La Phénoménologie* 232). The work of contemporary French phenomenologist Christine Leroy will be particularly enlightening as I will be analysing the fragile, at times porous, boundaries of the self in Hardy and Lawrence's novels, as consequences of the co-dependency between self-construction and contact with otherness. I will draw from her *Phénoménologie de la danse: de la chair à l'éthique*

[9] « L'identité du personnage se construit en liaison avec celle de l'intrigue ».

to better understand the concept of *Einfühlung*, a German word coined by Robert Vischer in 1873 and later translated as "empathy" by Edward B. Titchener (Leroy 25;35). The psycho-organic process of empathy will be useful in this chapter (as in several others) for its emphasis on identification without amalgamation (Leroy, *Phénoménologie de la danse* 25). In other words, as soon as characters are being built through this process, they are meant to access their fullest selves via the contact with other selves, but without ever losing themselves in the process or merging with that otherness. But is this process always so clear-cut in the works of Hardy and Lawrence? Is empathy always beneficial to the characters, or may the intensity of a connection end up being detrimental to the construction of their identities? The fragile balance between relation and fusion seems to have been one of Lawrence's fascinations, even to the point of obsession, leading him to try and theorise it in his non-fiction. Focusing on romantic heteronormative relationships, he writes: "he must know that he is half, and the woman is the other half: that they are two, but that they are two-in-one" (Lawrence, *Study* 128). Here, the way to access the complete version of oneself seems to be the contact with the loved one, without whom any sense of identity is to be denied. Yet, Lawrence also writes:

> In love, in the act of love, that which is mixed in me becomes pure, that which is female in me is given to the female, that which is male in her draws into me, I am complete, I am pure male, she is pure female, we rejoice in contact perfect and naked and clear, singled out unto ourselves, and given the surpassing freedom. (…) For she is she and I am I, and, clasped together with her, I know how perfectly she is not me, how perfectly I am not her, how utterly we are two, the light and darkness, and how infinitely and eternally not-to-be-comprehended by either of us, is the surpassing One we make. (Lawrence, *Study* 80)

In this passage, his argument seems to shift in another direction as he implies that a sense of self may very well be achieved individually ("pure male, pure female"), only a higher plane of existence ("the surpassing One") can be attained through a deep connection between a woman and a man. What is the reader meant to conclude then? Can one find oneself through the loved one, or does one only achieve a better version of oneself in the process? Is one entirely protected from fusion as one connects so deeply with the other? If taking a closer look at Lawrence's non-fiction is undoubtedly helpful to get a glimpse of the "making-off" of his fiction, returning to his novels as the place where his most abstract theories were given substance, will allow a more precise assessment of his views on the use of empathy in the characterisation process. Less of

an obsession for an author who, since childhood, had not wanted "to know more people than he already knew (about half a dozen)" (Florence Emily Hardy 16), connections to others in Hardy's work will be just as much meaningful and just as much related to an ontological reflection.

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If the exploration of diverse relations in fiction requires the creation of co-made rather than self-made heroes, it is only the first step towards writing a proper relational ontology and inserting complex and fundamental questions about our status as humans, in between the lines. The second step in this process is for the authors to introduce another level of "relativity" as part of the human experience, an issue which has been the subject of continuing debate in philosophy since antiquity: the mind-body dichotomy. In France, Descartes's *cogito* has laid the foundation of the dualistic philosophy of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century (Jütte 52) and has led many philosophers across Europe to confront his theory, offering counter-arguments or complementary ones. Scottish philosopher David Hume is among those who tackled the mind-body problem in their works and attempted to transcend the limits posed by Descartes' theory. If Hume does not entirely break from the Cartesian tradition, he "puts forward an empiricist and sceptical version of" the French philosopher's dualist thinking, based on the separation of body and mind, but also on the recognition of an unproblematic "interaction between immaterial mind and material body" (Armstrong 27;30). In putting forward the "causal relations" between body and mind (A. E. Pitson 290), Hume builds up a dualistic philosophy that does not exclude relationality, as an attempt to annihilate the rivalry between immaterialism and materialism which, to him, could never solve the body-mind problem (Pitson 278). In the light of this British dualistic tradition, the omnipresence of the body-mind issue in Hardy's and Lawrence's fiction and non-fiction does not actually appear incompatible with the development of a relational ontology. Just as Hardy declared that he "saw souls outside of bodies" in a concert in 1887 (Turner 124), Lawrence wrote in "Fantasia of the Unconscious" (1922) that there were "two planes of being and consciousness", the "lower plane" being the "sensual" and the "upper plane" being the "spiritual" (Lawrence, *PFU* 88). These two statements by the two authors, made in different circumstances and times, seem to echo each other in their demonstration of a split between the physical and the psychical, without suggesting that no interaction is possible between the two. However, as mere impressions or philosophical reflections, these statements cannot be taken for granted and should rather encourage readers to examine the way their views

on the matter might be reflected in their fiction, or might even have evolved throughout their careers as novelists. The second part of this work will be dedicated to that very task and will aim at demonstrating how Hardy and Lawrence's seemingly dualist thinking turns out to be a very complex and Humean argument which, I argue, is part of the development of their relational ontology.

The revelation of the two authors' non-dualist thinking comes out in various shapes in their novels. In his essay, Lawrence mentioned the "sensual" as opposed to the "spiritual," yet, in my reading, the sensual in Hardy and Lawrence turns out to be a multi-layered concept, used to re-establish the relation between body and mind. As they write, the authors are trying to *make sense* of the world, that is, understanding one's place in the world through the medium of the senses. Critics of Hardy agree that "perception", in his novels, "is understood as a both physically and psychologically fraught process" (Plotz 127), and that "Hardy's fiction" as a whole "might be seen as both expression and homage to (…) the 'nerves' themselves" (Wilson 43). Now according to Lawrence himself, "Hardy had a wonderful sensuous understanding" that he thought was very modern and very close to his own (Di Gregorio 6). All of these statements show how the exploration of the senses is central to their writing and how *feeling*, in Hardy and Lawrence, involves both senses and sentiments, both body and mind, thus inevitably bringing them back together as one. From characterisation, our attention will shift towards the construction of the plots and the categorisation of the novels in one particular genre, specific to the two authors, that I will coin as "sensual realism." In a nineteenth-century Europe dominated by the realist genre, Robin Gilmour points out that "Naturalism in its full continental severity never really established itself in Britain" (Gilmour 131). In British literature, writing realistic plots does not necessarily amount to describing things precisely the way they are, in their raw reality and with the conspicuous intention of denouncing them. In that sense, Hardy offers an alternative to that type of realism that too often sounded to him like "copyism" (Hardy, *Personal Writings* 136) and which had Charles Dickens as his most famous representative. For Hardy, and later for Lawrence, a realist novel first and foremost needs to *feel* real, that is, needs to call upon the readers' senses by conveying a synaesthesic experience of being in the world. Advocating for a rendering of subjective perception rather than the simple insertion of objective descriptions, he writes:

> What cannot be discerned by the eye and ear, what may be apprehended only by the *mental tactility* that comes from a *sympathetic* appreciativeness of life in all its manifestations, this is the gift which renders its possessor a more accurate delineator of

> human nature than many another with twice his powers and means of external observation, but without the sympathy (Hardy, *Personal Writings* 137, my emphasis).

Here, both the physical and the mental aspects of the characters' experiences are involved in Hardy's definition of a realistic story, as an illustration of "Shklovsky's claim that literature is a tool for restoring sensational vivacity to our perceptions and thus closing the gap between how we perceive things and how they physically affect us" (Coombs 6). This particular focus on the senses in Victorian realism has been studied by recent critics such as Brilmyer or above-cited David Sweeney Coombs in *Reading with the Senses in Victorian Society and Science* (2019). In modernist studies, however, realism has not been a topic much discussed and the relation of Lawrence to the genre seems to have been somewhat neglected. As it turns out, critics of Hardy and Victorian literature will be as much enlightening in regard to Lawrence's writing, demonstrating once again that literature as a whole "continues to provide a kind of theatre into which the experience of the senses can be displaced" (Steven Connor in Hillman and Maude 192). In Lawrence's writings and in modernist literature more generally, the senses are not less present but seem to be referred to in a more modern, scientific way, as "nerves." Works like Laura Salisbury and Andrew Shail's *Neurology and Modernity: A Cultural History of Nervous Systems 1800–1950* (2010), or George M. Johnson's *Dynamic Psychology in Modernist British Fiction* (2006), demonstrate the intricate link that exists between science and literature from the mid-nineteenth century onward and will be very helpful in the search for a modernist version of "sensual realism" in Lawrence's writing. Indeed, we will see how Lawrence literally brings his readers back to their senses through the exploration of a very specific concept drawn from studies in psychology – the allotropic states. In *Human II*, Frederic W. H. Myers defines allotropic states as "modifications of the arrangements of nervous elements on which our conscious identity depends, but with no more conspicuous *superiority* of the one state over the other than (for instance) charcoal possesses over graphite or graphite over charcoal (…)" (Johnson 154). Science meets literature as allotropic states are translated in Lawrence's fiction into the different nervous states his characters go through, page after page, without ever losing their very own identities. Through the close readings of various passages, I will argue that "Sensual Realism", in Lawrence, is illustrated in the myriads of feelings, physical as well as psychical, that the characters may experience in their fictitious lifetimes. Realism in Hardy and Lawrence needs to be relative, since, according to Alexander Bain, "it is only seeing things relationally that we can understand anything at all" (Rylance 173).

Thinking about human experience in relative terms goes hand in hand with its conception as a fluid process rather than a fixed knowledge. Movement itself is at the core of Hardy and Lawrence's non-dualist fiction in so far as it works as a binding concept, itself crystallised in the word *emotion*. Sara Ahmed, in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004), reminds us that "the word 'emotion' comes from the Latin 'emovere,' referring 'to move, to move out'" (Ahmed 11). In this light, emotions are as much related to the physical dimension of one's experience as to its psychological dimension and the very dialectic between motion and emotion, if found in the works of Hardy and Lawrence, could justify further our initial hypothesis that posited their fiction as non-dualist. The primary aim of this chapter will therefore be to try and find potential associations between the way characters feel and the way they move: may one move trigger an emotion in a character, or *vice versa*, may one emotion trigger a particular movement? More importantly, what direct consequences may these e-motions have on the characters' ability to relate to anything or anyone? Psychologists and critics like Sara Ahmed have pointed out that "emotions are relational" in that they "involve (re)actions or relations of 'towardness' or of 'awayness' in relation to such objects" (Ahmed 8). Writing moving stories, in which characters are both *being moved* and *on the move*, might therefore be part of Hardy's and Lawrence's strategies to express their relational ontology in fictional terms. Studies in psychology will be particularly useful here to get an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of emotion, and the philosophical reflections of the authors themselves on the topic of movement will serve to enlighten their fiction. As an example, Lawrence's ambiguous concept of "positive inertia," coined at a time when "restlessness [was giving] the modern era its identity" (Kalaidjian 1), will be explored extensively so as to reveal all its non-dualist implications. Just as Lawrence situates his concept "in relation to discussions of being and becoming" (Kalaidjian 53), phenomenologist Christine Leroy, with her *Phénoménologie de la danse: de la chair à l'éthique*, will help reveal the relational potential contained in any movement. This particular work will give us some valuable insights into the concept of kinaesthesia (or kinesthesis), defined in the *OED* as "the sense of muscular effort that accompanies a voluntary motion of the body." Far from being confined to the field of science and physical therapy, kinaesthesia has been recently exploited in the human science for its surprising relevance to care ethics. With John Martin's theorisation of "kinesthesic sympathy" in performing arts, moving – and being aware of one's movement – becomes a very efficient way to connect to the Other. In Leroy's words, "the body is the place where the centripetal

emotion is converted into centrifugal motility" (Leroy, *Phénoménologie de la danse* 43).[10] Again, the dialectic of motion and emotion is clearly stated and appears central to any author's centrifugal view of characterisation. From simple walks home to country dances, wrestling sessions or reckless skiing, the empathic potential of various kinds of movements found in the novels will be analysed and their metaphysical dimension similarly assessed. In the same way and as a transition towards the next part of this work, the fluidity that characterises the characters' consciousnesses will be explored as another illustration of Hardy's and Lawrence's relational – and by definition dynamic – conception of the human experience.

In his *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), Hume concurs with "Descartes's identification of the mind with consciousness" and therefore holds that "the mind is always active" (Armstrong 32). What distinguishes him from Descartes, however, is his conception of the mind (and therefore, of consciousness) as a "collection of perceptions" that he illustrates by "comparing the mind to a theatre where perceptions appear and reappear" (Pitson 288). What critics have called Hume's bundle theory (Pitson 288) is therefore based on a very fluid and dynamic conception of human consciousness which cannot but call to mind a very famous literary technique used two centuries later by modernist writers. As one of the most famous "emblems" of modernist literature, the stream of consciousness device seems to be a relevant starting point to study the relation between body and mind in Hardy's and Lawrence's novels, insofar as movement traditionally refers to *physical* displacement, while the stream of consciousness was rather used to reveal the flow of *thoughts* in a character's mind. Taking its roots in the fields of philosophy and psychology, the stream of consciousness constitutes both a literary technique and a theoretical concept which cannot be reduced to specific passages in specific modernist novels, but which rather needs to be understood under the lens of Victorian physiological psychology. Again, Victorian and Modernist studies meet through the revelation by recent critics that the phrase "stream of consciousness" was not coined by modern psychologist William James but was actually theorised by mid-Victorian philosopher George Henri Lewes in *The Physiology of Common Life* (1860): "there is a general stream of consciousness which constitutes [an individual's] feeling of existence – the Consciousness of himself as a sensitive being" (George H. Lewes quoted in Johnson 21). What is implied in such a revelation is that Hardy's works written before 1890 and the publication of William James' *The Principles of Psychology* might very well have been informed by Lewes' philosophical

[10] My translation. Leroy writes : « Le corps est donc le lieu de conversion de l'émotion centripète en motricité centrifuge ».

reflections. As a matter of fact, this hypothesis can be confirmed by Hardy's notebooks in which the following quote from Lewes can be found: "Physiology began to disclose that all the mental processes were (…) functions of physical processes" (Björk 92n899).[11] The choice to write down this specific quote in his notebook says a lot about what drew Hardy to Lewes and to physiological psychology as a whole, that is, the view according to which the studies of the psychological experience and of the physical experience are co-dependent. Such a statement seems to be less explicit in James's conception of the stream of consciousness and this, to Johnson, might have been the reason why Lawrence was not drawn to the concept the way Hardy was to Lewes's initial theory (Johnson 151). In "Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious Lawrence voices his aversion towards James's phrase as follows:

> Immortal phrase of the immortal James! Oh stream of hell which undermined my adolescence! The stream of consciousness! I felt it streaming through my brain, in at one ear and out at the other. (…) And sometimes I felt it must bubble up in the cerebellum and wind its way through all the convolutions of the true brain. Horrid stream! Whence did it come, and whither was it bound? The stream of consciousness! (Lawrence, *PFU* 8)

To make up for a concept he deemed insufficient and flawed, Lawrence dedicated parts of his non-fiction as well as his fiction to the theorisation of a new notion which would perform the reconciliation between body and mind in the study of human consciousness. Whether he referred to it as "blood-consciousness" (Lawrence, *PFU* 185) or as "stream of tenderness" (Lawrence, *LCL* 279), the author's faith in a non-dualist approach to psychology aligns with Hardy's own views and, more generally, with Victorian philosophers' metaphysical reflections that reveal the ontological dimension of any study of human consciousness. In that sense, looking for a psycho-organic conception of consciousness in Hardy and Lawrence's novels amounts to looking at another aspect of their relational ontology, in that such a conception suggests a relational dynamic between body and mind, to make up consciousness. If the works of Victorian critics and Victorian thinkers themselves will be particularly informative to that issue, more recent studies in psychology, namely the theory of Embodied Cognition, will also prove very illuminating. Developed in the 1980s (Dutriaux and Gyselinck 420) by psychologists such as Francisco Varela, Embodied Cognition is nothing but a more modern

[11] This reference was brought to my attention by William A. Cohen in "Faciality and Sensation in Hardy's *The Return of the Native*" (438).

version of physiological psychology, informed by further scientific research. Arguing that "the mind needs to be understood in the context of its body" (Dutriaux and Gyselinck 420), Embodied Cognition can be better illustrated by the state of mindfulness in which "the mind is present in embodied everyday experience" (Varela et al. 22). Interestingly enough, a state of consciousness that sounds very much focused on the mind (mind-fulness, also translated in French as "pleine conscience") cannot be achieved anywhere else than *in the body.* Another type of relation then comes up: the relation between the specificities of one's body and the development of one's consciousness. Indeed, if the state of consciousness depends on the state of one's body then does it mean that a woman's consciousness is determined by her female physical attributes? On another note, is a crippled body – like that of Clifford in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* – inevitably synonymous with a crippled, fragmented consciousness? All the implications that the body-mind relation may have for the consciousness of Hardy and Lawrence's characters will be analysed in the light of the aforementioned theories and from a very contemporary vantage point with the exploration of the Material Engagement Theory (MET). Going a step further than the Embodied Cognition, the MET posits that "cognition is not to be found trapped within the brain, because the cognitive process involved in many 'real-life' tasks are brought forth through the relational engagement of brains, bodies, and things" (Iliopoulos 40). Let us bear in mind this relation between human consciousness and these *things* as we approach the third and last part of this work.

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At this point, various types of relations have been introduced as part of a wider reflection on the relativity of human experience in Hardy and Lawrence's works. There is, however, an ultimate relationship that needs to be identified for the two authors' relational ontology to be complete, that is this very special relationship of the self with its environment. In *La Nature*, Merleau-Ponty makes clear the intricate link that exists between metaphysics and environmental studies, contending that "the ontology of nature" is "the way towards ontology" (Merleau-Ponty, *Nature* 346). Despite his questionable use of the word "nature" which I will come back to later, Merleau-Ponty tackles an issue that seems to be central to the novels of Hardy and Lawrence, written decades before any of the philosopher's works were published. In 1910, Hardy himself, in a letter to the secretary of the Humanitarian League, declared that "the most far-reaching consequence of the establishment of the common origin of all species is ethical" (quoted in K. Wilson 48), thus touching upon the necessity to go beyond the human in order to elaborate a set of moral principles for human beings to follow. Similarly, twelve years

later, Lawrence asserted in "Fantasia of the Unconscious" that "a new relationship between ourselves and the universe mean[t] a new morality" (Lawrence, *PFU* 168). What is striking in both these statements, besides their converging messages, is that they highlight the importance to look at "the world" to understand oneself and access the best version of oneself. Inversely, recent eco-critics such as Don Marietta have shown how "environmental ethics requires an ontological commitment" (Brown and Toadvine 121) and have extensively explored the dialectics between environmental studies and metaphysics, going back to the origins of the term "ecology." Coined by Ernst Haeckel in 1869 as "the relations of the organism to the environment including, in the broad sense, all the 'conditions of existence'", "ecology" is a term that becomes key to any argument on human relativity (Haeckel quoted in E.C. Miller, "Ecology" 653). Indeed, the Oxford English Dictionary offers both an early and a later definition of the term, each representing a different conception of humans' affiliation to their natural surroundings. Originally, "ecology" referred to "the branch of biology that deals with the relationships between living organisms and their environment; the interrelationships between any system and its environment" and then it gradually took up the modern meaning by which we usually understand it today, that is "the study of or concern for the effect of human activity on the environment." The absence of the word "relationship" from the second definition is all the more striking as it is replaced by the word "effect", thus implying that the human-nature collaboration later became a one-way relationship for the benefits of humans. Looking at the ecological dimension of Hardy and Lawrence's writing therefore amounts to looking at the way characters interact with their natural surroundings and to analyse the consequences of a potential discontinuity in that interaction on the characters' sense of self. Indeed, if "the ecological self is a dialogical self" (Brown 152), then, strictly speaking, an ecological text is first and foremost a text that focuses on the interrelationship between characters and their environment, rather than openly and explicitly commenting on human actions performed on that environment. In the same way, the "ecological/dialogical self" mentioned by phenomenologist Charles Brown makes the greenness of Hardy and Lawrence's writing a key argument to define their philosophical thinking as relational ontology.

To get a better sense of what an ecological self entails in Hardy and Lawrence's novels, one needs to go back to the notion of consciousness introduced in the second part of this work. The embodied conception of consciousness serves to grant it an organic dimension and a place in the midst of the material world. Under such a light, the modern notion of environmental consciousness as an awareness of the impact of one's actions on the environment becomes two-

fold: both a consciousness *made of* its environment, and, ultimately, a consciousness *made aware of* the need to protect what has nourished and nurtured it. "Evolutionary biology and affiliated 19th-century sciences" demonstrated how consciousness, in fact, was not limited to the organic tissue of the body but was also to be found out in the material world (Cohen 438). In "Faciality and Sensation in Hardy's *The Return of the Native*," William A. Cohen argues that this evolution in the understanding of consciousness was illustrated in Victorian literature, and namely in Hardy's writing. Cohen explains that "Hardy's conception of the materiality of inner qualities was particularly influenced by the Victorian polymath Herbert Spencer, whose work on physiology gives perception a prominent role as a channel of communication between inner states and external environments" (Cohen 438). On the other hand, Kalaidjian draws our attention to the fact that "introspective, subconscious workings of the human mind" which characterise the plots of modernist novels might seem "at first blush counterintuitive to a discussion of environment" (Kalaidjian 20). Yet, Kalaidjian adds that it is precisely this "awareness of environment from *within*" (Kalaidjian 20, emphasis in the original) which grants modernism its legitimacy in eco-critical studies. The simple act of thinking, or more tellingly, having one's head in the clouds, is already engaging a reflection on environmental issues, just the way describing the characters' environment becomes a convoluted way to get to their consciousnesses. On that issue, critic John Alcorn declares in *The Nature Novel from Hardy to Lawrence*: "Any account of Lawrence's development as a novelist between *Sons and Lovers* and *Women in Love* must centre upon his attempts to find techniques of internalizing landscape – that is, of developing an idiom through which the subtle ebb and flow of the unconscious life of his characters might be charted through the device of nature description" (Alcorn 90). Because consciousness, in Hardy as well as in Lawrence, is – I argue – characterised by its openness to the world, it fits the phenomenological conception of it as intentional, constantly turned outward and not inward. The use of phenomenological theories will therefore be essential to the exploration of the dialectic between soul and soil in Hardy and Lawrence, along with the use of more recent and ground-breaking theories in cognitive studies such as the aforementioned Material Engagement Theory which "goes a step further than embodiment and embeddedness" in its claim that "cognition can actually be extended into the outer realm" (Iliopoulos 40). The authors' choice of opening up their characters' consciousnesses to the world as well as their techniques to attribute a consciousness to the environment will be analysed alongside each other so as to reveal the novels' affinities with phenomenology, defined by Husserl as reflection rather than introspection (David R. Cerbone in Zahavi 8).

William Barret, in "Irrational Man," declares that artists are better at going back to the things themselves than philosophers who "come to experience with too many intellectual preconceptions" (quoted in Alcorn 1). In this argument, Barret obviously refers to the fundamental tenets of phenomenological philosophy which were first introduced by Husserl's *Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* (1913). Hardy himself might have been a relevant illustration of Barret's argument on the phenomenological superiority of artists over philosophers, as he seemed to foreshadow, back in 1901, Husserl's famous words, in a reflection on literature and poetry which was included in his preface to 'Poems of the Past and Present': "Unadjusted impressions have their value, and the road to a true philosophy of life seems to lie in humbly recording diverse readings of its phenomena as they are forced upon us by chance and change" (Hardy, *Poems* 84).[12] The semantical similarities between "unadjusted impressions" and "things themselves," along with Hardy's use of the word "phenomena", leave no doubt as to the author's affinities with phenomenological thinking, and a proper look at his fiction will serve to demonstrate Hardy's position as a literary pioneer in this philosophical school. Whether they be called "impressions," "things," or "phenomena", the fundamentals of phenomenology call us back from abstraction to materiality and invite us, in Lawrence's words, to "fall to earth" (Lawrence, *PFU* 174). In that sense, exploring the phenomenological content of Hardy and Lawrence's writings goes hand in hand with an exploration of the relation between human characters and matter in their fictions. How do characters matter, in Hardy and Lawrence? And how exactly does that infuse ecology into their novels? Part of the answer would have to be found in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy and its particular focus on the material body as key to the perception of one's environment. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty asserts:

> Our own body is in the world as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms a system. (…) The thing, and the world, are given to me along with the parts of my body, not by any 'natural geometry', but in a living connection comparable, or rather identical, with that existing between the parts of my body itself (235;237).

The main argument of this chapter, informed by Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, will revolve around the return to the body, in Hardy and Lawrence's novels, as a way to return to what truly *matters:* our relationship with the nourishing soil. The various modes of relating to one's body,

[12] This reference was brought to my attention by Hugh Epstein in *Hardy, Conrad and the Senses* (3).

the way the characters are made to connect to it, or, on the contrary, to dissociate from it, will be analysed and interpreted in a phenomenological light which will help to identify further the ecocritical dimension of Hardy and Lawrence's writing. What consequences does Constance Chatterley's disembodied existence have on her ability to connect to nature? At the opposite end of the spectrum, is Tess's oft-emphasised materiality enough for Hardy's novel to be considered green writing? What does it mean, for the young Tess, to be called a "child of the soil" (Hardy, *Tess* 369)? All these questions will serve as common threads throughout this chapter as I will try and demonstrate how the exploration of the body, in Hardy and Lawrence, is intrinsically linked to the exploration of ecological issues, since "to be a body, is to be tied to a certain world" (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 171). This world, in the works of the two authors, becomes so complex and diverse in its representation, that the word "nature" hardly seems appropriate to refer to it. Merleau-Ponty's persistent use of the word and its openly ambiguous definition as "an object which is not quite an object" (Merleau-Ponty, *Nature* 16)[13] encourage us to look for alternative representations in Hardy and Lawrence's narratives, which would help annihilate the human-as-subject and nature-as-object dialectic. If he chose not to give up on the term "nature," Merleau-Ponty did put forward the embedding process that exists between the self and the world and that, in itself, prevents any objectification of the environment. His famous theory of the "Flesh of the World", introduced in *The Visible and the Invisible*, will be very helpful to reveal the intricate relations that are being built in the novels, between characters and their environments, to the point of their becoming, in Hardy's novels especially, "indistinguishable from their surroundings" (Plotz 122). More than a simple tool to perceive one's environment, the body, in Merleau-Ponty as in Hardy and Lawrence's writing, becomes a binding force:

> [As the body gets] caught up in the tissue of the things, it draws it entirely to itself, incorporates it, and, with the same movement, communicates to the things upon which it closes over that identity without superposition, that difference without contradiction, that divergence between the within and the without that constitutes its natal secret (Merleau-Ponty, *VI* 135).

If the relationships between organisms is the funding principle of ecology, then revealing the interrelationship between body and environment in fictitious works amount to revealing their

[13] My translation. Merleau-Ponty writes : « La nature est un objet énigmatique, un objet qui n'est pas tout à fait objet ».

ecocritical dimension. Where there is interdependency, there is ecology, and where there is ecology, there is inevitably ontology. Thinking of nature, in Merleau-Pontian terms, as a chiasm in which we grow in-relation, or, in Albrecht's wording, as a "symbioment" which we are meant to share (Albrecht 101), seems to be the first step towards thinking ecologically and finding one's ecological self.

Hardy and Lawrence's relational ontology is therefore to be found in the ecocritical dimension of their writing and is ultimately performed through the representation, in their novels, of an ideal ecological self which would be the final metaphysical truth. Yet, many questions still remain about this mysterious self one should spend one's life chasing: is it a gendered self or does it transcend the limits of gender to access a higher state of being? Can one access this ultimate being on one's own, or does one need the help of the Other, as was touched upon in part one? Is this self necessarily human? Lawrence partly answers those questions as he declares that "the great relationship, for humanity, will always be the relation between man and woman" (Lawrence, *Study* 175), thus suggesting the key role of heteronormative relationships in the achievement of a perfected self. As questionable as it may sound to us twenty-first-century readers, such an argument serves as a reminder that gender plays a role in both the ontological and the ecological debates. Indeed, if the connection to the world has to be performed through the body, then it surely does not mean the same thing to access the world through a female body than through a male body. How does one's gendered flesh affect one's ability to access the Flesh of the World? In their novels, I suggest that Hardy and Lawrence address these specific issues by building female characters whose very experiences of nature are often dictated, influenced or complicated by their gender. Just as Tess's own relationship with the natural world is practically forced upon her by men who see her as yet another land to conquer, Constance Chatterley's own femaleness is only achieved through her reconnection to the wood where she gets to meet a man. Gender, in the two authors' writing, is inseparable from environmental issues, precisely because women's plight is better understood in the light of environment's plight. Thus, it will be particularly relevant to study Hardy and Lawrence's novels from the perspective of ecofeminism, so as to further delineate the shape of the ultimate ecological self. I would like to stress, however, that my goal will not be to decide whether Lawrence was a feminist or an anti-feminist author, but in an attempt to define a relational ontology in the novels of the two writers, the relation between the female characters and their natural surroundings will necessarily need to be explored: are women meant to be on the side of nature? And if so, what is one to make of the essentialist discourse linking

women to nature, which feminists have been striving to erase? The comparison of Tess and Constance Chatterley, both clearly placed on the side of nature, will be particularly relevant to demonstrate how two similar processes of characterisation may lead to two different results. Indeed, for a narrative to be defined as eco-feminist, it needs to be more than the representation of the female experience in a natural setting. Material feminist Stacy Alaimo, in her discussion on Darwin, simultaneously pinpointed the complex and non-obvious elements that make Hardy's writing eco-feminist: "His [Darwin's] work is not "feminist" in any sense, but as a profound and complex account of the organic becoming of matter, of the strategies of survival and the generation of multiple modes of becomings in the face of the obstacles or problems of existence that life poses for them, it is or should be of some direct interest and value for feminists" (Alaimo 46). As stories of women's struggles for existence, Hardy and Lawrence's novels do seem to take up an eco-feminist dimension that will need to be further defined and fleshed out with close readings. Hand in hand with the exploration of eco-feminism in their fiction, the study of Hardy and Lawrence's relational ontology will naturally lead us to the recent fields of ecosexuality and ecosensuality that encourage a "re-envisioning of the Earth as "Lover" rather than "Mother" (Ryan 2). Again, the vital need to be in relation is at the core of the emergence of the ecosexual movement, arising "out of a deep understanding that the ecological crises and the erotic crises that alienate humans from their own sexuality, share a common root—disconnection—and that to heal our relationship with the ecosystems that sustain us, we are called to heal our relationship with our bodies, sexuality and erotic lives" (Lindsay Hagamen quoted in Ryan 2). If "the ecological self is a dialogical self," then it seems necessary to look at all the forms of dialogues in the novels, verbal or non-verbal, one of them being sexual intercourse. Here, Derek Ryan reminds us that "sex with humans is also part of ecosexuality, as humans are part of, not separate from, nature" (3). The most obvious candidate for the exploration of ecosensuality is obviously the scandalous *Lady Chatterley's Lover,* but it will be interesting to look at more discrete and implicit examples of ecosensuality in the works of Hardy, whose *Tess* was also initially deemed improper for publication. Looking for the ecological self in Hardy and Lawrence's fiction therefore requires to look for all types of relational dynamics in their works, that between men and women, but also that between humans and non-humans, that is, "the relation of organism to organism" which Darwin deems most important (Darwin quoted in Beer 233). In using the word "organism," Darwin does not discriminate between humans and non-humans but rather suggests that any kind of living being may have an impact on any other. The six novels that constitute the corpus offer numerous

examples of Hardy and Lawrence's respective position towards animals and the protection of their rights. More famously than Lawrence, Hardy has been said by many critics and biographers to have been "ahead of his time as a champion of animal rights" (Turner 4). We know for a fact that he was so sympathetic to the plea of animals that he committed his writing to their defence, allowing parts of his work to be reprinted in magazines dedicated to the cause, or openly voicing his support of the "slaughterhouse reform" or of "animal welfare organizations and movements" (Millgate quoted in Tait 6). Thus the point will not be to demonstrate, as many critics have brilliantly done before, how omnipresent non-human characters are in Hardy's fiction, just as animals were central to his life. The point will rather be to qualify the nature of the relationships between humans and non-humans in Hardy and Lawrence, so as to determine whether the characters' sense of humanity could actually be found in in-humanity. Because advocating for an ethics of animal protection does not necessarily guarantee any underlying reflection on one's place as human, Elisha Cohn points out that in Victorian literature, animals "can be figures in a radically new conception of ontological continuity as well as objects of sympathy" (Cohn 495-96). Indeed, to have sympathy and to be willing to protect some beings necessarily involves being in a position that allows such protection. To be able to defend animals, doesn't one need to be superior to them and use one's power for their sake? A closer look at the way human characters' lives, in Hardy and Lawrence's novels, may be impacted by non-human characters, will reveal the two authors' stances on this "new conception of ontological continuity." The on-going debate on the power and limits of the use of anthropomorphism in literature will be central to the exploration of characterisation and will contribute to define the specific strategies Hardy and Lawrence may have used to develop a relational ontology in their fiction. Do Hardy and Lawrence use anthropomorphism, and if so, in what specific ways, and to what specific purposes? Then, what does it say about their approach to characterisation and, more generally, their conception of the human being? To answer those questions, concurrent close readings of Hardy and Lawrence will be supported by critical works exploring the non-human in the two authors' fictions.

As was made clear, I hope, by this overview of my work, many different types of relations will be put forward, analysed, and located within a larger web of relations that make up Hardy and Lawrence's relational ontology.

PART I:

A Centrifugal Vision of Characterisation: Thomas Hardy's and D. H. Lawrence's Alternatives to the Self-made Hero

As a point of entry into Lawrence's and Hardy's relational ontology, the first part of this work proposes to focus on the genesis of characterisation, in the two authors' fiction, in an attempt to demonstrate that Hardy's and Lawrence's heroes and heroines are not pre-definite and fixed entities who would serve a plot, but rather very fluid and interactive figures who embody their creator's relational philosophy. In his comparative study of Lawrence and Hardy, Langbaum contends that the innovation brought about by the two authors lies in their "portrayal of characters as states of being rather than as defined by social class and moral choice – the criteria of traditional characterization (Langbaum 77). The first chapter of this work will be dedicated to qualifying such an assertion, and to exploring the way in which characters might not be entirely defined by traditional factors such as social class and moral values, but that those factors do play a crucial role in the unfolding of the two authors' relational ontology within the framework of characterisation. To do so, the main protagonists of the six novels under study will go through "a background check", which will allow us to assess the way environmental, social, and genetic factors are taken into account by the two authors when creating a new hero or heroine. While they are deemed by some critics, such as Robin Gilmour, to be merely "evolutionary victims" (Gilmour 138), Jude and Tess, among others, will prove to be far more complex characters, who get to transcend their victim status and engage in innovative ways of relating to their circumstances. From their birth to the different stages of their growth, Hardy's and Lawrence's characters are the results of various connections, the most primordial one being the connection with the Other. According to French philosopher Paul Ricœur, "the whole issue of personal identity revolves around this quest for a relational invariant, thus giving it the powerful meaning of permanency through time" (Ricœur 142-143).[1] If we, as readers, are to uncover the complex identities of Hardy's and Lawrence's characters, we first need to begin by investigating the myriads of relations that make up those identities. The second chapter of this work argues that love relationships, whether they are romantic or filial ones, constitute the main relational dynamics of our being and have both the power to liberate our true selves, and to cancel our whole being. In *Ecopsychology: Psychology in the Service of Life,* Andy Fisher writes: "To be loved is to have our own being affirmed, to feel connected to and embraced by others; love is thus the source of our ontological security, of feeling grounded in our own being" (Fisher 99). I suggest that Hardy and Lawrence are looking for this ontological security in their

[1] My translation. Ricœur writes: « Toute la problématique de l'identité personnelle va tourner autour de cette quête d'un invariant relationnel, lui donnant la signification forte de permanence dans le temps ».

fiction, exploring healthy and unhealthy types of relationships, in an attempt to pinpoint the one type of love which can reveal one to oneself.

CHAPTER ONE.
Being Born in Relation : a Background Check

"An extraordinary combination of circumstances"
(Darwin 21)

This chapter proposes to demonstrate a centrifugal vision of characterisation in Hardy and Lawrence by going back to the origins of the characters and the circumstances in which the authors intended them to be born. Taking a closer look at the early stage of the characterisation process, namely the choice of the characters' backgrounds, will help to locate and comprehend the genesis of Hardy and Lawrence's relational ontology based, I argue, on the idea that humans (and therefore fictitious human characters) are nothing in themselves. A background, in its polysemous understanding, necessarily adds depth to the character and places him or her in a wider network made of 'cultural knowledge, education, experience, environment, or social surroundings' *(OED*). A background is where one comes from and what provides the strengths or the weaknesses one is to carry on the way to the foreground and to becoming an accomplished version of oneself. A background is the relational network one does not choose but has to work with or around throughout one's life. As a result, humans may be driven into the background of their lives, just as characters may be driven into the background of their own stories, letting destiny decide of their fates. In an attempt to better understand Hardy and Lawrence's metaphysics, I suggest to proceed to a background check of their characters so as to reveal the way their relational ontology stems from a belief in co-arising, that is, a belief in the idea that everything and everyone arise out of a combination of factors and causes rather than independently and out of the blue. The characters' environmental, social, and genetic backgrounds will be assessed, along with the actual background they often find themselves relegated to and from which they strive to extricate themselves.

1. Is Character Destiny? Heroes as Backgrounds to their own Stories

Now become a common saying, Heraclitus' words "character is destiny" were meant to suggest that there is no such thing as destiny, but only personal choices leading to logical consequences. In Hardy and Lawrence's novels, this three-thousand-year-old saying seems to be called into question as characters often appear to be precisely made and controlled by a higher power, depriving them of any free will. Fiona Fleming discusses extensively the issue of destiny in the works of the two authors, through the prism of the tragic in her essay "Resisting Tragedy in D. H. Lawrence and Thomas Hardy." In her introduction, Fleming asserts that both authors "explore the question of the inescapability of tragedy and the part that individual human

responsibility, collective human responsibility, cosmic design or chance play in tragic events" (Fleming 2). It is precisely this question of "human responsibility," or in other words, of human decision-making power, which concerns us here and which probably led Lawrence to conclude "from his reading of Hardy and his study of Abercrombie (…) that Hardy's tragic metaphysic was pessimistic, perverse and untrue" (Lawrence 1985, intr. by Bruce Steel Xxviii). But is Hardy's alleged obsession for tragedy really a symptom of a pessimistic form of thinking? And is Lawrence's fiction devoid of any such pessimistic reflections? Shifting the focus from tragedy to destiny and the role of characters in this destiny, I suggest that what comes across as a character's doom may actually be the result of what Darwin would have called "an extraordinary combination of circumstances" (Darwin 21), which the characters need to accommodate to and work with. The narrator of *The Return of the Native* introduces Clym Yeobright to the readers by declaring that "the only absolute certainty about him was that he would not stand still in the circumstances amid which he was born" (Hardy *TRN*, 168). Surely, he did not, since the protagonist actually left to work as a diamond merchant in Paris; yet, as conveyed in the title of the novel, he finally returned to his birthplace, on Egdon Heath, right where he had started. The whole plot of Hardy's 1878 novel is built around the very attempt from the protagonist to flee his own background only to be called back and put back in relation with his birthplace. What would appear as a failed attempt on his part is actually a promise kept, since Clym did actually move, rather than stand still, and came back a different man from the young man who had left. It is more than Lawrence's Paul Morel can say (*Sons and Lovers*), as a character who never leaves his home – the very circumstances in which he was born – throughout the entire novel. Paradoxically enough, among the six novels under study, a lot more comings and goings can be found in Hardy's novels than in Lawrence's, while much fewer changes in circumstances can be noted for Hardy's characters than for Lawrence's. Hardy's protagonists only get to dream about change, living, like Jude, in an "imaginative world (…) in which an abstract figure, more or less himself, was steeping his mind in a sublimation of the arts and sciences, and making his calling and election sure to a seat in the paradise of the learned" (Hardy, *JO* 92). Words like "imaginative," "abstract" and the phrase "more or less" all stress the impracticable dimension of Jude's utopic prospects and not only remind us of the power of destiny but also of the irony of fate. Later on, when Jude is still battling to get through the walls of Christminster Colleges, he finds himself *on* these walls, working to restore the very place he was denied access to: "People seemed to have forgotten that he had ever shown any awkward aberrancies: and he daily mounted to the parapets and copings of colleges he could

never enter, and renewed the crumbling freestones of mullioned windows he could never look from, as if he had known no wish to do otherwise" (Hardy, *JO* 270). The parallel structure that can be picked up in this quotation bears the weight of Jude's destiny and may have been one of the phrases that caused Hardy to be called a pessimistic, and sometimes, gloomy writer. If it is true that no such ironic comment on the way destiny plays with humans can be found in the three novels by Lawrence, it is also fair to say that Lawrence does deal with the helplessness of humans in the face of unexpected and unwanted circumstances.

Fleming, in the essay previously mentioned, contends that "fate and coincidence do not take part in Lawrence's plots as they do in Hardy's" (Fleming, "Resisting Tragedy" 8). The analysis of the six novels in my corpus both corroborates and qualifies this assertion, since, in my reading, fate is dealt with as a philosophical subject in Lawrence, rather than as a force in the unfolding of the plot. As he was writing *Sons and Lovers*, early in his career, the question of destiny seems to have been a key concern to the author who used his semi-autobiographical protagonist, Paul, to voice such metaphysical concerns. In one of the numerous dialogues between Paul and Miriam, the young man expresses his belief in destiny in these words: "I reckon we've got a proper way to go – and if we got it, we're all right – and if we go near it. but if we go wrong, we die. I'm sure William went wrong somewhere" (Lawrence, *SL* 193). The idea of a "proper way to go" leading to wellbeing and a "wrong" way to go leading to death sounds quite as pessimistic and tragic as any act of fate Jude, Tess, or Clym may have to suffer. However, in that particular instance, fate appears to be the only reasonable explanation for the unfair and unexpected death of Paul's brother, William. No superior force explicitly precipitates William's death, since the young man dies of a skin disease, mainly triggered by an unhealthy lifestyle. Destiny, in Lawrence, is less about more-than-human forces than about the characters' own life forces and about their being true to themselves – thus directly linking the issue of destiny to wider ontological questions. Indeed, Paul further reinforces his argument declaring that "what we are inside makes us so that we ought to go one particular way, and no other" (Lawrence, *SL* 193). This idea of predetermination is central to both authors' works and is probably most salient in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* in which the protagonist seems to spend his life doing precisely what Paul advises not to do, that is, straying away from the "right" path, marrying against everyone's opinion, pursuing a career no one in his position ever achieved, etc. Jude appears as a pre-made hero who will suffer the consequences of his going against what destiny had in store for him, but, as a counterargument to Paul's logic, his misfortunes rather result from his staying true to what he is inside and his believing that the way to Christminster

is the “one particular way” he “ought to go”. This predetermined path is made visible from the beginning of the novel, through the symbolism of the well little Jude is looking into, right after his beloved schoolmaster and mentor has left the village:

> The boy returned to the draw-well at the edge of the greensward, where he had left his buckets when he went to help his patron and teacher in the loading. There was a quiver in his lip now and after opening the well-cover to begin lowering the bucket he paused and leant with his forehead and arms against the framework, his face wearing the fixity of a thoughtful child’s who has felt the pricks of life somewhat before his time. The well into which he was looking was as ancient as the village itself, and from his present position appeared as a long circular perspective ending in a shining disk of quivering water at a distance of a hundred feet down. There was a lining of green moss near the top, and nearer still the hart’s-tongue fern. (Hardy, *JO* 11)

The well here serves as a metaphor for Jude’s destiny which lays before him (“a long circular perspective”), his final goal which seems so distant (“at a hundred feet down”) and his utopian prospects which are bound to end up in failure (“a shining disk of quivering water”). This metaphor both calls to mind the imagery of the well as the basic sustenance for life and the imagery of the well of knowledge, suggesting that Jude will strive to make reading the basic sustenance for his life, drawing knowledge from books without ever being able to become a fount of knowledge and quench his thirst for recognition. From the beginning of the novel, the protagonist, along with the reader, seems to be getting hints from a higher power, reminding him that the path he wishes to take is not the one which was made for him. The very inability to see Christminster from his hometown on a misty day early on in the novel is in itself symbolical of his later inability to reach his lofty goal: “the boy strained his eyes also; yet neither could he see the far-off city” (Hardy, *JO* 18).

Both *Sons and Lovers* and *Jude the Obscure* present characters who can feel the weight of destiny on their shoulders, in various forms, and in a more reflective way in Lawrence, but always with an emphasis on the helplessness of the protagonists. In the following extract, before Paul is even born, his mother is pregnant with William and is despairing over her precarious situation, wondering how she got where she is:

> She went indoors, wondering if things were never going to alter. She was beginning by now to realise that they would not. She seemed so far away from her

girlhood, she wondered if it were the same person walking heavily up the back garden at the Bottoms as had run so lightly up the breakwater at Sheerness ten years before.

"What have I to do with it?" she said to herself. "What have I to do with all this? Even the child I am going to have! It doesn't seem as if *I* were taken into account."

Sometimes life takes hold of one, carries the body along, accomplishes one's history, and yet is not real, but leaves oneself as it were slurred over.

"I wait," Mrs. Morel said to herself—"I wait, and what I wait for can never come." (Lawrence, *SL* 14, italics in the original).

In this passage, Lawrence conveys both semantically and linguistically the mother's powerlessness regarding her condition. While the subject "I" is emphasised by the use of italics, it only serves to express the actual passivity of the self who is later made to suffer the action through the use of the passive voice ("slurred over"). Here, Mrs Morel presents a form of destiny that does not come in the shape of a path one is to actively follow, but rather as a stream one is to let oneself be carried along. In that sense, Mrs Morel is relegated to the background of her own story, conceding that she has lost control of it and has become a spectator of her own life. "Life," in this extract, precisely becomes a synonym for destiny, suggesting once again that Hardy's and Lawrence's characters are evolving into a bigger macrocosm, in which their individual wishes are more often than not made insignificant. A particular character in Hardy's *The Return of the Native* may have inspired Mrs Morel's cry of despair at the loss of all sense of will power. Eustacia Vye is the character in Hardy's novel who maintains the most complex relationship with her background: she both has a very intense connection to it and loathes it to the point of risking her life to get away from it. In a fit of anger directed to the place in which she was born, Eustacia voices, in a somewhat more intense and dramatic manner, this feeling of injustice felt by characters who have lost control of their own stories:

"Can I go, can I go?" she moaned. "He's not great enough for me to give myself to—he does not suffice for my desire!... If he had been a Saul or a Bonaparte—ah! But to break my marriage vow for him—it is too poor a luxury!... And I have no money to go alone! And if I could, what comfort to me? I must drag on next year, as I have dragged on this year, and the year after that as before. How I have tried and tried to be a splendid woman, and how destiny has been against me!... I do not deserve my lot!" she cried in a frenzy of bitter revolt. "O, the cruelty of putting me into this ill-conceived world! I was capable of much; but I have been injured and blighted and crushed by things beyond

my control! O, how hard it is of Heaven to devise such tortures for me, who have done no harm to Heaven at all!" (Hardy, *TRN* 346).

The word "destiny" is here used explicitly, and the passive voice is again used to highlight the character's helplessness in the face of such a crushing and malevolent power. If Mrs Morel blames a very general concept, "life," for putting her in such a delicate situation, Eustacia blames an "ill-conceived world," and more precisely the microcosm she has always lived in, the heath. It seems that the very first thing that destiny decides for the characters is the place in which they were born, the environmental background that will nurture them. In that sense, Hardy's and Lawrence's characters are not only backgrounds to their own stories but suffer the effects of their backgrounds on their own stories.

2. Setting the Self: the Environmental Background

In *Studies in American Literature* (1923), Lawrence expresses his belief in the "spirit of place", most likely inspired by his encounters with aboriginal cultures and his interest in animism. Taking the American territory in which he now lives as a case in point, the author declares:

> Every continent has its own great spirit of place. Every people is polarized in some particular locality, which is home, the homeland. Different places on the face of the earth have different vital effluence, different vibration, different chemical exhalation, different polarity with different stars: call it what you like. But the spirit of place is a great reality. The Nile valley produced not only the corn, but the terrific religions of Egypt. China produces the Chinese, and will go on doing so. The Chinese in San Francisco will in time cease to be Chinese, for America is a great melting pot. (Lawrence, *Studies* 5-6)

Not only does Lawrence underline the close relationship that exists between human beings and the places they inhabit, but he stresses how uneven this relationship actually is, implying that the animated places will always have the upper hand, exerting their overwhelming influences on people's identities. Three years earlier, the concept of an ensouled place had already emerged in his mind as he was writing *Women in Love*, a novel in which the places the characters go to and evolve in seem to participate in the unfolding of theirs stories, that is, of the plot itself. The environmental background is suddenly pushed into the foreground of the plot and what should

only be regarded as a setting slowly becomes a set-up for the characters. The agency of their surroundings and the impact they may have on their fates is often commented upon by the characters themselves, who, like Birkin in the following quotation, may be overcome by a sublime sentiment as they stand amidst the snowy mountains: "I couldn't bear this cold, eternal place without you [Ursula],' he said. 'I couldn't bear it, it would kill the quick of my life" (Lawrence 2007, 408). In the same chapter, Ursula is described by the narrator as equally impressed by the white immensity surrounding her, to the point of feeling physically threatened by its power: "Ursula could not believe the air in her nostrils. It seemed conscious, malevolent, purposive in its intense, murderous coldness" (Lawrence*, WL* 407). Here, Lawrence's choice of words relating to evil and murder seem to foreshadow Gerald's later death in these very mountains, thus suggesting the very Hardyan possibility that external forces contained in the character's background might have had something to do with his own downfall. Such a hypothesis would make no doubt for Hardy's Eustacia who, as was touched upon earlier, can feel with intensity the evil powers of the spirit of the heath: "Egdon was her Hades, and since coming there she had imbibed much of what was dark in its tone, though inwardly and eternally unreconciled thereto" (Hardy, *TRN* 69). More than any other Hardyan character, Eustacia spends much energy to resist her connection with her environmental background, which seems to result in her unhappiness. The same thing could probably be said of Lawrence's Connie Chatterley who, in the first pages of the novel, is utterly estranged from the setting in which she is meant to grow. This setting, however, is again endowed with agency and rapidly becomes the obvious cause for Connie's failing health, as suggested by her first lover, Michaelis: "That place Wragby would kill anybody. Beastly place, foul place, kill anybody!" (Lawrence 2006, 79). The use of an epiphora here reinforces Michaelis' dread of Wragby but also betrays the subjectivity of his words, given his strong wish for Connie to go away with him. The perception of one's environment therefore depends on the affects one maintains with this environment, just as "human events and encounters simply cannot be isolated from the places that engender them" (Abram, "The spell of the sensuous" 161). "Topos is destiny" (de Villiers 71) in Hardy and Lawrence's novels as the characters find themselves relying on their surroundings to achieve their goals. Described by Alcorn as being "structured around an elaborate symbolism of location" (Alcorn 3), Hardy's last novel *Jude the Obscure* epitomises the relational dynamics that play out between self and setting by giving places the power to make dreams come true. "Let me only get there," says the hopeful Jude (Hardy, *JO* 94), referring to Christminster as the place in which all his goals will be magically achieved. The bitter irony hidden behind those

words illustrates Alcorn's argument according to which "Hardy's dominant use of 'spirit of place' in his last novels is closely connected with his increasingly bitter criticism of institutional morality" (Alcorn 20). Christminster, in Hardy's novel, becomes an allegorical beast both representing the faith of the likes of Jude in the educational system, and the failure of this very system to reward them for their hard work. From this results a very complex relationship between Jude and the setting in the hands of which he has put his fate:

> I love the place—although I know how it hates all men like me—the so-called self-taught—how it scorns our laboured acquisitions, when it should be the first to respect them; how it sneers at our false quantities and mispronunciations, when it should say, I see you want help, my poor friend! … Nevertheless, it is the centre of the universe to me, because of my early dream: and nothing can alter it. Perhaps it will soon wake up, and be generous. I pray so! … I should like to go back to live there—perhaps to die there! In two or three weeks I might, I think. It will then be June, and I should like to be there by a particular day." (Hardy *JO,* 252)

Jude's mixed feelings about Christminster are particularly salient here through the accumulation of antitheses, and his persisting faith only reinforces the idea of an active, rather than passive, setting in Hardy's fiction. Though less omnipresent in Lawrence's writing, the environment's ability to impact the characters' destinies can still be found in the description of the visible effects the setting may have on their movements or moods. In *Women in Love*, "the morning [is] full of a new creation," which leads the two sisters to walk "swiftly, gladly, because of the soft, subtle rush of morning that fill[s] the wet haze" (Lawrence, *WL* 46).

If setting and fate are interconnected in both Lawrence and Hardy's fiction, it is also relevant to point out that the dialectic between setting and soul constitutes yet another dimension of the two authors' relational ontology. Various passages in their works show how the development of the characters' psyches, the mood swings they may be subjected to, are direct consequences of phenomena happening in their surroundings. The eco-psychologist Craig Chalquist, quoted in Vakoch and Castrillon's *Ecopsychology, Phenomenology, and the Environment*, theorises this interrelationship between psyche and place, arguing that "when people inhabit a particular place, its features inhabit their psychological field, in effect becoming extended facets of their selfhood" (Cochran 187). In such a light, the choice of environmental backgrounds for their characters becomes, for Hardy and Lawrence, a key step towards creating alternatives to self-made heroes and introducing protagonists who are literally

nurtured by the place in which they find themselves. Indeed, the snowy landscape in *Women in Love*, mentioned earlier for its evil powers over the characters' destinies, can also get into the characters' minds and define their emotional states. Ursula's soul seems particularly upset by the spirit of the place, which leads her to suggest to Birkin that they should leave the place altogether: "I hate it, (…). I hate this snow, and the unnaturalness of it, the unnatural light it throws on everybody, the ghastly glamour, the unnatural feelings it makes everybody have" (Lawrence, *WL* 434-435). The repetition of the word "unnatural" in relation with a very natural element – the snow – sounds quite antithetic and emphasises the intensity with which the spirit of the snowy mountains can alter the characters' natures, to the point of making them feel "estranged" by it (Lawrence, *WL* 460). Again, a parallel can be drawn between Ursula's disturbed emotional state in the snow and that of Hardy's Eustacia in the heath, whose anxiety is only reinforced by the howling wind: "In it lay what may be called the linguistic peculiarity of the heath; and being audible nowhere on earth off the heath, it afforded a shadow of a reason for the woman's tenseness which continued as unbroken as ever" (Hardy, *TRN* 56). Through the sound of the wind, the spirit of the heath is here given a voice which has the power to impact the characters listening to it and which constitutes a key explanation for their states of mind. While Plotz contends that "environment is complementary to (rather than determinative of) character in Hardy" (Plotz 123), I would argue that the choice of an environmental background for the protagonists plays a decisive role in the author's characterisation strategy. Still in *The Return of the Native*, the narrator introduces the heath as an "environment which would have made a contended woman a poet, a suffering woman a devotee, a pious woman a psalmist, even a giddy woman thoughtful" but which, in Eustacia's case, "made a rebellious woman saturnine" (Hardy *TRN* 73). The parallel structure of this passage highlights the transcending powers of the heath which is deemed capable of drawing the best out of its inhabitants, or more precisely of the inhabitants whose psychical states are open to alterations for the better. In the opposite case, if a character, like Eustacia, resists such changes, then the effect on her psyche will still happen and will necessarily be negative. Either way, this passage suggests that the heath has in its power to precisely determine whether a character will be able to thrive or, on the contrary, to rot on its grounds. On the other hand, Plotz's previously-quoted argument lays on relevant grounds insofar as it "underlies Hardy's abiding interest in how differently individuals make sense of the world they share" (Plotz 123). If the different ways the characters react to their environmental background do not save them from being affected by it, the variety of their reactions helps reveal facets of their personalities, thus adding depth to the characterisation

process and more layers to the characters' ontological journeys. To some extent, then, environment in Hardy is complementary to characters who are willing to consider the heath as an ally, and determinative to characters who have insisted on making their own decisions and going against the current.[2] As opposed to Eustacia, Thomasin has always felt at home in the heath, for which she feels a strong "endemophilia" – a term used by Albrecht to refer to "the particular love of the locally and regionally distinctive, manifest in the people of that place, (…) what gives a particular sense of belonging, and endemic sense of place" (Albrecht 126). As a consequence of this intense connection, she is dependent on her natural environment to heal from the loss of her husband: "The spring came and calmed her; the summer came and soothed her; the autumn arrived, and she began to be comforted" (Hardy, *TRN* 372). Through the tertiary rhythm and the gradation, Hardy manages to convey how the changes in weather, reflected in the heath, are decisive elements in Thomasin's grieving process, helping her to take back the control of her life. Indeed, in the third part of the quote, Thomasin becomes the subject of the sentence, implying that she can finally be the master of her own story. A particular echo of this passage may be found in Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover,* as Connie is trying to find the strength to fight the depressive state she has been in. As she is wandering about Wragby Wood, she seems, like Thomasin, both appeased and empowered by her environment:

> Connie walked dimly on. From the old wood came an ancient melancholy, somehow soothing to her, better than the harsh insentience of the outer world. She liked the *inwardness* of the remnant of forest, the unspeaking reticence of the old trees. They seemed a very power of silence, and yet a vital presence. (Lawrence, *LCL* 65, italics in the original)

Both the "soothing" effect of the environmental background and its "vital" influence on the characters are common to Hardy's and Lawrence's novels. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the protagonists, like Hardy's narrator in *The Return of the Native*, comment upon the weather's ability to affect people's moods and therefore reinforce the link between self and setting:

> In the spell of fine weather Clifford, too, decided to go to the wood. The wind was cold, but not so tiresome, and the sunshine was like life itself, warm and full.

[2] The death of Eustacia and Wildeve by drowning at the end of the novel seems to be yet another argument in favour of this hypothesis.

> "It's amazing,' said Connie, 'how different one feels when there's a really fresh fine day. Usually one feels the very air is half dead. People are killing the very air." (Lawrence , *LCL* 92)

In this passage, another layer is added to the self/setting relationship as Connie implies that humans themselves may have an impact on their surroundings and alter it, for better or worse. The relationship becomes reciprocal and the environment can no longer be understood as a backdrop to the characters' stories but rather as a mirror reflecting their moods and desires, as much as interacting with them.

In his book entitled "Getting Back into Place: Toward a renewed Understanding of the Place-world", Edward S. Casey declares that "people who live in places – who inhabit or re-inhabit them – come to share features with the local landscape" (Casey 305). This argument is extensively illustrated in the corpus under study which presents characters who may share both physical and psychological features with their surroundings. In Hardy, the psyches of the protagonists are often reflected in their environments, through the recurrent use of pathetic fallacy[3] or through explicit parallels drawn between the feelings of the characters and the appearance of their milieu. In *The Return of the Native*, Hardy chooses to set Eustacia's life crisis in a very gloomy and "funereal" setting conveyed, once again, by the weather on the heath. As she is pondering over the possibility of leaving her husband and Egdon, a heavy rain starts to fall, prompting the narrator to declare that "never was harmony more perfect than that between the chaos of her mind and the chaos of the world without" (Hardy, *TRN* 345). The repetition of the word "chaos," along with the use of a structural parallelism here makes very clear Hardy's intention to bring self and setting closer together. Such a structure does not, however, allow the reader to determine whether the character's psyche is reflected in her environment or whether it is the other way around, the state of the environment itself being reflected in the character's psyche and implying that the rain might have triggered such a mood in Eustacia. Other occurrences in the same novel seem to be intended for the purpose of highlighting the reciprocal dynamics that exist between psyche and place, most of them, quite interestingly, focusing on the one character who feels estranged from her environment. Indeed, as Eustacia is taking one of her numerous walks in the dreaded heath, her wandering thoughts seem to arise in her mind simultaneously with the rising of a high wind: "The wind, indeed,

[3] I will not discuss in this chapter the ethical questions raised by the use of pathetic fallacy and by a tendency to anthropomorphise the non-human environment, mainly because the environmental background I am exploring here is not necessarily a natural environment. These questions will be extensively treated in Part III, chapter 6.

seemed made for the scene, as the scene seemed made for the hour" (Hardy, *TRN* 56). A chiasmic structure, this time, serves to create the mirroring effect between character and environment, suggesting that neither places nor people are self-made in Hardy's world. As a matter of fact, the author did entitle his Wessex edition of 1912 "Novels of Character and Environment" (Plotz 123), a label that suggests the co-dependency, or more precisely the co-arising, of self and setting in the plots. As the characters' thoughts and moods evolve, the appearances of their surroundings change too, so as to remain in keeping with the characters' growths. In Hardy's last novel, once the excitement of reaching the "venerable city" of Christminster dies down (Hardy, *JO* 64) and Jude faces his first setbacks, the narrator describes a metamorphosed setting, reflecting the protagonist's own disillusionment:

> Passing out into the streets on this errand he found that the colleges had treacherously changed their sympathetic countenances: some were pompous; some had put on the look of family vaults above ground; something barbaric loomed in the masonries of all. The spirits of the great men had disappeared. (Hardy, *JO* 68)

Here, the reader is led to wonder whether the evil features of the setting are meant to foreshadow Jude's failure and downfall, or whether the appearance of the environment is only a symptom of Jude's disenchantment and a consequence of his altered perception. Either way, the spirit of the protagonist and the spirit of the place are deeply connected through the use of pathetic fallacy which also helps illustrate how Jude's discriminating intelligence is impacted by the new environmental background he has chosen for himself and worked so hard to reach. In Hardy's fiction and in *Jude the Obscure* in particular, places represent stages in a character's life and any effort from a character to change sceneries may often be interpreted as an effort to achieve the fullest version of herself or himself. From the beginning of the novel, Jude strongly believes that the success of his enterprise depends entirely on his leaving the circumstances in which he was born. Early on in the novel, the narrator remarks how "his dreams were as gigantic as his surroundings were small" (Hardy, *JO* 20). Here, Hardy resorts again to a parallelism, but this time, the parallel between Jude's hopes and his milieu is immediately cancelled by the antithesis between "gigantic" and "small". Such a device not only highlights the crucial role of the setting in the characterisation process but also unveils the initial anomaly at the root of Jude's tragic story – the belief of being born in the wrong place at the wrong time. Relying on one's surroundings to become a better version of oneself or simply to get better is not a feature that may exclusively be found in Hardy's fiction. Lawrence, most likely drawing inspiration

from his senior, attaches a similar importance to the way human beings are nurtured by their environments and to the way humans' emotional stability may very well depend on the stability of their surroundings. Research has indeed allowed environmental philosopher Glenn Albrecht to declare that "the negative transformation of a loved place triggers a negative emotion in the whole person who is still emplaced" (Albrecht 32). This assertion allows Lawrence's readers to better understand the character of Clifford Chatterley who seems to be more pained by his observation of a thinning wood in Wragby than by actual injuries, physical and psychological, caused by the war:

> Clifford loved the wood; he loved the old oak-trees. He felt they were his own through generations. He wanted to protect them. He wanted this place inviolate, shut off from the world.
>
> The chair chuffed slowly up the incline, rocking and jolting on the frozen clods. And suddenly, on the left, came a clearing where there was nothing but a ravel of dead bracken, a thin and spindly sapling leaning here and there, big sawn stumps, showing their tops and their grasping roots, lifeless. And patches of blackness where the woodmen had burned the brushwood and rubbish.
>
> This was one of the places that Sir Geoffrey had cut during the war for trench timber. The whole knoll, which rose softly on the right of the riding, was denuded and strangely forlorn. (…)
>
> This denuded place always made Clifford curiously angry. He had been through the war, had seen what it meant. But he didn't get really angry till he saw this bare hill. He was having it replanted. But it made him hate Sir Geoffrey. (Lawrence 2006, 42)

Just as Clifford was fighting on the battle field and being injured in the process, the Wood he had known all his life was simultaneously being injured, suffering the collateral damages of the conflict. Restoring the wood therefore becomes the first logical step for him to take in his healing journey. To better translate that idea in his writing, Lawrence chooses to further assimilate the protagonist's damaged psyche and the atmosphere of his homeland. In the following passage, a focalisation on Connie allows the narrator to describe Clifford's PTSD from an external point of view, using metaphorical terms without ever assuming that the narrator, Connie, or even the reader, might actually know or understand what such a traumatic experience feels like. Only through an indirect description of Clifford's beloved birthplace can

the reader be allowed into the protagonist's mind, the setting thus becoming an integral tool to reveal the complexity of a character:

> Clifford looked at Connie, with his pale, slightly prominent blue eyes, in which a certain vagueness was coming. He seemed alert in the foreground, but the background was like the Midlands atmosphere, haze, smoky mist. And the haze seemed to be creeping forward. So when he stared at Connie in his peculiar way, giving her his peculiar, precise information, she felt all the background of his mind filling up with mist, with nothingness. And it frightened her. It made him seem impersonal, almost to idiocy. (Lawrence, *LCL* 49)

The use of the term "background" is here worth commenting upon, insofar as it is used as a metaphor for Clifford's unconscious – the deepest, misty part of his psyche that PTSD has made inaccessible to him, let alone to Connie. Environment, in Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, appears to be determinative of character (as opposed to what Plotz argued about Hardy), in the sense that Clifford's strong endemophilia is rendered crucial to his healing process and therefore to his construction as a character. If places have the power to affect psyches in both Lawrence and Hardy, Lawrence's last novel displays a particular feature of the relationship between self and setting in focusing not only on the effects a background may have on the characters' minds, but also on the way it may determine their physical appearances. As much repelled as she is fascinated by the inhabitants of the Midlands, Connie often reflects on what makes them who they are, and what makes them look the way they look. She remarks: "The people were as shapeless, haggard, and dreary as the countryside, and as unfriendly" (Lawrence, *LCL* 14). Putting aside Connie's blatant depreciation of an environment she has not yet managed to connect to, this quotation is another example of the mirror effect Lawrence chooses to create between his characters and the settings in which their stories unfold. Both the physical and the psychological layers of Lawrence's characters are defined in relation to their surroundings, evolving with the flow of seasons and the weather changes they bring. In yet another passage, the logic of the intricate relation between self and setting is further strengthened through free indirect speech and an internal focalisation on Connie: "In spite of May and a new greenness, the country was dismal. It was rather chilly, and there was smoke on the rain, and a certain sense of exhaust vapour in the air. One just had to live from one's resistance. No wonder these people were ugly and tough" (Lawrence , *LCL* 152). Just as heavy rain on the heath mirrors Eustacia's heavy heart in *The Return of the Native*, the Midlands' cold

and grey weather in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is reflected in the appearances and the behaviours of its dwellers. It is quite clear that Hardy and Lawrence believed in the spirit of the place and in the decisive role of that spirit in the development of human character. Locale and logos coexist in Hardy and Lawrence's writings, so as to further nourish their relational ontology based on a belief in co-dependency. More than simply providing the reader with a localisation for the characters in the story, the choice of a particular setting emplaces them in a context, both material and social.

3. True Self and Social Self: the Social Background

Intrinsically linked to the environmental background, the choice of a protagonist's social background and its primary or secondary role in the unfolding of the plot says a lot about Hardy and Lawrence's centrifugal view of characterisation. Interestingly enough, French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre who originated the concept of a centrifugal movement of consciousness was also the pioneer of existentialist philosophy which rejected determinism and argued that humans were made out of the choices they made rather than out of a predetermined essence (Leroy , *La Phénoménologie* 141). To Sartre, then, despite our consciousness being in no way limited to the boundaries of the mind and being in direct contact with the world, humans are not to be determined by that said-world but can only define themselves through an active interaction with it. A further background check on Hardy and Lawrence's characters and a particular focus on their social circumstances should allow us to determine whether the two authors might have foreshadowed, in their fiction, a philosophical movement which was only recognised as such in the 1940s. At first sight, most readers of Hardy are likely to argue against any sense of existentialism in his novels, insofar as his characters' endeavours appear to be constantly hindered by a sort of predestined essence, as explored in the first part of this chapter. Indeed, given Jude's endless efforts and numerous attempts at getting a higher education, it seems hardly fair to conclude that his social circumstances had nothing to do with his ultimate failure. Jude's own conclusion that "there is something wrong somewhere in our social formulas" (Hardy, *JO* 256) takes the responsibility of his defeat off his shoulders and transfers it to the social system as a whole, making Hardy's novel a work explicitly committed against social injustices in Britain. Numerous passages in the novel contribute to pushing the hero's social background at the foreground of his story without, however, implying that his social

circumstances determine who he is, but rather implying that they determine who he *cannot* be: "Only a wall divided him from those happy young contemporaries of his with whom he shared a common mental life; men who had nothing to do from morning till night but read, mark, learn and inwardly digest. Only a wall – but what a wall!" (Hardy, *JO* 70). In this extract, the symbolism of the social wall is conveyed through a two-fold sentence, separated by a semi-colon, with a first part focusing on the fundamental similarities between Jude and pupils at Christminster, and another part stressing the dissimilarities in their routines. The obvious suggestion made by the author here is that this social wall is irrelevant and therefore needs to be broken down for Jude and the likes of him to achieve their true selves. If the reader needed further convincing, Hardy dedicates several passages in his novel to the depiction of Jude's particularly tough and underprivileged living conditions, so as to call for the reader's empathy and emphasise a sense of injustice. Verging on pathos, the following passage epitomises Hardy's apparent strategy:

> Having been deeply encumbered by marrying, getting a cottage, and buying the furniture which had disappeared in the wake of his wife, he had never been able to save any money since the time of those disastrous ventures, and till his wages began to come in he was obliged to live in the narrowest way. After buying a book or two he could not even afford himself a fire; and when the nights reeked with the raw and cold air from the Meadows he sat over his lamp in a great-coat, hat, and woollen gloves. (Hardy, *JO* 71)

Despite the trials he has to face, Jude's resilience is constantly put forward by the narrator and has the paradoxical effect of making his social background less determinative of his destiny. In fact, this extract has an existentialist undertone insofar as his financial situation makes his studying difficult but does not make it impossible, and is mainly the result of his personal choice, that of marrying and putting an end to that marriage. Jude's then low social standing seems to go back to that moment when he decided – or did destiny decide for him? – to go and see Arabella instead of staying in, in company of his books. A closer look back at this particular extract unveils much of the existing tension between determinism and existentialism in Hardy:

> In short, as if materially, a compelling arm of extraordinary muscular power seized hold of him—something which had nothing in common with the spirits and influences that had moved him hitherto. This seemed to care little for his reason and his will, nothing for his so-called elevated intentions, and moved him along, as a violent

schoolmaster a schoolboy he has seized by the collar, in a direction which tended towards the embrace of a woman for whom he had no respect, and whose life had nothing in common with his own except locality.

Η ΚΑΙΝΗ ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ was no more heeded, and the predestinate Jude sprang up and across the room. *Foreseeing such an event he had already arrayed himself in his best clothes*. In three minutes he was out of the house and descending by the path across the wide vacant hollow of corn-ground which lay between the village and the isolated house of Arabella in the dip beyond the upland. (Hardy, *JO* 37, emphasis added)

If most of the passage seems to be built around the idea of a hero helplessly facing his destiny ("extraordinary muscular power; care little for his (…) will; moved him along; predestinate, etc."), one sentence, highlighted above in italics, manages to surreptitiously and ironically debunk the logic of the whole paragraph by suggesting that the only thing that was pre-made in this scene was Jude's own decision of going to see Arabella – a decision he had consciously made earlier in the morning as he was getting dressed. Such subtleties reveal Hardy's complex exploration of the impact of social class on the construction of the self, as the reader is led to wonder if Jude would have succeeded in his endeavours, despite the burden of his social background, should he have decided to stay in. Through an apparent, and somewhat classic, condemnation of social inequalities, Hardy opens up a wider ontological discussion on the social determination of the self, which was to be taken up later by Lawrence in his own fiction. If issues of class and the possibility of transferring from one social class to another are quite central to some of Lawrence's novels like *Sons and Lovers* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the point of this work is not to prove whether or not Lawrence was a socialist or a social reformist. In an attempt to approach the social, in Lawrence's writing, as a background to the development of his characters, I argue that some reflections inserted in *Women in Love* (rather than actual scenes from the two novels previously mentioned) serve best to reveal whether or not the social is bound to the ontological in the author's fiction. One of the heated debates between Hermione and Birkin becomes, in the "Breadalby" chapter, an opportunity for Lawrence to expose his views on the notion of equality, using Birkin as a spokesperson:

"If," said Hermione at last, "we could only realise, that in the spirit we are all one, all equal in the spirit, all brothers there—the rest wouldn't matter, there would be no more of this carping and envy and this struggle for power, which destroys, only destroys." (…)

> "It is just the opposite, just the contrary, Hermione. We are all different and unequal in spirit—it is only the *social* differences that are based on accidental material conditions. We are all abstractly or mathematically equal, if you like. Every man has hunger and thirst, two eyes, one nose and two legs. We're all the same in point of number. But spiritually, there is pure difference and neither equality nor inequality counts. It is upon these two bits of knowledge that you must found a state. Your democracy is an absolute lie—your brotherhood of man is a pure falsity, if you apply it further than the mathematical abstraction. We all drank milk first, we all eat bread and meat, we all want to ride in motor-cars—therein lies the beginning and the end of the brotherhood of man. But no equality.
>
> "But I, myself, who am myself, what have I to do with equality with any other man or woman? In the spirit, I am as separate as one star is from another, as different in quality and quantity. Establish a state on that. One man isn't any better than another, not because they are equal, but because they are intrinsically other, that there is no term of comparison. The minute you begin to compare, one man is seen to be far better than another, all the inequality you can imagine is there by nature. I want every man to have his share in the world's goods, so that I am rid of his importunity, so that I can tell him: 'Now you've got what you want—you've got your fair share of the world's gear. Now, you one-mouthed fool, mind yourself and don't obstruct me.'" (Lawrence, *WL* 102-103, italics in the original)

This passage, for its convoluted dimension and its philosophical content, might very well have been found in one of Lawrence's non-fictional writings and is therefore key to understanding the author's metaphysical thinking. If social inequality is unequivocally to be condemned and fought against in Hardy's fiction, "social differences" in Lawrence appear, in my reading, to be only side issues casting a shadow over what truly matters, the ontological differences at the root of every human being and making him or her unique. To Lawrence, it seems that the "accidental material conditions" one chances to be born into are not what defines oneself and are to remain in the background of one's story. What makes it unique and worth telling, however, is the specificity of one's spirit or character and the way it develops in a singular way throughout one's life. Spiritual inequality is, to Lawrence, to be nourished and encouraged, without ever being hindered by social inequalities. As mere obstacles in the way of achieving one's truest self, one's social conditions appear to be, both in Hardy and Lawrence, a background characters are inevitably related to but are encouraged to dismiss. The importance given to environmental

backgrounds in the characterisation process is not, I argue, applied to social backgrounds in the two authors' fiction, thus suggesting that the existence of their protagonists does precede their social essence.

If social status undoubtedly plays a greater role in defining character in Hardy than in Lawrence, I have demonstrated that heroes like Jude, one of the most famous social martyrs of Victorian literature, are yet to be entirely defined by the social circumstances in which they were born. As a matter of fact, for some of Hardy's characters, social considerations do not even seem to be involved in the characterisation process. For instance, in *The Return of the Native*, Clym Yeobright's life journey is in no way built around his original social status or around any social ambition. When a punctual blindness compels him to give up his schoolmaster studies for an indefinite period, far from falling into a state of despair, he "sings a song", as announced in the title of the chapter, and turns to furze-cutting, a task objectively below his social status. "This man from Paris was now (…) disguised by his leather accoutrements, and by the goggles he was obliged to wear over his eyes" (Hardy, *TRN* 247), and yet Clym remained "an absolute stoic in the face of mishaps which only affected his social standing" (Hardy, *TRN* 245). As opposed to his wife, Eustacia, who wrongly believes that only by climbing the social ladder will she be allowed to achieve her true self, Clym's development as a character, and in particular his return to Egdon Heath, has nothing to do with social ascension, but everything to do with the unique journey of his spirit, as touched upon by Birkin in *Women in Love*. As they emplace their protagonists in particular social backgrounds, Hardy and Lawrence can further delineate the particularities of their characters, in allowing an exploration of the way they interact with their social environments, the way they rebel against it or make do with what they have. Depending on the characters involved, the social backgrounds in their stories are therefore given more or less importance, sometimes to the point of becoming an abstraction, a concept invented by humans, without any actual grounding in reality. In Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, a novel in which the heroine's poor social background seems to be the root of every plot turn, the relevance of social conventions is more often than not discussed and questioned. Instead of highlighting the precarious living conditions of dairymaids and dairymen at Tabolthay's, the narrator stresses how happy their humble position makes them:

> Dairyman Crick's household of maids and men lived on comfortably, placidly, even merrily. Their position was perhaps the happiest of all positions in the social scale, being above the line at which neediness ends, and below the line at which the

> *convenances* begin to cramp natural feelings, and the stress of threadbare modishness makes too little of enough. (Hardy, *Tess*, 128, emphasis in the original)

Here, the social ladder is turned into a very subjective imagery, in which the best position does not necessarily mean the highest. The ternary rhythm, supported by a gradation on the adverbs "comfortably," "placidly" and "merrily," only emphasises further the idea that one may stand high in the happiness scale while being relatively low in the social scale. Rather than representing an immovable backdrop to the characters' stories, Hardy, through such comments from his narrator, suggests to the reader that a social background might very well be a fluid concept characters might choose to float along or to swim against. This idea is very much present in several novels by Lawrence, for instance in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, in which Clifford is perceived by his nurse, Mrs Bolton, as being "just part of a phenomenon, the phenomenon of the high-class folks" (Lawrence, *LCL* 82). As "a thing which is perceived or observed" (*OED*), a phenomenon is, by definition, subjective, its nature entirely depending on the outlook of the observer.[4] As a result, Mrs Bolton's own nature, as a phenomenon of the working-class folks, is moulded by the ones observing her and getting in touch with her. As she becomes Clifford's nurse, her observers and her sense of self simultaneously and accordingly change: "They [the colliers] had always made her feel so grand and almost superhuman in her administrations. Now Clifford made her feel small and like a servant, and she accepted it without a word, adjusting herself to the upper classes" (Lawrence, *LCL* 82). The antithesis between "grand/superhuman" and "small/servant" here serves to stress the strong impact a change of social sphere may have on a character's self-esteem, while the end of the passage, focusing on Mrs Bolton's indifferent compliance, suggests that this change does not actually affect her true self but is only part of a game she has to play. This social game is also played by characters in *Women in Love*, and in particular by Gudrun who is keenly aware of the artificiality of social conventions and is therefore uninterested in making any change in her person to fit any social norm:

> Young as she was, Gudrun had touched the whole pulse of social England. She had no ideas of rising in the world. She knew, with the perfect cynicism of cruel youth, that to rise in the world meant to have one outside show instead of another, the advance was like having a spurious half-crown instead of a spurious penny. The whole coinage

[4] This take on the word "phenomenon" will be extensively supported by references to phenomenology in the third part of this work.

> of valuation was spurious. Yet of course, her cynicism knew well enough that, in a world where spurious coin was current, a bad sovereign was better than a bad farthing. But rich and poor, she despised both alike. (Lawrence, *WL* 418)

Through a focalisation on Gudrun, the narrator uses the metaphor of coins representing different social spheres so as to debunk the whole idea of social classes and make it irrational. As a character who has evolved in different social environments, from houses of artists in London to her home in the Midlands, Gudrun serves as a particular apt example of the irrelevancy of social classes and of their inability to shape the identity of a person. Indeed, why would Gudrun in the Midlands be a different person from "the social success" she was in London, having dinner with "friends among the slack aristocracy that ke[pt] touch with the arts" (Lawrence, *WL* 16)? Ontological issues are once again discussed along the lines of social issues and the various close readings introduced seem to suggest that Hardy and Lawrence, while recognising one's social background as a heavy burden to be carried along, do not believe that one's social class determines who one really is. As such, both authors go against the views of psychologist William MacDougall who "pioneered the study of the social environment's impact of the self" in his *Introduction of Social Psychology* in 1908 (Johnson 39). Indeed, to MacDougall, one's social class does define who one truly is precisely because it dictates the way one perceives oneself, "through interplay with the social environment" (Johnson 40). Since "the self-regarding sentiment forms the basis of the self" (Johnson 40), then the understanding of the social class as a phenomenon does nothing, according to the psychologist, but reinforce the impact it has on the development of one's identity. To Hardy and Lawrence, however, this "interplay with the social environment," rather than having the power to shape the self, seems to result in fragmenting it.

In the previously cited *Dynamic Psychology and Modernist British Fiction*, Johnson explores the different conceptions of the self in early-twentieth century psychology and points out that William James "replac[ed] the traditional notion that there [was] a single, unified self with the idea that there [were] several selves – material, social, spiritual, and the Ego (…)" (Johnson 24). Leaving aside the specifics of James's psychology and the delineations of each of the selves that he put forward, this quotation serves to demonstrate that the idea of a social self, as opposed to a complete self, was very much present in the minds of psychologists and thinkers at the turn of the century, and therefore might very well have inspired novelists too. As James's contemporary, Hardy seems to have been in agreement with the psychologist insofar as the dichotomy between social self and spiritual, or intellectual self, is often crucial to the

characterisation process. Some of Hardy's protagonists such as Jude and Clym Yeobright have in common this discrepancy between their living conditions and their "thinking conditions", that is to say, the activities of their intellect. The narrator of *TRN* makes this discrepancy a recognisable feature of the character, declaring that "Yeobright's local peculiarity was that in striving at high thinking he still cleaved to plain living" (Hardy, *TRN* 172). If the parallelism coupled with the antithesis between "high" and "plain" are enough to stress the gap which Clym intentionally maintains between his way of living and his intellectual ambitions, a closer look at onomastics will determine how such a contradiction is an integral part of his identity. Indeed, Clym's surname Yeobright is composed of the suffix "yeo" which is to be found in the word "yeoman," referring to "a man holding and cultivating a small landed estate", and of the adjective "bright", meaning, among other things, "smart" (*OED*). As he was delineating the features of his protagonist, Hardy clearly had in mind the idea of an inner fragmentation of the self, between the social and the intellectual, and this very tension becomes, in Clym's case, the key to his true self. A very similar dialectic is developed through the character of Paul, in Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, as the hero discusses with his mother the possibility of his transferring to a higher social class. The exchange reads as follows:

> "You know," he said to his mother, "I don't want to belong to the well-to-do middle class. I like my common people best. I belong to the common people."
>
> "But if anyone else said so, my son, wouldn't you be in a tear. You know you consider yourself equal to any gentleman."
>
> "In myself," he answered, "not in my class or my education or my manners. But in myself I am."
>
> "Very well, then. Then why talk about the common people?"
>
> "Because—the difference between people isn't in their class, but in themselves. Only from the middle classes one gets ideas, and from the common people—life itself, warmth. You feel their hates and loves." (Lawrence, *SL* 298)

The most striking and crucial sentence in this passage is probably Paul's affirmation that "the difference between people isn't in their class, but in themselves", for it constitutes yet another proof of Lawrence's refusal to consider the power of one's social background to determine one's singular identity. On the other hand, this dialogue serves to reveal the complexity of Lawrence's thinking, voiced through his semi-autobiographical character who suggests that his sense of self lies somewhere in-between two social classes. In the extract, "the middle classes"

are related to the intellect ("ideas"), while "the common people" are related to emotions ("warmth"), thus implying that the social self James was writing about needs, in Lawrence's opinion, to be understood as a composite self. Here, Paul does not demonstrate how one's social background contributes to shaping one's personality but rather shows how one's identity needs to be developed through direct contact with different social spheres, drawing from each what accords best with one's soul, or with one's intellectual ambitions. The overall suggestion of this passage seems to be that in the absence of social classes, one should not have to fragment one's identity and compartmentalise one's being into different selves. In fact, outside of this social system, women in particular should not have to reconcile "the two halves" of their beings (Lawrence, *WL* 103), as is suggested by Gerald in *WL*, or should not have to struggle to keep their social mask on, during a dinner. In the "Shortlands" chapter, in *WL*, Birkin gets to witness this very struggle as displayed on the face of the hostess, Mrs. Crich, after they had a brief conversation about an unknown guest:

> Her eyes closed wearily, a peace came over her face, she looked like a queen in repose. Then she started, a little social smile came on her face, for a moment she looked the pleasant hostess. For a moment she bent graciously, as if everyone were welcome and delightful. And then immediately the shadow came back, a sullen, eagle look was on her face, she glanced from under her brows like a sinister creature at bay, hating them all. (Lawrence, *WL* 27)

Within a few lines, Mrs Crich goes from a "pleasant hostess" to a "sinister creature" as the whole description of the female character is fragmented into two parts, one positive and the other pejorative. Such a dichotomous description does not allow the reader to get to Mrs Crich's true self which therefore seems to be threatened, rather than nourished, by her social self. Women, in Lawrence as in Hardy, are shown to be first-hand victims of a social system that makes the fragmentation of the self inevitable in order to survive. In Hardy's *TRN*, Eustacia illustrates the destiny that awaits women who try to resist social conventions and yet fail to avoid having their inner selves divided into two halves: "As far as social ethics were concerned Eustacia approached the savage state, though in emotion she was all the while an epicure. She had advanced to the secret recesses of sensuousness, yet had hardly crossed the threshold of conventionality" (Hardy, *TRN* 96). Again, a two-fold description is used to introduce Eustacia to the reader, so as to underline the discrepancy between what she truly is and what society makes her out to be. In an indirect way, Hardy and Lawrence use such descriptions in an attempt

to lead the reader away from the characters' social circumstances and to suggest to her or him that the key to their characters' true natures is to be found elsewhere. If the choice of social backgrounds for their protagonists is undeniably an integral part of the characterisation process for the two authors, they remain mere backgrounds and act as inverted mirrors to reveal, in a roundabout way, the peculiar features of their characters' personalities. Without ever being introduced as self-made heroes, with no attachment whatsoever to any social class, Hardy and Lawrence's protagonists are well aware of their social situations and are made up against their social backgrounds, rather than out of them. As such, they are still constructed in a centrifugal fashion, as their makers direct them away from their social centres to try and unveil what they truly intend them to be. At every step of the characterisation process, the protagonists are designed to be selves-in-relation, in direct contact with the places they inhabit, the social spheres they belong to, and, from the very start, with the people who have conceived them or who share their blood, aptly called relatives.

4. Breaking the Genes: the Genetic Background

The ultimate key for Hardy and Lawrence to offer alternatives to self-made heroes in their novels is, according to me, to make sure that their characters' lives are understood in relation to the lives of the ones who begot them. The protagonists of the six novels under study are all introduced to the readers as members of a bloodline – as daughters, sons, brothers or sisters – and their genetic backgrounds invariably become integral parts of the settings in which the characters are emplaced. This particular stress laid on genetics may not come as a surprise to readers familiar with Hardy, since the author's fascination with theories of descent is well known and has been attributed to his careful readings of Charles Darwin and later, August Weisman (Beer 240). Lawrence, on the other hand, is probably less known for his interest in evolution science, though Jeff Wallace recently made the issue centre stage in *D. H. Lawrence, Science, and the Posthuman*. By pointing out Lawrence's subscription to "the weekly paper *The New Age* for a period between 1908 and 1909" (Wallace quoted in Cotton 11), Wallace explains how Lawrence was introduced to "evolutionary theory and the pseudo-science of eugenics" (Cotton 12). First attributed to Herbert Spencer in 1863, the use of the term "heredity" and the exploration of this new field were therefore not limited to the Victorian era and remained

prominent in social and scientific debates up until the first part of the twentieth century with the rediscovery of "the labors of the Moravian monk Gregor Mendel" and "the foundation of an adequate science, what we today know as genetics" (Ruse 41). No wonder, then, that the question of heredity was central to both Hardy and Lawrence's works and that the exploration of the workings of genetics in their fiction became, I argue, an important layer in the development of their relational ontology. Given Hardy's previously-mentioned tendency to create pre-determined characters who are tragically led to their fates by external forces, one would expect this "melancholy student of late-Victorian biological determinism" (Lyons 331) to display in his novels an understanding of genetics in keeping with Weisman's concept of hard heredity. Defined by Peter J. Bowler as "the modern view that characters are transmitted unchanged from one generation to the next and cannot be influenced by changes in the parent's body" (Bowler 3), hard heredity makes one's genetic background the key agent in one's life and, as such, serves as a strong argument in favour of a vision of human life as predetermined. Opening one of Hardy's most tragic novels, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, the reader would therefore expect to be offered a proper genealogy of the heroine which would explain it all and which would introduce Tess as a mere victim of her bloodline. The reader's expectation appears to be met since the book opens with a conversation between Jack Durbeyfield (Tess's father) and a parson, the former informing the latter of his knightly lineage with the family of the D'Urbervilles, and instantly transforming Jack into Sir John:

> "Well it's true. Throw up your chin a moment, so that I may catch the profile of your face better. Yes, that's the d'Urberville nose and chin—a little debased. Your ancestor was one of the twelve knights who assisted the Lord of Estremavilla in Normandy in his conquest of Glamorganshire. Branches of your family held manors over all this part of England; their names appear in the Pipe Rolls in the time of King Stephen. In the reign of King John one of them was rich enough to give a manor to the Knights Hospitallers; and in Edward the Second's time your forefather Brian was summoned to Westminster to attend the great Council there. You declined a little in Oliver Cromwell's time, but to no serious extent, and in Charles the Second's reign you were made Knights of the Royal Oak for your loyalty. Aye, there have been generations of Sir Johns among you, and if knighthood were hereditary, like a baronetcy, as it practically was in old times, when men were knighted from father to son, you would be Sir John now." (Hardy, *Tess* 8)

In this passage, a hyperbolic tone is used by the parson to enumerate all the wonderful things that his ancestors did before him, and a gradation can be observed, from "your ancestors/they" to "you", which has the effect of involving Jack Durbeyfield entirely in this tale and of erasing the difference between his ancestors and himself. Jack linguistically becomes his ancestors and simultaneously inherits their genetic background and qualities, in accordance with the laws of hard heredity. The end of the passage, however, locates Jack's glorious destiny in a hypothetical reality and debunks, in a way, the grandeur of the tale that has just been told, knighthood failing to be inherited as baronetcy is. Moreover, a note in the Penguin edition I am quoting from points out that "the rank of baronet is the lowest hereditary rank in Britain" (Hardy, *Tess* 402), making clear that Jack's ancestors (who were not even Baronets themselves) were not so glorious as the parson would like to make it sound, and in the meantime, revealing the mock-heroic tone that pervades the passage. Indeed, the whole scene is built on a discrepancy between the tale of the heroic deeds of Jack's ancestors and Jack's own reactions and interjections in the vernacular that punctuate the parson's narrative. For instance, to the parson's revelation that "there is hardly such another family in England," Jack replies: "Daze my eyes, and isn't there?" (Hardy, *Tess* 8). Through Jack's gullible reaction and failure to use a formal language, the very concept of hard heredity is actually challenged here, as the reader is led to wonder how on earth such a person could be genetically descended from such a respectable family. The discrepancy becomes more and more striking as the scene unfolds and the parson seems to take a step backwards, now minimising the importance of his revelation and of Jack's lineage altogether. From being one of the most illustrious families in England, the D'Urbervilles become merely an "extinct" family (Hardy, *Tess* 8) and the glorious tale ends up being "a useless piece of information" (Hardy, *Tess* 9). The passage then ends up with an accumulation of negations from the parson, which serve to invalidate any sense of kinship between Jack and his ancestors, but also to annihilate any hope for this "genetic discovery" to have any positive impact on the man's life: "You don't live anywhere. You are extinct (…); you haven't any [mansions and estates]; none [lands]; Ah – that I can't tell!; Oh – nothing, nothing; except chasten yourself with the thought of 'how are the mighty fallen'" (Hardy, *Tess* 9). From the incipit of the novel, the question of heredity is given a very ambiguous role in the plot, both as a triggering factor leading to life-changing events for the heroine, and as a non-issue, which should never have been a triggering factor in the first place. Through a mock-heroic tone, Hardy is able to mock heredity itself and to suggest, sometimes in a more direct way through the narrator's voice, that the notion of hard heredity should be qualified and its deterministic implications challenged. In

the end, the narrator wonders, what are genes without means?: “Pedigree, ancestral skeletons, monumental record, the d’Urberville lineaments, did not help Tess in her life’s battle as yet, even to the extent of attracting to her a dancing-partner over the heads of the commonest peasantry. So much for Norman blood unaided by Victorian lucre” (Hardy, *Tess* 17). The narrator’s ironic tone here serves to confirm the mock-heroic representation of heredity in the incipit, and the association of words like “pedigree, ancestral, monumental” with “skeletons, life’s battle” and “peasantry” only reinforces the non-deterministic dimension of the D’Urbervilles genes for the heroine. At the turn of the century, hard heredity, for all its suggestions of stability and its validation of aristocratic lineage as unmovable and eternal, may not have sounded so attractive. Yet, a few decades later, as people were healing from the trauma of World War I, the idea of permanency in an era of destruction and the possibility for one to erase the immediate past, might very well have contained a hopeful “modernist message” (Maurizio 57). Indeed, Weismann’s theory of hard heredity relied on his identification, in 1883, of two “distinct cell types”: somatic cells which “could be affected by the environment” but which were not present in the gonads (creating sperm and eggs), and germ cells which were the “hereditary units”, defined as being “inviolate and transmitted unaltered down the generations” (Diane B. Paul and James Moore 37). In a “tragic age” (Lawrence, *LCL* 5), hard heredity could therefore ensure a return to a pre-war humanity, no matter how many somatic cells had been destroyed or altered in the process, “no matter how many skies ha[d] fallen” (Lawrence, *LCL* 5). If Lawrence had often been “a vocal critic of Darwinism” in his non-fiction (Cotton 10-11), the nostalgia for a lost England which transpires in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* seems, at first sight, to validate a theory based on generational transmission and enduring qualities. As opposed to the mock-heroic tone used by Hardy in *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, Lawrence has his character Clifford evoke the issue of heredity with much gravity and conviction. In a discussion about the possibility for Clifford and Connie to produce an heir, Clifford stresses the national – rather than personal – importance of descent as follows:

> 'If some of the old England isn't preserved, there'll be no England at all,' said Clifford. 'And we who have this kind of property, and the feeling for it, must preserve it.'
>
> There was a sad pause. 'Yes, for a little while,' said Connie.
>
> 'For a little while! It's all we can do. We can only do our bit. I feel every man of my family has done his bit here, since we've had the place. One may go against convention, but one must keep up tradition.'

Again there was a pause.

'What tradition?' asked Connie.

'The tradition of England! of this!'

'Yes,' she said slowly.

'That's why having a son helps; one is only a link in a chain,' he said.

Connie was not keen on chains, but she said nothing. She was thinking of the curious impersonality of his desire for a son. (Lawrence, *LCL* 43)

In this passage, heredity is directly linked to tradition and procreation to the perpetuation of the English aristocracy represented by Wragby. Clifford's metaphor of the human being as a "link in a chain" recalls Weisman's vision of bodies as mere vessels of germ cells transmitted from generation to generation and hard heredity thus becomes a theoretical tool in favour of the preservation of aristocratic privileges. Connie's inner thoughts intimate as much, as the "impersonality of his desire for a son" implies a certain self-sacrifice, in favour of a grander social scheme. What comes next in the scene then suddenly enlightens Clifford's initial take on heredity and the reader gradually understands that Lawrence, through Clifford, actually questions hard heredity as much as Hardy did in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, not exactly mocking it, but rather discrediting it by cancelling the roles of genes altogether. When Connie expresses her surprise at Clifford's suggestion of her getting pregnant and producing an heir without his help but with the help of a third party, the protagonist simply replies: "Does it matter very much?" (Lawrence, *LCL* 44). Just as Hardy's narrator had implied that Tess's glorious genes had no power to make her life any easier, Lawrence's protagonist similarly minimises the impact of one's genetic background on one's development and fulfilment as an individual. Rather than breaking the chains of generational wealth, Clifford opens up the possibility of breaking the genes, that is, of envisioning heredity without genetics.

In turn-of-the-century debates around heredity issues, a contrast was often made between two schools of thought, Neo-Lamarckism and Neo-Darwinism – the former positing the "inheritance of acquired characters" as "the principal mechanism of evolution" (Bowler 53), and the latter arguing that the "laws of reproduction" surpassed the "effects of the conditions of life" on the subject (Darwin 18) whose qualities could only be innate. If historian Charles Rosenberg declares that "before 1900 there was no question in the medical profession but that acquired characteristics [like alcohol, drugs, sub-standard living conditions] could become hereditary" (Rosenberg quoted in Meloni 39), it is yet evident that some members of the scientific community were still strongly resisting such an assertion and attempting experiments

to prove it wrong. Indeed, in 1887-1888, Weisman decided to "tes[t] Lamarckian inheritance by amputating the tails of more than twenty successive generations of mice. Their offspring all had intact tails", serving as proofs against "the theory that acquired mutilations could be inherited across generations (Meloni 49). These contextual elements help to inform the literary works which were produced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, just as the lack of general consensus on genetic laws explains how novels could have become places where theories were likewise tested and where questions were raised rather than questions answered. Lawrence was precisely writing at a time when Darwin's death had cast a shadow over his work and when much research still needed to be done on Mendel's work for "population genetics" to be born in the 1930s. In this interval, any belief or hypothesis put forward by biologists or even philosophers seemed worth exploring and authors themselves could initiate debates about heredity laws. Lawrence was indeed amongst those who did not find Darwin's theories of descent satisfying, in part because they seemed to have emerged in response to criticisms of *The Origin of Species*, as a way to validate his theory of evolution.[5] Instead, I argue that he favoured a Lamarckian view according to which the circumstances in which an individual is born play a part in hereditary laws, in the sense that the traits acquired thanks or because of those circumstances may be transmitted to the offspring. In *LCL*, Wragby itself becomes a vessel of transmission of the Chatterley's character, replacing Clifford as a genitor: "If we brought it [the baby] up at Wragby, it would belong to us and to the place" (Lawrence, *LCL* 43-44). Dismissing the importance of the baby's genetic background, Clifford uses a Lamarckian argument to convince Connie to get pregnant from another man, going so far as to assert that noble character cannot actually be innate but must rather be acquired, without failing to be transmitted from generation to generation:[6]

> 'I don't care who his father may be, so long as he is a healthy man not below normal intelligence. Give me the child of any healthy, normally intelligent man, and I will make a perfectly competent Chatterley of him. It is not who begets us, that matters, but where fate places us. Place any child among the ruling classes, and he will grow up,

[5] Michael Ruse explains how the theory of descent was essential for Darwin to assert his theory of evolution: "without some way in which favorable variations are transmitted from generation to generation, there is just no way in which selection can be effective" (Ruse 41).

[6] It might be relevant to suggest that Clifford's views on paternity may also have been inspired by Lawrence's close contact with primitive cultures, especially in the last years of his life. In *Marriage and Heredity*, first published in 1903, J. F. Nisbet remarks how "the pleasures of paternity are unknown to men living under the most primitive conditions. At first children are affiliated not to particular couples, but to the tribe; their kinship through females is recognised, children being sure of their mother although not of their father" (Nisbet 12).

to his own extent, a ruler. Put kings' and dukes' children among the masses, and they'll be little plebeians, mass products. It is the overwhelming pressure of environment.'

'Then the common people aren't a race, and the aristocrats aren't blood,' she said.

'No, my child! All that is romantic illusion. Aristocracy is a function, a part of fate. And the masses are a functioning of another part of fate. The individual hardly matters. It is a question of which function you are brought up to and adapted to. It is not the individuals that make an aristocracy: it is the functioning of the aristocratic whole. And it is the functioning of the whole mass that makes the common man what he is.' (Lawrence, *LCL* 183)

The first paragraph of this passage is built on parallelisms that are made to rhythmically demonstrate the logic of Clifford's argument and the reversal of common belief: the verb "place" comes out as stronger than the verb "beget," just as "ruling classes" lead to "a ruler" and "the masses" to "mass products". Clifford's argument suddenly sounds undeniable and the Lamarckian view, traditionally used to argue in favour of social reform and its benefits, is twisted to serve the interest of the ruling class. However, such conservative motives will later be betrayed by Clifford's own reaction to Connie being pregnant by his game-keeper, Mellors: "And you mean to say you want to have a child to a cad like that? (…) I care nothing about the child" (Lawrence, *LCL* 296-297). From theory to practice, Clifford's rejection of the child shows the limit of his theory and leads the reader to wonder whether or not Lawrence's voice had ever been behind Clifford's in the first place. Lamarckism, as a strong argument against genetic determinism, appealed to different thinkers to demonstrate various philosophical views on heredity and on social progress, and even Hardy, a convinced supporter of Darwin, inserted in his fiction Lamarckian remarks which prove the author's interest in the subject. In *Jude the Obscure*, the issue of heredity is evoked as Jude is asked to take care of Arabella's child who, she says, is most likely his. As he discusses the request with Sue, the use of a rhetorical question echoes Clifford's own question quoted above:

"What does it matter, when you come to think of it, whether a child is yours by blood or not? All the little ones of our time are collectively the children of us adults of the time, and entitled to our general care. The excessive regard of parents for their own children, and their dislike of other people's, is, like class-feeling, patriotism, save-your-own-ism, and other virtues, a mean exclusiveness at bottom". (Hardy, *JO* 216)

Here, it is interesting to note how Jude's speech seems to be condemning precisely the "class feeling" Clifford is putting forward, yet both characters use the same Lamarckian argument to reject genetic pre-determinism and entertain the possibility of conceiving heredity without genetics. By comparing the family system to the class system and minimising the importance of genes, Hardy uses a Lamarckian perspective to caution his readers against the downward slide of Darwinism, known as social Darwinism. In that sense, Hardy draws different ideas both from Lamarckism and Darwinism, suggesting that the two schools of thought might not be so different and incompatible. In fact, Diane B. Paul and James Moore point at Darwin's own hesitations on the subject, adding that "he sometimes wrote as though the need for social intervention was urgent (…), yet he also thought selection continued to work in a positive direction" (Paul and Moore 33). Michael Ruse confirms such an assessment, declaring that, unlike popular belief, "Darwin never claimed that natural selection was the only force for evolutionary change. He was ever a Lamarckian, believing in the inheritance of acquired characteristics" (Ruse 36). Yet, the slowness that characterised "the pace of Darwinian evolution" led many thinkers, Lawrence included, to drift away from Darwin's theories (Cotton 10) and let themselves be seduced by the immediate promise of Lamarckism. As fervent a supporter of Darwin as he may have been, Hardy was well aware of the tragic implications of Darwin's theories that always fed his obsession for "the failure of things to be what they are meant to be" (Beer 231-232). Another reason for Jude to accept to take care of his unknown son is the hope that, following the pace of biological time, his dreams might one day come true: "What I couldn't accomplish in my own person perhaps I can carry out through him?" (Hardy, *JO* 219). Because "it takes two or three generations to do what [Jude] tried to do in one" (Hardy, *JO* 256), Hardy's novel, from a Darwinian point of view, should not be considered entirely tragic, insofar as it only represents the flaws in the cogs of the hereditary machine. Indeed, Hardy defends himself against accusations of writing dark and gloomy novels in these words: "If way to a Better there be, it exacts a full look at the Worst: that is to say, by the exploration of reality and its frank recognition stage by stage along the survey, with an eye to the best consummation possible: briefly, evolutionary meliorism. But it is called pessimism nevertheless…" (Hardy, *The Complete Poems* 557). What if, after all, genetics could be understood in an optimistic way? What if the relational dynamics of heredity in Hardy and Lawrence could actually be a way to betterment, rather than a doom awaiting the characters?

At the core of Darwin's late reflections on heredity was the issue of improvement of the human race and the concept of selection which constituted the foundation of his theory of

evolution. In *The Descent of Man*, he applied this concept to the human race and wrote that selection "might enhance man's body, intellect, and morals, and the sort he recommended was purely voluntary and individualistic: abstinence from marriage" (Paul and Moore 33). Selection through "abstinence from marriage" is precisely the foundational idea of Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, whose entire plot revolves around Jude's hesitations to marry, first Arabella and then Sue. Jude's aunt, Miss Fawley, could act as Darwin's spokesperson when she pleads: "Jude, my child, don't you ever marry. 'Tisn't for the Fawleys to take that step any more" (Hardy, *JO* 13). What may at first sound like mere folk superstition turns out to be a scientifically-grounded argument when Jude is willing to defy genetics to marry his first-cousin Sue.[7] The tragic results of their union (though they never got properly married) seems to confirm both Miss Fawley's apprehensions and Darwins's views on selection, suggesting that self-restraint remains the only way to make the best of one's poor genetics. In regard to Jude's early suicidal thoughts[8] and given "the hereditary nature" of such thoughts, "long ago remarked by Voltaire" (Nisbet 96-97), Little Father Time's tragic gesture at the end of the novel comes more as a confirmation of hereditary laws than as a proof of the existence of a curse on the Fawley family. In his fiction, Hardy no doubt illustrates Darwin's own inclination "to agree with [his cousin] Francis Galton (…) that education and environment produce only a small effect on the mind of any one, and that most of our qualities are innate" (Paul and Moore 32). In *The Return of the Native*, a Darwinian undertone therefore transpires in Eustacia's admission to Wildeve that she has been feeling depressed, partly because of him and partly because of her genetic background: "But perhaps it is not wholly because of you that I get gloomy (…). It is in my nature to feel like that. It was born in my blood, I suppose" (Hardy, *TRN* 65). In Hardy, characters seem to be constantly striving to overcome limitations imposed by hereditary laws, a preoccupation which was at the origins of Darwin's interest in selective breeding, and more importantly, at the core of his cousin Francis Galton's theory of eugenics. Galton coined this neologism in 1883, "from the Greek *eu*, "good," and *genos*, "birth" (Meloni 43), and defined it as "the science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of race" (Galton quoted in Meloni 70). At the turn of the century, the consequences of the Boer War, along with a general "anxiety of degeneration and national efficiency," made eugenic discourses appealing to a large audience (Meloni 68-69) who either supported positive or negative eugenics. As Meloni reminds us, the

[7] It might be interesting to note that Darwin's "own sick children were the offspring of a first-cousin marriage" (Paul and Moore 34), which might have inspired Hardy to write *Jude*.

[8] See the scene in which Jude jumps on an icy pound and deplores the ice not breaking: "What was he reserved for? He supposed he was not a sufficiently dignified person for suicide. Peaceful death abhorred him as a subject, and would not take him" (Hardy, *JO* 59).

former referred “to the improvement of the human race by supporting the reproduction of the fittest members of society”, while the latter “aimed to prevent the diffusion of what was then called “defective germ-plasm”, mostly based on “forced sterilization” (Meloni 70-71). Darwin’s position on the subject, reflected in Hardy’s work, seems to stand in-between those two sections of the eugenicist school of thought, while Lawrence’s own stance on the issue seems to lean towards the negative definition of eugenics. Lawrence’s ambiguous, and sometimes problematic, discourse in his non-fiction and personal writings have often been condemned and have constituted the starting point of his being associated with the Nazi doctrine. In the following extract quoted by Cotton and taken from one of Lawrence’s personal letters, the similarity between Lawrence’s “utopian” scheme and what the Nazis actually put into practice is undeniably disturbing:

> “Concerning Daisy Lord, I am entirely in accord with you. If I had my way, I would build a lethal chamber as big as the Crystal Palace, with a military band playing softly, and a Cinematograph working brightly; then I'd go out in the back streets and main streets and bring them in, all the sick, the halt, and the maimed; I would lead them gently’, and they would smile me a weary thanks; and the band would softly bubble out the 'Hallelujah Chorus'.” (Lawrence quoted in Cotton 53-54)[9]

Lawrence’s eugenicist thoughts, clearly stated in this letter, are to be found in a lesser and lighter degree in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, through the voice of Clifford, previously mentioned in this part in association with questions of heredity. In voicing the eugenicist dogma according to which “the good of the individual” has to be subordinated to “the health of the species or race” (Meloni 67), Clifford might very well have illustrated a positive dimension of the eugenicist discourse in which humans would be encouraged to be selfless, and act for the greater good of humanity (in deciding not to marry, for instance, as is suggested in Hardy). However, Lawrence’s bitter feeling, at the end of his life, triggered by his poor health condition and by the faults of humanity as a whole, seems to have led him to use Clifford as a spokesperson of negative eugenics: “'I do think sufficient civilization ought to eliminate a lot of the physical disabilities,' said Clifford. 'All the love-business for example, it might just as well go. I suppose it would if we could breed babies in bottles'” (Lawrence, *LCL* 74). It is no coincidence that Lawrence chose a crippled character who is slowly being deserted by his wife, to voice such

[9] The original quote is to be found in James T. Boulton, ed., *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence: Vol. I (1901-13)* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979. As a context to this letter, Cotton explains that “Daisy Lord had been convicted of the murder of her illegitimate child and sentenced to death” (Cotton 54).

radical beliefs. To some readers, Clifford's speech may actually sound like the cry of despair, or even the distress call, of a man who has lost any faith in love and humanity as a consequence of his fighting in the war. A more nuanced, but still pessimistic tone is used by Mellors in relation to eugenicist discourse, as the game-keeper declares to Connie: "It seems to me a wrong and bitter thing to do, to bring a child into this world" (Lawrence, *LCL* 218), mainly "because the world is overcrowded" (Lawrence, *LCL* 220). In his novel, Lawrence therefore takes care of contrasting Clifford's negative eugenicist discourse to Mellors' positive one, while the need to improve humanity through close attention to genetics is omnipresent. Going back to Lawrence's earlier works, one easily notices that the author's stance on the subject had not always been so extreme, and that Mellors might very well represent Lawrence's younger self, while Clifford might voice Lawrence's later and more pessimistic ideas. Indeed, in *Sons and Lovers*, the presence of a eugenicist discourse is far more subtle and restrained, focusing mainly on the idea of human collective improvement. Unsurprisingly, such a discourse is conveyed through Lawrence's semi-autobiographical protagonist, Paul: "Now I think that the race of sparrows matters, but not one sparrow; all my hair, but not one hair. (…) And people matter. But *one* isn't so very important" (Lawrence, *SL* 193, emphasis in the original). Through animal and organic imageries, Lawrence shows how the eugenicist notion of self-sacrifice for the greater good was very much present in his mind, early on in his career. In fact, Lawrence, like most eugenicists of the time, saw this new view on heredity as a way to turn the curse of genetics into a blessing for the human race, and used it to address "the problem of fertility in relation to economic status" (Meloni 78). Controlled procreation – pushed to the extreme with sterilisation – was indeed thought of as a welcome option for the lower classes who might suffer from the burden of having children to take care of. Still in *Sons and Lovers*, an internal focalisation on Mrs Morel enables Lawrence to comment on the negative impact of non-regulated procreation on the working classes: "And the children ! She could not afford to have this third. She did not want it. The father was serving beer in a public house, swilling himself drunk. She despised him, and was tied to him. This coming child was too much for her. If it were not for William and Annie, she was sick of it, the struggle with poverty and ugliness and meanness" (Lawrence, *SL* 13). In this short passage, the happy news of an upcoming birth is turned by the mother into a final blow that will only make her family's situation worse. Reading this passage, those familiar with Hardy will immediately recall the scene in *Jude the Obscure*, when Sue informs Jude's son of their financial difficulties and lets him know that yet another baby is coming.

Little Father Time's cry of despair, along with Sue's own inability to reassure him, seems to serve as a justification of eugenicist motives:

> "There is going to be another in our family soon," she hesitatingly remarked.
>
> "How?"
>
> "There is going to be another baby."
>
> "What!" The boy jumped up wildly. "Oh God, Mother, you've never a-sent for another; and such trouble with what you've got!"
>
> "Yes, I have, I am sorry to say!" murmured Sue, her eyes glistening with suspended tears.
>
> The boy burst out weeping. "Oh you don't care, you don't care!" he cried in bitter reproach. "How ever could you, Mother, be so wicked and cruel as this, when you needn't have done it till we was better off, and Father well! To bring us all into more trouble! No room for us, and Father a-forced to go away, and we turned out to-morrow; and yet you be going to have another of us soon! … 'Tis done o' purpose!—'tis—'tis!" He walked up and down sobbing.
>
> "Y-you must forgive me, little Jude!" she pleaded, her bosom heaving now as much as the boy's. "I can't explain—I will when you are older. It does seem—as if I had done it on purpose, now we are in these difficulties! I can't explain, dear! But it—is not quite on purpose—I can't help it!"
>
> "Yes it is—it must be! For nobody would interfere with us, like that, unless you agreed! I won't forgive you, ever, ever! I'll never believe you care for me, or Father, or any of us any more!" (Hardy, *JO* 262)

Just as it does in the extract from Lawrence quoted above, procreation comes with social implications that may be checked through a better management of the laws of heredity. If this passage does not constitute a proof in itself of Hardy's affinities with eugenicist discourse, his confirmed admiration of Darwin along with the latter's admitted interest in the work of his cousin Francis Galton, all contribute to suggest that Hardy and Lawrence's views on eugenics might not have been so opposite. A closer look at Darwin's own theory has allowed us to better qualify what might be implied by Hardy's well-known affinities with the biologist, and by Lawrence's supposed opposition to his ideas. Rather than drawing them away from one another, Darwin might actually have been an unexpected meeting point between the two authors' thinking, for the equal influence his work had on their understandings of heredity and for the

social issues it raised. Genetic and social backgrounds are therefore intrinsically linked in both Hardy and Lawrence's works, just as the genetic limitations imposed on the characters seem to be, like the social ones, only there to be overcome. Again, Hardy and Lawrence's heroes, rather than being self-made, are made of genes, fraught with their family histories, which they have to work with and transform in order to create their very own genetic backgrounds, transmissible in turn to their own children.

Environmental, social and genetic backgrounds in both authors' novels turn out to be very fluid and unstable grounds on which characters have to stand in balance, constructing their identities out of the interconnections between the different circumstances they were born in. Rooting their characters in those various grounds allows Hardy and Lawrence to set their growth within a larger web of connections, and to locate the concept of relation at the origin of the characterisation process. To be human, for both authors, is to be related to some place, some social sphere, some genetic heritage, but also to find the strength to go, burdened with all this baggage, and form new relationships, which will in turn shape our identities

CHAPTER TWO.
Lost in Love or Found in Love?
Assessing the Role of Romantic and Filial Relationships in the Realisation of Lawrence's and Hardy's Characters

"She resisted it as far as she could, for it was the loss of herself to herself"
(Lawrence, LCL 135)

As part of a wider discussion on Lawrence and Hardy's centrifugal vision of characterisation, this chapter focuses on the universal feeling of love and on its different variations and expressions which constitute the core of the six novels in the corpus. As common a theme as love might be in literature of all times, it is no coincidence that Hardy and Lawrence attached so much importance to these special human relationships in which the self is irresistibly drawn towards the Other, towards that unfathomable subjectivity which has suddenly become essential to the survival of the self. Creating protagonists who are in love actually allows both authors to develop further their centrifugal process of characterisation, in so far as love is defined, by feminist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir, as "an outgoing movement, an impulse towards another person, towards an existence separate and distinct from one's own, towards an end in view, a future (…)" (de Beauvoir 457).[1] But how does love have anything to do with the characters' individualities? In *Civilization and its Discontent*, Freud reminds us of the unique implications of the feeling of love for the development of the individual who is experiencing it: "The ego seems to maintain clear and sharp lines of demarcation. There is only one state (…) in which it does not do this. At the height of being in love, the boundary between ego and object threatens to melt away. Against all the evidence of the senses, a man who is in love declares that 'I' and 'You' are one, and is prepared to behave as if it were a fact" (Freud, *Civilization* 13).[2] Of all the recorded human emotional states, Freud suggests that the state of being in love is the one experience which needs to be explored hands in hands with ontological studies. Indeed, if the feeling of love is capable of altering one's self-perception, then it is to be inferred that one's self-realisation might very well be led – or mis-led – by that same feeling. Reading Hardy and Lawrence's novels, one constantly vacillates between a belief in love as catalyser of the self and a conception of love as destructive. This chapter has been conceived so as to mirror this dichotomous vision of love, in an attempt to better uncover the two authors' ultimate conception of love as part of a reflection on the fulfilment of the self.

1. *L'enfer, c'est ceux qu'on aime*: The Loved One as a Threat to Self-Realisation

[1] I will be referring extensively to Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* in this chapter, for its in-depth exploration of the place of women in various types of relationships, and of the way the female sex is being shaped by those relationships.

[2] This reference was brought to my attention by Roszak et. al in *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*, 16.

a. Love as a Feeling to be Resisted for Self-preservation

In his 1944 play entitled *Huis Clos*, Jean-Paul Sartre declared: "l'enfer, c'est les Autres"[3] (Sartre, Huis Clos 93). Behind this mysterious and often misquoted assertion can be found the idea of Otherness having so much impact and so much influence over one's own individuality that it tends to become an enemy to the self and its healthy development (Leroy, *Phénoménologie* 146). Applying Sartre's logic to the case of a beloved Other, one can only think that the ontological power exerted on the self must be increased proportionally to the intensity of the feeling. From such a perspective, the noble feeling of love becomes a weapon available for the Other to use against one, leading one's growth in a particular direction or checking one's personal development altogether. In Hardy and Lawrence's novels, readers may encounter characters who are introduced as fearful and reluctant lovers, not because they fear they might not be loved in return, but because they fear they might be loved *too much* in return. Male characters, in particular, tend to be turned into passive victims of alluring women who become responsible for any of the men's failures and disappointments. In Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, the eponymous protagonist illustrates a category of men who perpetuate the myth of the woman-temptress and who strongly believe that women have the power to prevent them from achieving their true potentials. As Jude meets his first wife, Arabella, the young woman is described as "a complete and substantial female animal" to whom the protagonist attributes "the enterprise of attracting his attention from his dreams of the humaner letters to what was simmering in the minds around him" (Hardy, *JO* 33). Whether it be through an internal focalisation on Jude or through the use of free indirect speech, Hardy makes sure to insert some distance between the narrator and Jude's own opinion, thus indirectly invalidating the young man's words or thoughts just as he states them. Jude, rather than the narrator, perceives Arabella and his growing desire for her as a force distracting him from his intellectual ambitions – a nuance suggesting that Hardy himself did not consider female attraction to be actually deadly to male ambitions but was only well aware that some men did. When, a hundred pages further, the story is repeating itself with Sue and Jude's career plans go awry once again, the character's love-is-to-blame reassurance strategy meets its limits and the blame is transferred to the more general "system of things":

[3] "Hell is other people."

> Strange that his first aspiration – towards academical proficiency – had been checked by a woman, and that his second aspiration – towards apostleship – had also been checked by a woman. 'Is it,' he said, 'that the women are to blame; or is it the artificial system of things, under which the normal sex-impulses are turned into devilish domestic gins and springes to noose and hold back those who want to progress?' (Hardy, *JO* 171-172)

Strange, indeed, that a woman's love – or rather two women's love – might have such an evil power over a man's hopes and dreams. In fact, if Sartre pointed out the necessary – and sometimes unwelcomed – mediation of the Other in the process of building the self, we saw in chapter one how the phenomenologist also rejected a deterministic vision of existence and emphasised our being "condemned to be free" (Sartre, *L'Être et le Néant* 530)[4]. In a pre-Sartrian fashion, Hardy's narrator therefore presents us with a protagonist who willingly chooses these special Others who will have the power to impact his growth. Some Lawrencian characters seem to face the same ontological dilemma and, unlike Jude, may choose to resist the centrifugal impulse so as to protect the integrity of the self. Despite its being secondary and naturally shadowed by the passionate relationship between Connie and Mellors, the affair between Connie and Michaelis in the first pages of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is no less meaningful in its failure. Indeed, Connie and Michaelis's relationship illustrates this instinct of self-preservation rooted in the belief that love is the enemy of individuality and that the only way to remain whole in a relationship is to keep aloof and never properly connect to the other. As such, the intercourses – verbal or sexual – between the two characters are characterised by a very antithetic, distant contact, a dissociated proximity best exemplified by Connie's inner thoughts during an erotic scene:

> But a woman could yield to a man without yielding her inner, free self. That the poets and talkers about sex did not seem to have taken sufficiently into account. A woman could take a man without really giving herself away. Certainly she could take him without giving herself into his power. Rather she could use this sex thing to have power over him. For she only had to hold herself back in sexual intercourse, and let him finish and expend himself without herself coming to the crisis: and then she could prolong the connexion and achieve her orgasm and her crisis while he was merely her tool. (Lawrence, *LCL* 7)

[4] My translation. Sartre writes : « Nous sommes condamnés à la liberté. »

Unlike traditional descriptions of erotic scenes in which the two characters are moving in unison to the point of forming one whole, this passage is built around oppositions, between the pronouns "he" and "she" which are never transformed into "they", and between motion verbs referring to two opposite directions: "hold herself back" and "expend himself". If Connie is described as experiencing a very self-centred kind of love with Michaelis, the latter is similarly said to be lying "in his own isolation" and is defined as "a lone dog" (Lawrence, *LCL* 29; 31). Both characters are painstakingly resisting a deep intimacy which Jude could not make himself reject and which Mellors, Connie's later lover, would struggle against for as long as he possibly could. More than being a mere obstacle to personal development, love is, to the gamekeeper, a life-threatening experience he needs to avoid at all costs: "Especially, he did not want to come into contact with a woman again. He feared it: and he had a big wound from old contacts. He felt, if he could not be alone, and if he could not be left alone, he would die" (Lawrence, *LCL* 88). Jude's fear to have his career plans sabotaged by a loving woman is here surpassed by Mellors' fear to have his whole life destroyed by the female Other, thus associating love with the annihilation of the self. Yet, despite all his efforts, Mellors ends up following in the footsteps of Jude as he gives in and proves to the reader that love, however threatening to the self, is not to be resisted: "'It's life', he said. 'There's no keeping clear. And if you do keep clear, you might as well die. So if I've got to be broken open again, I have— '" (Lawrence, *LCL* 118). The deadly threat which was earlier posed by love is now coming from isolation and rejection of deep intimacy, underlining again the eros-thanatos dichotomy at the root of love. Looking into another illustration of a defective relationship in Lawrence's *Women in Love* allows the reader to be comforted as to the murderous nature of love. As opposed to the ultimately harmonious duo of Birkin and Ursula, Gerald and Gudrun's failure to properly connect can be attributed to their respective sense of self-preservation, turning their relationship into an experience of alternate living: "But always it was this eternal see-saw, one destroyed that the other might exist, one ratified because the other was nulled" (Lawrence, *WL* 445). Again, antitheses are used to convey the tragic ontological dilemma in a love story that seems to only have room for one.

In *Ecopsychology, Phenomenology, and the Environment*, Vakoch and Castrillon define intimacy as "that mysterious, delightful, at times dreadful intertwining of two that are of one essence" (Vakoch and Castrillon 12). In this poetic definition of intimacy is encapsulated both the tension between the self and the other that characterises a love relationship and the blurring of individual boundaries as the two lovers are bound to become one. This threat of dissolution

had actually become an obsessive thought for Lawrence, as soon as he had met and fallen in love with Frieda. In his *Study of D. H. Lawrence and Psychoanalysis*, John Turner explains how Lawrence was resisting "a regressive desire to merge with Frieda; the boundaries in his marriage needed to be shored up by greater mutual awareness of each other's otherness" (Turner quoted in Gifford, *Ecofeminism* 112). It is no coincidence, then, that his Lady Chatterley be described as a very passionate lover for whom mere proximity with Mellors is not enough, or that Birkin, one of the male protagonists of *Women in Love*, be advocating against "this horrible fusion of two beings, which every woman and most men insisted on" and which was "nauseous and horrible anyhow" (Lawrence, *WL* 309). In the numerous love scenes of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the narrator emphasises how painfully Connie experiences the end of the embrace with the gamekeeper and the re-drawing of individual boundaries:

> And yet when he had finished, soon over, and lay very very still, receding into silence, and a strange motionless distance, far, farther than the horizon of her awareness, her heart began to weep. She could feel him ebbing away, ebbing away, leaving her there like a stone on a shore. He was withdrawing, his spirit was leaving her. (Lawrence, *LCL* 172)

In this passage, the repetitions ("very very; ebbing away, ebbing away") and the polyptoton ("far, farther") mimic the gradual parting of the two lovers and highlight the torturous aspect of the process, like a band aid being removed slowly rather than in one pull. "She would never have him" (Lawrence, *LCL* 176), the narrator tragically concludes in free indirect speech at the end of the scene. Female characters, in Lawrence's fiction, tend to have a special need to fuse with their lovers, to the point of becoming a threat to their male identities. In *Sons and Lovers*, for instance, Paul feels threatened by Miriam's stifling love who makes him feel "uncertain of himself, insecure, an indefinite thing" (Lawrence, *SL* 231). Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* reminds us how "the word love has by no means the same sense for both sexes" (608). In the case of Paul and Miriam, love seems to mean "normal give and take" for the young man (Lawrence 2012, 320) and utter take-it-all for the young lady. In one of the several scenes in which Paul verbally abuses Miriam, the protagonist cruelly declares: "You don't want to love – your eternal and abnormal craving is to be loved. You aren't positive, you're negative. You absorb, absorb, as if you must fill yourself up with love, because you've got a shortage somewhere" (Lawrence 2012, 258). What Paul interprets as selfish love can be seen, through a feminist lens, as the illustration of de Beauvoir's argument according to which love is a

woman's whole existence, while man does not have to give his whole being to be able to love (de Beauvoir 609). At the time when the French philosopher is writing, women are being denied access to the same liberties as men, which results, according to her, in their using a relationship with the male Other as their only tool to grow as individuals. The "shortage" Paul is referring to in the above quotation is therefore very much female – that is, a shortage of freedom, a shortage of rights. As if to justify Miriam's way of loving, De Beauvoir writes:

> Now the woman in love is not simply and solely a narcissist identified with her ego; she feels, more than this, a passionate desire to transcend the limitations of self and become infinite, thanks to the intervention of another who has access to infinite reality. She abandons herself to love first of all to save herself; but the paradox of idolatrous love is that in trying to save herself she denies herself utterly in the end. (de Beauvoir 615)

In absorbing Paul's soul, Miriam is both trying to transcend her female status and to resist being annihilated by the male other. In an internal focalisation on the young woman, the narrator comments:

> She knew she felt a sort of bondage to him, which she hated because she could not control it. She had hated her love for him from the moment it grew too strong for her. And, deep down, she had hated him because she loved him and he dominated her. She had resisted his domination. She had fought to keep herself free of him, in the last issue. (Lawrence, *SL* 340)

This passage suggests that a man's love seems to be as necessary as it is dangerous for a woman's personal development. If the character of Miriam does illustrate this idea, Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* remains a novel written from a male perspective, in so far as the author identifies to the protagonist, Paul. It is probably this male-oriented representation of the woman in love which led de Beauvoir to declare that Lawrence "believe[d] passionately in the supremacy of the male" (de Beauvoir 228-29). Indeed, it seems to be the superiority of the female other that Paul is trying to resist throughout the novel, rather than love itself. A concise but very eloquent assertion on his part does confirm such a hypothesis: "I want a woman to keep me, but not in her pocket" (Lawrence, *SL* 320). The polysemous verb "to keep" inevitably calls to mind the figure of the housewife whose main role is to take care of the man and give him no reason to want to get away. In Hardy's fiction, such a patriarchal representation of the

woman in love also features, but rather as a reflection of Victorian customs than as a validation of the quiet-housewife figure. Reading *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, one is more likely to consider love as a threat to female characters like Tess or her mother, rather than to male characters like Angel or Alec. As she meets Angel, Tess is precisely filled with this awe-inspiring new feeling that both leads her to him and warns her against loving him. In the following passage, when the passion has grown between the two lovers, the narrator conveys the dichotomy between necessity and vulnerability which is at the core of the experience of love as a woman:

> Possibly the Talbothays milk was not very thoroughly skimmed that afternoon. Tess was in a dream wherein familiar objects appeared as having light and shade and position, but no particular outline. Every time she held the skimmer under the pump to cool it for the work her hand trembled, the ardour of his affection being so palpable that she seemed to flinch under it like a plant in too burning a sun. (Hardy, *Tess* 170)

Here, the metaphor of the plant in the burning sun – which could also be analysed as a reification of Tess – perfectly illustrates the idea of love as an essential element of a woman's growth but also as a threat to the integrity of her being. Love, in Hardy's fiction, is actually represented as a potential danger to the development of men and women alike, for the same reason which was put forward earlier in relation to Lawrence's novels: the risk of fusion and absorption. In *Jude the Obscure*, as much as Sue and Jude have tried to stay apart and avoid marriage, their passionate love for each other finally has the better of them – quite literally, since they are described by Phillotson as "one person split in two" (Hardy, *JO* 182). The use of the verb "split" makes the whole assertion sound like a negative side-effect of their love and serves as a counterpart to other passages describing the beauty and attraction of fusion: "That complete mutual understanding in which every glance and movement was as effectual as speech, for conveying intelligence between them, made them almost the two parts of a single whole" (Hardy, *JO* 229). More than reducing the two lovers to "parts" of themselves, Sue and Jude's passion leads to more destruction as their own children, the outcome of their love, are annihilated in turn. In fact, Little Father Time's tragic gesture in killing his siblings and himself is nothing but an act of love, "done because [they] are too menny" (Hardy, *JO* 264), in an attempt to make his parents' lives easier. It is only when faced with the loss of her children that Sue gets the full measure of the destructive dimension of her relationship with Jude and of the tragic impact it has had on the people she cares about (Phillotson being the first victim). Still in shock, she cries out to Jude: "O my comrade, our perfect union – our two-in-oneness – is now

stained with blood!" (Hardy *JO,* 265). Through that sentence, Sue consciously associates love with death and thereby puts an end to the idealisation of intense love. Both Hardy and Lawrence therefore write idealised love stories that paradoxically serve to caution their readers about the lethal power of intimate relationships, which are not limited to romantic ones.

Apart from the representation of the dangers of heteronormative romantic relationships, Hardy and Lawrence give pride of place to another type of human relationship in their fiction, that between the mother and her child. In going back to the original relationship, the one which starts even before birth, the two authors add some depth to their exploration of the ontological impact of loving and being loved. In what sorts of way may a mother's love have a negative impact on one's personal development? And, the other way round, how may becoming a mother hinder one's growth as a woman? While there is no doubt that mother figures often play a key role in the unravelling of the plot in Hardy and Lawrence's novels, it is also true to say that motherly love is in no way idealised. In fact, Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* introduces to the reader an unhealthy relationship between Tess and Mrs Durbeyfield whose obsession for offering her daughter a better life than she has had makes her domineering and emotionally detached. Indeed, it is Mrs Durbeyfield herself who leads her daughter into the Lion's den, that is, Alec D'Urbervilles house, after having insisted on making her look as womanly as possible. In the scene quoted below, Tess's passivity contrasts with her mother's controlling attitude and leaves the reader wondering about the consequences of motherly love on one's personality and free will:

> And to please her parent the girl put herself quite in Joan's hands, saying serenely—"Do what you like with me, mother."
>
> Mrs Durbeyfield was only too delighted at this tractability. First she fetched a great basin, and washed Tess's hair with such thoroughness that when dried and brushed it looked twice as much as at other times. She tied it with a broader pink ribbon than usual. Then she put upon her the white frock that Tess had worn at the club-walking, the airy fulness of which, supplementing her enlarged coiffure, imparted to her developing figure an amplitude which belied her age, and might cause her to be estimated as a woman when she was not much more than a child.
>
> "I declare there's a hole in my stocking-heel!" said Tess.
>
> "Never mind holes in your stockings—they don't speak! When I was a maid, so long as I had a pretty bonnet the devil might ha' found me in heels."

> Her mother's pride in the girl's appearance led her to step back, like a painter from his easel, and survey her work as a whole. (Hardy, *Tess* 49)

Here, the comparison of the mother to a painter, coupled with a reification of Tess as an easel, only reinforces the idea of a stifling love which has the power to alter the young woman's appearance, to deprive her of her free will and to potentially lead her life down an unwanted path. Even as Tess will physically distance herself from her mother, she will never be quite able to free herself from her influence and Mrs Durbeyfield will continue impacting her life in a negative way. Another example is the crucial moment when the heroine turns to her mother for advice, as she cannot decide whether or not she should confess her past to Angel before they marry. From Mrs Durbeyfield, Tess receives the advice to lie to her future husband, mostly to honour a promise she was forced to make years before to her mother. The letter written by the mother to Tess reads as follows:

> Dear Tess,
>
> J write these few lines Hoping they will find you well, as they leave me at Present, thank God for it. Dear Tess, we are all glad to Hear that you are going really to be married soon. But with respect to your question, Tess, J say between ourselves, quite private but very strong, that on no account do you say a word of your Bygone Trouble to him. J did not tell everything to your Father, he being so Proud on account of his Respectability, which, perhaps, your Intended is the same. Many a woman—some of the Highest in the Land—have had a Trouble in their time; and why should you Trumpet yours when others don't Trumpet theirs? No girl would be such a Fool, specially as it is so long ago, and not your Fault at all. J shall answer the same if you ask me fifty times. Besides, you must bear in mind that, knowing it to be your Childish Nature to tell all that's in your heart—so simple!—J made you promise me never to let it out by Word or Deed, having your Welfare in my Mind; and you most solemnly did promise it going from this Door. J have not named either that Question or your coming marriage to your Father, as he would blab it everywhere, poor Simple Man.
>
> Dear Tess, keep up your Spirits, and we mean to send you a Hogshead of Cyder for you Wedding, knowing there is not much in your parts, and thin Sour Stuff what there is. So no more at present, and with kind love to your Young Man.—From your affectte. Mother,
>
> J. Durbeyfield (Hardy, *Tess* 191)

Through this letter, Hardy manages to show the mother's best intentions towards her daughter while underlining her key role in Tess's upcoming fall. Because they tend to meddle in their children's personal affairs or because they fail to take into account their children's personal wishes, mother characters, in Hardy and Lawrence, are as much loving as they are imperfect and detrimental to their children's development. As was touched upon earlier in the case of romantic relationships, the more the feeling of love is intense, the more it is likely to have a negative impact on the characters' growths. The relationship between Paul and his mother in *Sons and Lovers* is a case in point, insofar as the oft-commented Oedipus complex at the root of the son's love for his mother can be identified as the main reason for Paul's delay in becoming independent and building meaningful relationships. To his mother who is trying to reassure him in arguing that he just has not met "the right woman" yet, the protagonist answers: "And I never shall meet the right woman while you live" (Lawrence, *SL* 395). In uttering this truth, Paul recognises that his overwhelming love for his mother leaves room for no other love and therefore constitutes an obstacle to his emotional growth. Similarly, the mother's love for his son is so invasive that it does not allow any other kinds of love, to the point of becoming a self-centred feeling. Indeed, Mrs Morel's attitude towards her sons, William and Paul, recalls the typical behaviour of the mother figure in a patriarchal society, analysed by de Beauvoir. The latter contends that, as the child grows up, he or she becomes "a double, an alter ego, into whom the mother is sometimes tempted to project herself" (de Beauvoir 491). In Lawrence's novel, Mrs Morel exemplifies such a tendency as she seems to live vicariously through her sons and therefore resents their leaving the family home to work and build a life of their own. As William announces to his mother that he is moving to London, an internal focalisation on Mrs Morel allows the narrator to convey the intermingling of the mother and the son's individualities in the love they share:

> It never occurred to him that she might be more hurt at his going away than glad of his success. Indeed, as the days drew near for his departure, her heart began to close and grow dreary with despair. She loved him so much! More than that, she hoped in him so much. Almost she lived by him. She liked to do things for him: she liked to put a cup for his tea and to iron his collars, of which he was so proud. It was a joy to her to have him proud of his collars. There was no laundry. So she used to rub away at them with her little convex iron, to polish them, till they shone from the sheer pressure of her arm. Now she would not do it for him. Now he was going away. She felt almost as if he were

> going as well out of her heart. He did not seem to leave her inhabited with himself. That was the grief and the pain to her. He took nearly all himself away. (Lawrence, *SL* 79)

Here, the self-centred love Mrs Morel feels for her son is justified by the important impact his departure has on her own life and happiness, and by the blurred boundaries between their lives. In fact, in Lawrence's novel, the joys of motherly love are often overshadowed by the same threat which accompanies romantic love, the threat of absorption. What comes across as selfish love in the passage previously quoted can actually be interpreted as a symptom of an utterly selfless love, in which the mother has been forgetting herself to the point of being left lifeless when it is time for her children to go:

> The mother lay in bed thinking of her children. As she had no life of her own, but was busy from morning till night cleaning, cooking, nursing, and sewing, she had to put her own living aside, put it in the bank, as it were, of her children. She thought and waited for them, dreamed what they would do, with herself behind them as motor force, when they grew up. Already William was a lover for her. (Lawrence, *SL* 44)

Just as one would put money away in the bank, Mrs Morel has to put her own life away and place it in the hands of her children, in order to be able to concentrate her whole energy on them and their well-being. As a selfless character who is constantly transcending herself and reaching out towards her children, the mother figure in Hardy and Lawrence is the epitome of the centrifugal conception of characterisation they are putting forward in their works. A mother figure very similar to Mrs Morel can be found in Hardy's *The Return of the Native* with Mrs Yeobright, whose tragic fate is intrinsically linked to that of her only son Clym. As she is walking home under a blazing sun, after having been denied entry into her son's home by her daughter-in-law, Mrs Yeobright is both emotionally hurt and physically exhausted. Yet, the narrator comments:

> But being a mother, it was inevitable that she should soon cease to ruminate upon her own condition. Had the track of her next thought been marked by a streak in the air, like the path of a meteor, it would have shown a direction contrary to the heron's, and have descended to the eastward upon the roof of Clym's house. (Hardy, *TRN* 282)

The imagery of the mother's thought extending from her conscience to the home of her child serves as an illustration of the centrifugal movement of motherhood and of the dissolution of

the mother's self into her son's existence. In Hardy's novel, this idea is actually exemplified within the plot itself, since Mrs Yeobright's death in the burning heat(h) is indirectly precipitated by her son, whose wife turned the old lady away without any rest or refreshment. Motherly love, in *The Return of the Native*, leads to actual death, as yet another cautionary tale about the dangers of loving one's children more than oneself. It is interesting to note how father figures, in both Hardy and Lawrence, are either secondary or totally absent from the plot, thus making fatherly love appear both less important and less threatening to the self. Rather than fatherly love, it is patriarchal love which features in the two authors' novels, as a way for them to explore further the ontological implications of love.

b. Patriarchal Love as a Threat to Self-Construction

In referring to patriarchal love, I want to explore, in Hardy and Lawrence, the types of relationships in which the female lover is presented as inferior to the male lover, and which, consequently, impose limitations on the female character's personal development. As one of the most solid foundations of patriarchy, the marriage institution and its creation of the wife and husband statuses constitutes an obvious starting point to our study. Living and writing in a very conservative Victorian era, Hardy was a direct witness of the way individuals were impacted by marriage, either because they strived to avoid it or because they had to suffer its injunctions. Among his novels, *Jude the Obscure* is probably the one that contains the harshest and most thorough criticism of the marriage institution which is made to appear antinomic with love. Indeed, Sue draws the reader's attention to this contradiction as she defines marriage as a "dreadful contract to feel in a particular way in a matter whose essence is its voluntariness" (Hardy, *JO* 168). The modern tones of Sue's words are confirmed by their disturbing similarity with de Beauvoir's own words, written more than fifty years after the character was even created. Echoing Sue, de Beauvoir writes: "Marriage is obscene in principle in so far as it transforms into rights and duties those mutual relations which should be founded on a spontaneous urge" (de Beauvoir 431). Both Sue's and de Beauvoir's assertions are built around an opposition between the freedom that characterises the feeling of love and the coercion that accompanies married life. Such an incompatibility between the emotional tie and the social bound that is supposed to validate it inevitably leads to a representation of marriage as destructive for both parties. Listening to Sue complaining about her position as a wife, Jude replies:

> It is no worse for the woman than for the man. That's what some women fail to see, and instead of protesting against conditions they protest against the man, the other victim; just as a woman in a crowd will abuse the man who crushes against her, when he is only the helpless transmitter of the pressure put upon him. (Hardy, *JO* 226).

In the patriarchal conception of marriage, the real oppressor, Jude says, is not the man, but the institution which grants his superior status to man. Yet, the way the novel is built seems to favour a more nuanced argument, once again voiced years later by de Beauvoir as she argued that "marriage diminishes man (…), but almost always (…) annihilates woman" (de Beauvoir 461). In Hardy's novel, it is mostly from an ontological perspective that marriage is represented as more detrimental to women than to men. Indeed, the threat of absorption which was brought up earlier in relation to romantic love in general, becomes particularly salient when applied to the case of the married woman. During the first years of Sue's marriage with Phillotson, Jude attempts to reassure his cousin in maintaining that she has not fallen victim to the marriage institution quite yet: "'No, you are not Mrs. Phillotson', murmured Jude. 'You are dear free Sue Bridehead, only you don't know it! Wifedom has not yet squashed up and digested you in its vast maw as an atom which has no further individuality'" (Hardy, *JO* 151). Here, Jude's choice of the verbs "squash" and "digest" reiterates the imagery of absorption and associates marriage with the dissolution of the female self. Sue's own self-perception seems to betray such a lack of individuality as she reflects on the discrepancy between herself as a wife and her true self, which she apparently has trouble to delineate. She tells Jude:

> I have been thinking (…) that the social moulds civilization fits us into have no more relation to our actual shapes than the conventional shapes of the constellations have to the real star-patterns. I am called Mrs. Richard Phillotson, living a calm wedded life with my counterpart of that name. But I am not really Mrs. Richard Phillotson, but a woman tossed about, all alone, with aberrant passions, and unaccountable antipathies. (Hardy, *JO* 162-163)

Here, none of the two versions of herself the female protagonist is presenting is her own: the first one represents Sue as constructed by the social conventions of marriage, and the other is supposed to be the way she truly sees herself, but this version is itself filtered by some standards of civilisation she cannot fit into. From the point of view of the marriage institution and society as a whole, Sue does not make sense. As a consequence, "the fibres of her nature see[m] strained like harp-strings" (Hardy, *JO* 178) and she is losing sight of the actual characteristics that make

her who she is. More than being the mere consequence of a patriarchal system, the dissolution of the wife's self in Lawrence's novels tends to appear as the result of man's own behaviour within marriage. Indeed, the description of Connie Chatterley's weathered self at the beginning of the novel seems directly linked to her status as wife to a very needy husband:

> Connie helped him all she could. At first she was thrilled. He talked everything over with her monotonously, insistently, persistently, and she had to respond with all her might. It was as if her whole soul and body and sex had to rouse up and pass into these stories of his. This thrilled her, and absorbed her. (Lawrence, *LCL* 16)

The ambivalence of Connie's feeling towards her loss of individuality through her husband (she is said to be both "thrilled" and "absorbed") again constitutes one of the examples that led feminist writers to condemn Lawrence for condoning a patriarchal conception of heteronormative relationships. In *Sons and Lovers*, the same kind of burden is laid on the woman's shoulder in marriage and the same self-abandonment is required from the wife. At multiple stages in the novel, Miriam and Paul are on the verge of getting married but ultimately never do. In fact, Miriam is repeatedly presented as unsuitable for marriage, in part because of her tendency to absorb a man's soul, as touched upon earlier, but mainly because of her inability to take on the burden of her lover's existence. Willing as she might be to give herself up in the process of loving him, to Paul, it is not enough:

> She was not to have him, then! So she could comfort him. She put her fingers through his hair. For her, the anguished sweetness of self-sacrifice. For him, the hate and misery of another failure. He could not bear it—that breast which was warm and which cradled him without taking the burden of him. So much he wanted to rest on her that the feint of rest only tortured him. He drew away. (…)
>
> It was the end then between them. She could not take him and relieve him of the responsibility of himself. She could only sacrifice herself to him—sacrifice herself every day, gladly. (Lawrence, *SL* 462-463)

In this passage, the inevitable separation between the two lovers is unequivocally linked to a failing on Miriam's part, as suggested by the accumulation of "she could not" and "she could only". If marriage is presented by both Hardy and Lawrence as "the end of experience" (Lawrence, *WL* 7) for woman, no comment or ironical device from Lawrence's narrator allows the reader to detect a criticism of such a conception by the author. The ground-breaking model

of "Matriarchy" (Hardy, *JO* 184) which is timidly suggested by Phillotson in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* is nowhere to be found in Lawrence's novels. On the contrary, in the three lawrencian novels under study, the female experience of loving often requires yielding.

The theme of female self-abandonment is probably most salient in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, in which Connie, after having been absorbed by her husband's intellectual life, is then to be absorbed into a whirlwind of physical desire for Mellors. Throughout the novel, Connie's sexual liberation is repeatedly associated with submission, creating a very ambivalent and paradoxical rendering of the female-lover figure. Using phrasal or modal verbs conveying the idea of obligation, the narrator often emphasises the heroine's helplessness against man's will, along with her own desire towards him. From the narrator's point of view, "a woman ha[s] to yield" (Lawrence, *LCL* 7) to build a meaningful relationship with the man, and she does so willingly: "From her breast flowed the answering immense yearning over him: she must give him anything, anything" (Lawrence, *LCL* 26). In this example as in many others from the novel, the responsibility of making a relationship work, of fostering love, is laid on woman, who is expected to "give up her own hard, bright female power" (Lawrence, *LCL*136), as a sacrifice she can try and delay for a while but cannot truly avoid: "It was gone, the resistance was gone, and she began to melt in a marvellous peace. (…) And she felt him like a flame of desire, yet tender, and she felt herself melting in the flame. She let herself go. (…) She yielded with a quiver that was like death, she went all open to him" (Lawrence, *LCL* 173). This passage being taken from one of the novel's erotic scenes, one might argue that the state of abandonment which is being described has nothing to do with a woman losing her individuality to a man but is rather all about conveying the intensity of orgasm. If I have no intention of questioning Lawrence's genuine interest in woman's pleasure and his wish to speak out on a tabooed subject, I must underline how Connie's accessing sexual climax involves dissolution ("melting"), submission ("she yielded") and even death. In such passages, the issue of consent, which will be extensively dealt with later on in this chapter, is inevitably raised as the author tends to represent a phallocentric vision of romantic relationships. Various other examples from the corpus under study might be quoted to support that argument, among which is an extract from *Women in Love* describing the meeting between Gerald and Pussum, a lady he met with his group of artist friends in London. This time, the scene is not erotic and yet, the same kind of female half-willing self-abandonment is described through an internal focalisation on the male character, Gerald: "Also he felt, she must relinquish herself *into his hands*, and be subject *to him*. She was so profane, slave-like, watching him, absorbed *by him*. It was not that she was

interested *in what he said*; she was absorbed *by his self-revelation*, *by him*, she wanted the secret *of him*, the experience *of his male being*" (Lawrence, *WL* 67, emphasis added). Here, the male perspective only reinforces the woman's submission and passivity which are further conveyed by indirect objects centred on Gerald: "into his hands; to him; by him; in what he said; by his self-revelation; by him; of him, of his male being." This passage, along with the previously-quoted extracts from *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, may be contrasted with an extract from Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, in which the heroine and his lover, Angel, are experiencing their first physical contact after weeks of loving from a distance:

> He jumped up from his seat, and, leaving his pail to be kicked over if the milcher had such a mind, went quickly towards the desire of his eye, and, kneeling down beside her, clasped her in his arms.
>
> Tess was taken completely by surprise, and she yielded to his embrace with unreflecting inevitableness. Having seen that it was really her lover who had advanced, and no one else, her lips parted, and she sank upon him in her momentary joy, with something very like an ecstatic cry.
>
> He had been on the point of kissing that too tempting mouth, but he checked himself, for tender conscience' sake.
>
> 'Forgive me, Tess dear!' he whispered. 'I ought to have asked. I—did not know what I was doing. I do not mean it as a liberty. I am devoted to you, Tessy, dearest, in all sincerity!' (Hardy, *Tess* 151)

If the use of the verb "to yield" and the seemingly passive attitude of Tess may at first suggest a similar approach to the female lover figure as Lawrence's, the lexical fields of dissolution and death are here replaced by words referring to well-being and tenderness, such as "joy", "ecstatic cry" and "sincerity." As opposed to Connie or Pussum, Tess is not forced to give up her female self and submit to her lover and superior. In fact, the act of "yielding" is only mentioned at the beginning of the passage, when Tess has not yet quite recognised the person embracing her. Beyond that moment, Tess ceases to be passive and becomes a proper actor in the scene, the two lovers being on an equal footing. Just as much as Lawrence, Hardy seems to be aware that loving often equals yielding for the female lover. Yet, as opposed to his younger counterpart, the Victorian author seems to suggest that true love should not require submission from one of the parties, unless the relationship is indeed dysfunctional.

c. The Male Self as a Threat to the Realisation of the Female Other – the Case of Dysfunctional Heteronormative Relationships

Our study of the impact of otherness on the characters' self-realisations implies that each character be granted the status of self. However, in reality as in fiction, women have not always been recognised as proper individuals, with their own personalities and desires. De Beauvoir has looked into the origins of this issue and has concluded that "humanity is man and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him" (de Beauvoir 15). Ontologically speaking, then, woman cannot possibly be considered a complete being, insofar as she is condemned to be the Other and therefore to have "her *pour-autrui* (…) confused with her very being" (de Beauvoir 631). As a consequence, the construction of woman is not only impacted by man but is properly defined by a hegemonic male self. Womanhood as otherness is a theme which features extensively in Hardy's fiction, through his descriptions of female characters facing particularly trying circumstances. Sue, in *Jude the Obscure*, is one of those female others who are constantly subjected to the male gaze, to the point of becoming mere objects of men's desires. As she is about to reluctantly get married to Phillotson, Sue makes a very open criticism of the marriage institution and its reification of women, in a letter to her cousin Jude: "According to the ceremony as there printed, my bridegroom chooses me of his own will and pleasure; but I don't choose him. Somebody gives me to him, like a she-ass or she-goat, or any other domestic animal. Bless your exalted view of woman, O Churchman!" (Hardy, *JO* 136). Sue's comparison of a bride to a "domestic animal" again calls to mind de Beauvoir's own comment on the role of the wife and and what such a role entails, ontologically speaking. She declares: "Woman is doomed to the continuation of the species and the care of the home – that is to say, to immanence" (de Beauvoir 419). The imagery of the domestic animal is indeed to be found at a metaphorical level in the philosopher's association of woman with the domestic sphere, and the objectification of the married woman is here justified by the dichotomy between female immanence and male transcendence. In Hardy's novel, though, the objectification of woman is not restricted to the realm of marriage and extends to romantic relationships as a whole, including – and perhaps all the more so – relationships in which the woman is very much loved by the man. Indeed, the idealisation of the female lover by the man often leads to the woman being reduced to a dreamy "vision" (Hardy, *JO* 148), a "something to love" (Hardy, *JO* 79). Under the gaze of the loving Jude, Sue is not even granted the status of material object but is led to become an unsubstantial being, " this loving woman whom man has not only revealed, but created" (de Beauvoir 631). As he reflects on the divine aspect of his cousin, as opposed to

the rough one of his ex-wife, Arabella, Jude paradoxically performs the imprisonment of Sue in a state of immanence:

> Looking at his loved one as she appeared to him now, in his tender thought the sweetest and most disinterested comrade that he had ever had, living largely in vivid imaginings, so *ethereal* a creature that her spirit could be seen trembling through her limbs, he felt heartily ashamed of his earthliness in spending the hours he had spent in Arabella's company. There was something rude and immoral in thrusting these recent facts of his life upon the mind of one who, to him, was so *uncarnate* as to seem at times impossible as a human wife to any average man. (Hardy, *JO* 149, emphasis added)

The phrase "to be the object of one's love", in the female experience, is to be understood quite literally, since the degree of reification seems to be proportional to the feelings of the man towards his lover. In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, the intensity of Angel's growing feelings for Tess foreshadows, from the beginning of their romance, her transformation from a material woman into an unsubstantial ideal. Tess is indeed described by the narrator as "the merest stray phenomenon to Angel Clare as yet – a rosy apparition, which had only just acquired the attribute of persistence in his consciousness" (Hardy, *Tess* 129). Once the contours of Tess would be entirely shaped in Angel's consciousness, the young man would make her an integral "part of himself", which is supposedly "the supreme happiness of the woman in love" (de Beauvoir 618). Miriam, in Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, illustrates this patriarchal ideal of the devoted woman in love whose chief function is to help the man achieve transcendence while she is to remain still and unchanged, like a soulless object. In several scenes of Lawrence's first novel, the narrator underlines how Miriam is very helpful to Paul, and how she is always so happy to listen to his philosophical or religious reflections, acting as an obedient disciple to her very own Socrates. In the following passage, the process of female reification which is to be found in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* is similarly at work, with an additional Lawrencian nuance consisting in presenting this process as pleasurable and desirable for the woman:

> As he sat in the arm-chair, reading, intent, his voice only thinking, she felt as if he were using her unconsciously, as a man uses his tools at some work he is bent on. She loved it. and the witfulness of his voice was like a reaching to something, and it was as if she were what he reached with. She sat back on the sofa, away from him, and yet feeling herself the very instrument his hand grasped. It gave her great pleasure. (Lawrence, *SL* 268)

Here, the internal focalisation on Miriam suggests that the comparison between the young lady and a "tool" or an "instrument" actually stems from her consciousness, as a very reassuring thought for a very enamoured woman. In Lawrence's fiction, it may be thrilling to be the actual object of a man's desire, but it still comes with a price. Indeed, being reduced to the status of object inevitably involves being treated as such, and this is where Lawrence seems to be drawing the line.

Inherent to the experience of reading Lawrence is the constant back and forth between different hypotheses we, as readers, may make up about the author's opinion on a particular topic. Regarding the representation of women, Lawrence is ever so ambiguous but never fails to put his female characters centre stage. Indeed, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is all about Lady Chatterley's growth as a woman and much less about her lover; the title of *Women in Love* speaks for itself, and *Sons and Lovers* is nothing but an autobiography built around the hero's meaningful relationships with women throughout his early life. Writing about women, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, amounts to writing about the invisible, about this specific living experience hidden behind the walls of family homes. Despite his tendency to apply a male gaze on his female characters, Lawrence is also one of the modernist authors who knew best how to give a voice to women, and how to draw from the experiences of his female relatives and friends in order to broach sensitive subjects. As one of the most dangerous threats to the integrity of the woman in love, domestic violence is a theme which allows the author to demonstrate further the destructive power of love and to get closer to rendering an authentic female experience in his writing. Based on the experience of his mother, *Sons and Lovers* tells the reader about the reality of domestic violence, thus forcing men's abuse of women out of the home sphere, into the public sphere. Most often implicitly suggested by authors, domestic violence is described by Lawrence's narrator in accurate and unforgiving terms in the following scene featuring Mrs Morel, her husband and their new-born child:

> He jerked at the drawer in his excitement. It fell, cut sharply on his shin, and on the reflex he flung it at her.
>
> One of the corners caught her brow as the shallow drawer crashed into the fireplace. She swayed, almost fell stunned from her chair. To her very soul she was sick; she clasped the child tightly to her bosom. A few moments elapsed; then, with an effort, she brought herself to. The baby was crying plaintively. Her left brow was bleeding rather profusely. As she glanced down at the child, her brain reeling, some drops of

> blood soaked into its white shawl; but the baby was at least not hurt. She balanced her head to keep equilibrium, so that the blood ran into her eye. (Lawrence, *SL* 53)

The brutality of the scene is conveyed by the stream of blood flowing down Mrs Morel's imperturbable face, as the mother turns to her child both to protect him and to get some comfort. Not only does Lawrence describe with accuracy what domestic violence really feels like, but the author also points out the ontological consequences of such a toxic behaviour, for both partners. While the woman's body and soul are hurt and her sense of self consequently impacted, Lawrence suggests that the man is equally impacted by the harm he has done. As if to warn his male readers against abusing women, the author shows how domestic violence can also destroy the integrity of the perpetrator, making him lose sight of who he truly is as a man: "Then, finally, his manhood broke. (…) He had hurt himself the most. (…). But no, he insisted to himself it was her fault. And so he broke himself" (Lawrence, *SL* 53-54). Interestingly enough, the oft-encountered Lawrencian conception of manhood as based on the supremacy of man over woman is here put into question as the author seems to suggest that an individual ceases to be a man as soon as he uses force to subject a woman to him. Phillotson, in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, seems to be keenly aware of the immoral dimension of the subjection of women as he repents for setting his heart on a "pupil-teacher under [him], for taking "advantage of her inexperience", and for tol[ing] her out for walks, and [getting] her to agree to a long engagement before she well knew her own mind" (Hardy, *JO* 182). The abuse of power that originated their relationship then leads to another kind of domestic violence touched upon by Hardy in his novel, that of psychological abuse. Indeed, physical harm is here replaced by emotional torture as Sue is held captive in an unwanted marriage and a house that has never felt like home. In the following extract, the topic of domestic violence is broached through Sue's state of deep emotional distress and weathered physical appearance:

> Then the slim little wife of a husband whose person was disagreeable to her, the ethereal, fine-nerved, sensitive girl, quite unfitted by temperament and instinct to fulfil the conditions of the matrimonial relation with Phillotson, possibly with scarce any man, walked fitfully along, and panted, and brought weariness into her eyes by gazing and worrying hopelessly. (Hardy, *JO* 173)

Attempting her best to cope with her confined situation, the young lady is driven to extreme acts of self-defence which include locking herself up into a narrow clothes-closet in order to spend the night away from her husband (Hardy, *JO* 174-175). In accordance with the

progressive laws which were passed from the mid-nineteenth century onwards to protect the rights of wives in marriage,[5] Hardy illustrates in his novel the values of a "Victorian regime" which, "for the first time in history, clearly articulated specific standards proclaiming the intolerability of marital violence and created institutions to aids its victims" (Moon 1-2). It is because domestic violence was already believed to take different forms and not only that of physical abuse, that "the 1844 Matrimonial Causes Act banned husband from forcing their wives to return home", whatever the reasons which prompted them to leave (Moon 6). However, Hardy draws our attention to the case of the dutiful and Christian wife who would never leave without her husband's consent, despite her knowing he would not legally be able to chase her back. In fact, Hardy demonstrates in his novel that the alternative of death sounds preferable to that of desertion, from the perspective of obedient wives like Sue. In a nightmarish scene, the young woman attempts suicide in utter horror as her husband enters her room by mistake during the night:

> There was a cry from the bed, and a quick movement. Before the schoolmaster had realized where he was he perceived Sue starting up half-awake, staring wildly, and springing out upon the floor on the side away from him, which was towards the window. This was somewhat hidden by the canopy of the bedstead, and in a moment he heard her flinging up the sash. Before he had thought that she meant to do more than get air she had mounted upon the sill and leapt out. She disappeared in the darkness, and he heard her fall below. (Hardy, *JO* 179)

This passage powerfully shows the psychological but also physical damages of emotional abuse and emphasises the deadly threat it constitutes for women. The dysfunctional relationship between Sue and Phillotson has important ontological consequences for the female protagonist who is forever condemned to be defined as his wife, even kilometres away from him, as a lover to Jude. Hardy's novel unequivocally shows how domestic imprisonment and emotional abuse eventually lead to the fragmentation of the female self.

There is one extreme sort of violence against women which results in the shattering of the female self in million pieces – the crime of rape. In *Awful Nearness: Rape and the English Novel, 1740-1900*, Erin A. Spampinato explains how "rape was a particularly resonant representational site for novelists concerned with exploring the essential isolation of human

[5] In 1870 was the Married Women's Property Act was passed, later followed by its 1882 and 1884 amendments which allowed women to receive "equitable property rights" and "function as social and economic agents" (Moon 5). In 1891, judges first declared that husbands did not have the right to beat or confine their wives.

minds and the various ways such minds try and fail to connect to one another" (Spampinato 1). As I have argued from the beginning of this chapter, Hardy was one of those novelists who were committed to studying these particular contacts which attempt to bridge the gap between self and other, and which participate in shaping or destroying individualities. In this perspective, and at the risk of being censored, Hardy represented the crime of rape in two of his novels, *Far From the Madding Crowd* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. As soon as the latter was published, readers and critics started to perform what Spampinato refers to as "adjudicative criticism", that is "the practice in which readers attempt to (…) decide in a legal sense whether rape occurred in the fictional world of the novel" (Spampinato 14). In the case of Hardy's novel, a question therefore arises: was Tess actually raped by Alec d'Ubervilles or was she merely seduced? What is interesting and peculiar with Hardy's representation of rape is that he makes it very difficult for the readers to pinpoint one particular scene as the "rape scene" and therefore makes the identification of the crime even more difficult. Indeed, several scenes between Tess and Alec contain sexual innuendos while suggesting a lack of consent on the part of the heroine. One immediately thinks about the scene in which Alec forces a strawberry into her cousin's mouth, resulting in Tess's "eating in an abstracted half-hypnotised state whatever d'Urberville offered her" (Hardy, *Tess* 42). At several points in the novel, Tess's acts are indeed described as being done under duress and without a full awareness of her doing them. In the three following extracts, Tess's mouth is the object of Alec's attention as he demands that she kisses him or that she whistles for him:

> He was inexorable, and she sat still, and d'Urberville gave her the kiss of mastery. No sooner had he done so than she flushed with shame, took out her handkerchief, and wiped the spot on her cheek that had been touched by his lips. His ardour was nettled at the sight, for the act on her part had been unconsciously done. (Hardy, *Tess* 56)
>
> But he persisted in his demand, and at last, to get rid of him, she did put her lips as directed, laughing distressfully, however, before she could succeed in producing a clear note, and then blushing with vexation that she had laughed. (Hardy, *Tess* 62)
>
> Her eyes vaguely rested upon the remotest trees in the lane while the kiss was given, as though she were nearly conscious of what he did. (Hardy, *Tess* 78)

Processes of coercion and self-dissociation are at work in these three passages, suggesting that the heroine is only trying to cope with a situation she cannot have the upper-hand on. If

Spampinato warns us against a tendency to investigate the authors' writings in the hope of proving that a rape did or did not take place, it is still essential, in my opinion, to respond to a dangerous discourse from critics like James A. W. Heffernan, who proceeded to blame the victim in arguing that Tess consciously let herself be seduced by d'Urbervilles (Spampinato 32-33). If Hardy never makes it clear that an actual rape happened, suggestions from the narrator are more than enough to indicate to the reader that D'Urbervilles's approach to Tess in the middle of the night as she is "sleeping soundly" on the ground (Hardy, *Tess* 73), cannot possibly results in consented sexual intercourse. In fact, it is precisely the lack of details that makes the scene undeniably traumatic – trauma being defined by contemporary critics as "a speechless void, unpresentable, inherently pathologic, timeless and repetitious" (Balaev quoted in Spampinato 186). Instead of describing the crime in revolting details, Hardy chooses to silence it and to focus on what truly matters: "the meaning of the act to its victi[m]" (MacKinnon quoted in Spampinato). In doing so, the author implicitly declares that as long as the act is felt as an aggression to the woman, and as long as negative consequences ensue for her, then no other information is needed to be able to consider it as an act of violence against a woman. Taking up a philosophical tone, the narrator then laments over the unfairness of a crime the reader has not actually read about but is all the more conscious of:

> Why it was that upon this beautiful feminine tissue, sensitive as gossamer, and practically blank as snow as yet, there should have been traced such a coarse pattern as it was doomed to receive; why so often the coarse appropriates the finer thus, the wrong man the woman, the wrong woman the man, many thousand years of analytical philosophy have failed to explain to our sense of order. One may, indeed, admit the possibility of a retribution lurking in the present catastrophe. Doubtless some of Tess d'Urberville's mailed ancestors rollicking home from a fray had dealt the same measure even more ruthlessly towards peasant girls of their time. But though to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children may be a morality good enough for divinities, it is scorned by average human nature; and it therefore does not mend the matter.
>
> As Tess's own people down in those retreats are never tired of saying among each other in their fatalistic way: "It was to be." There lay the pity of it. An immeasurable social chasm was to divide our heroine's personality thereafter from that previous self of hers who stepped from her mother's door to try her fortune at Trantridge poultry-farm. (Hardy, *Tess* 74)

The last sentences of this passage make clear the fragmentation of Tess's self and the social isolation that were bound to result from her being physically abused. As one of the most dysfunctional human contacts, the representation of rape here serves to demonstrate – if it were still needed – how the (de)construction of the self, and of the female self in particular, is dependent on the contact with otherness. On this subject, Spampinato declares that one of the main achievements of Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* lies in "its account of the self-as-constituted-by the Other, and in particular, as-constituted-by the abuses of the Other" (Spampinato 187). Hardy's focus on the female experience in his novel attests to his commitment to denouncing "a structure of oppression around which women's lives have been organized for centuries" (Spampinato 155). Lawrence's take on the subject of rape, on the other hand, does not necessarily stem from the same commitment and is, as is customary with the author, quite ambivalent. Indeed, the various sex scenes one can find in Lawrence's works tend to present a blurred conception of consent, to the point of associating coercion or the state of unawareness with pleasure. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, as Connie and Mellors are having sex for the first time, the young lady is said to be in a lethargic state quite similar to Tess's own state when she was abused by Alec:

> She lay still, in a kind of sleep, always in a kind of sleep. The activity, the orgasm was his, all his: she could strive for herself no more. Even the tightness of his arms around her, even the intense movement of his body, and the springing of his seed in her, was a kind of sleep, from which she did not begin to rouse till he had finished and lay softly panting against her breast.
>
> Then she wondered, just dimly wondered, why? Why was this necessary? Why had it lifted a great cloud from her, and given her peace? Was it real? Was it real? (Lawrence, *LCL* 117)

A twenty-first century reader, keenly aware of the definition of consent, inevitably feels uncomfortable as he or she reads about a woman who seems to be half-conscious, suffering passively the sexual act. The second paragraph of this passage does not make the uneasiness go away, when the use of free indirect speech suggests that Connie's feelings about what just happened are actually peacefulness and relief. One interpretation of this passage, taken in the context of the beginning of the book, could be that Connie's sleep is actually a metaphor for the lethargic state she has been in because of her dull life with her husband, and from which Mellors, through meaningful physical contact, manages to rise her up. However, the state of

sleep is here related to "the intense movement of [Mellors's] body" and no specific element suggests that the intercourse is helping Connie to liberate herself in any way. As a result, I am inclined to interpret this scene as a representation of woman's sexual pleasure understood as dependent on the silent and resigned acceptation of man's wish, dangerously leaning towards the banalisation of rape. A scene from *Sons and Lovers* tends to confirm such an assumption for it describes Miriam and Paul's first sexual intercourse in terms that again invoke female self-sacrifice and male self-indulgent domination:

> He seemed to be almost unaware of her as a person: she was only to him then a woman. She was afraid.
>
> He stood against a pine-tree trunk and took her in his arms. She relinquished herself to him, but it was a sacrifice in which she felt something of horror. This thick-voiced, oblivious man was a stranger to her.
>
> Later it began to rain. The pine-trees smelled very strong. Paul lay with his head on the ground, on the dead pine needles, listening to the sharp hiss of the rain—a steady, keen noise. His heart was down, very heavy. Now he realised that she had not been with him all the time, that her soul had stood apart, in a sort of horror. He was physically relieved, but no more. Very dreary at heart, very sad, and very tender, his fingers wandered over her face pitifully. Now again she loved him deeply. He was tender and beautiful. (Lawrence, *SL* 330)

Here, the sexual act in itself is silenced, which would be another argument in favour of interpreting it as non-consensual sex resulting in the creation of a laconic traumatic memory in Miriam's mind. Yet, the focalisation of the passage is not on the female character but rather on Paul who is presented as the victim of Miriam's aloofness and inability to connect with him. When the narrator focuses back on Miriam, only her loving feelings and adoration for the young man are conveyed. As opposed to Hardy's treatment of non-consensual sex, Lawrence's perspective does not demonstrate how enforced contact with the Other may have disastrous consequences on the development of the self. The female sacrifice of her body to the man is nothing but a rite of passage, in Lawrence's novels under study, that serves to shape one's individuality rather than breaking it. Paul's resulting sadness and the two lovers eventual incompatibility, however, attests of Lawrence's wish to present this relationship as imperfect and to avoid praising non-consensual sex. A knowledge of his clear-cut condemnation of domestic violence makes his ambiguous treatment of non-reciprocal sexual bliss all the more

unfathomable, unless one is to understand that sexual violence only equals physical abuse in the author's mind, and does not include psychological manipulation or failure to obtain consent from the partner. In *Love and Sex* in D. H. Lawrence, David Ellis explains that "while Lawrence was in North America he appears to have wanted to write about the subjection of women, and how sexual intercourse can bring them to accept male dominance" (Ellis 138). In the end, Lawrence's perspective on non-consensual sex may betray an inability to accept "the perverse reality that physical contact – even of the intimate kinds – is incapable of breaking down the immutable barriers between our own perceptions and those of others" (Spampinato 5). Indeed, if one remains unreachable, then he or she is to remain inexorably un-subjected, and unloved. Yet, a change of perspective might very well help us accept the unreachable dimension of the Other, as soon as one understands that "possession is not about wanting the other" but "about not wanting the other" (Young 167).

2. Falling in Love and Finding Oneself: Hardy's and Lawrence's Novels as "Bildungsromances"

The first part of this chapter has been dedicated to demonstrating how Hardy and Lawrence use their novels to warn their readers about the ontological dangers of love and to draw their attention to the intricate link that exists between self-development and contact with otherness. This second part acts as a counterpoint to the first, while keeping the focus on the dialectic between love and ontology. Despite the threats that come with the intimate contact with the Other, I argue that Hardy and Lawrence do not encourage their readers to give up on relationships and to withdraw from any human contact to protect their individualities. On the contrary, the six novels under study are built around the tying and untying of the hero or heroine's relationships, just as the reader follows his or her development over years. As such, the novels are not only bildungsromans but could be best defined as what I would call "bildungsromances", for the key role played by romantic ties in the construction of the protagonists. Hardy and Lawrence's centrifugal vision of characterisation is once again conveyed through the representation of "the earliest experience of selfhood" as being concomitant with "the earliest experience of otherness" (Abram, *Becoming Animal* 38). This assumption is confirmed by David W. de Villiers who declared that, "for Lawrence, to enter

into vital relation with something external to ourselves – a relation that, we way recall, relativizes our identity – is finally to approach the quality of otherness that resides within ourselves" (de Villiers 81). Falling in love, in both Hardy and Lawrence, often means finding oneself.

a. The Interdependence of Man's and Woman's growth in Heteronormative Relationships

When Darwin coined the phrase "struggle for existence," he did not just have in mind the destruction of the Other for the preservation of the self, but rather meant it "in a large and metaphorical sense" as "dependence of one being on another, and including (more importantly), not only the life of the individual, but success in leaving progeny" (Darwin 75). In Darwinian terms, the existence of man and woman are co-dependent because the process of coming into existence implies contact with the Other of the opposite sex, which itself results in engendering life. In *Study of Thomas Hardy*, Lawrence translates in philosophical terms Darwin's scientific theory as he declares that "the via media to being, for man or woman, is love, and love alone" (Lawrence, *Study* 20). When tackling the representation of woman as a tool for man, the idea of a necessary female presence for the development of the man was also introduced. Objectified as she might be, the female figure in Lawrence's work is no less indispensable for the construction of his male characters. In *Sons and Lovers*, not only does Miriam help Paul to think about philosophical subjects but she helps him shape "his sense of his particular masculinity" (Gifford 8). The narrator declares: "She alone was his threshing floor. She alone helped him towards realisation. Almost impassive, she submitted to his argument and expounding. And somehow, because of her, he gradually realised where he was wrong. And what he realised, she realised. She felt he could not do without her" (Lawrence, *SL* 267). Here, the use of the word "realisation" is two-folded since it may refer to the process of being aware of a piece of knowledge, or to the process of achieving the fullest version of oneself. The metaphor of the threshing floor, on the other hand, subverts the idea of male supremacy which was suggested by the objectification of woman, since the one suffering the action here is not the woman but the man – indeed, in agriculture, the threshing floor is "what grain is *threshed against*" (*Wordreference*). To come into being, man therefore has to go through the female machinery – both metaphorically and literally – , which alone will separate the wheat from the chaff in each man and reveal their true potentials. No wonder then, that Christian Cantle is

fearing for the preservation of his virility in Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, when he hears that "there was no moon" on the night he was born (Hardy, *TRN* 29). The saying "no moon, no man" (Hardy, *TRN* 29) which the young man has learned from his mother serves to perform the association of "sexual vigour with the full moon" (Hardy, *TRN*, note on the text 401) and, consequently, that of virility with the illuminating presence of a woman. Indeed, the moon being commonly identified with femininity, this folk saying suggests that the realisation of a man's true potential does not rely on a superior male power but rather on a mystic female presence. Quite logically then, the more feminine the woman turns out to be, the more masculine the man who comes into contact with her will be. A female character like Sue in *Jude the Obscure* does not make things easy for her male counterpart Jude, as the young woman does not seem to fit into traditional norms of femininity. Indeed, Sue's persistent refusal to accept the living conditions granted to women often makes her a gender-fluid character, a "Ganymedes" (Hardy, *JO* 123) whose hermaphroditic dimension threatens the core of Jude's self: "He looked away, for that epicene tenderness of hers was too harrowing" (Hardy, *JO* 122). At several points in the book, Sue's "strange ways and curious unconsciousness of gender" make her cousin "much depressed" (Hardy, *JO* 119), as if her behaviour prevented him from becoming the powerful man he was destined to be. Arabella, on the other hand, is entirely defined by her femininity, to the point of being often sexualised. As a consequence, she is the one who is endowed with the responsibility of revealing Jude's sex to him. After having flung "the characteristic part of a barrow-pig"[6] (Hardy, *JO* 33) at him, Jude's future wife demands that he literally picks his virility up: "'Bring back what is lying there.' (…) He set down his basket of tools, picked up the scrap of offal, beat a pathway for himself with his stick, and got over the edge" (Hardy, *JO* 34). Knowing that Darwin "makes sexual difference one of the ontological characteristics of life itself" (Alaimo and Hekman 44), then coming into contact with the opposite gender proves necessary to plant the roots of one's existence.

The complementary essence of man and woman was analysed by de Beauvoir as part of a patriarchal representation that associates femaleness with immanence and maleness with transcendence. In *The Second Sex*, she underlines the necessity for man to be in close contact with female immanence so as to access complete transcendence himself:

> The fact is that every human existence involves transcendence and immanence at the same time; to go forward, each existence must be maintained, for it to expand towards the

[6] A footnote confirms that "the characteristic part" refers to the penis (Hardy, *JO* 33).

future it must integrate the past, and while inter-communicating with others it should find self-confirmation. These two elements—maintenance and progression – are implied in any living activity, and for *man* marriage permits precisely a happy synthesis of the two. (…) and when he is tired of such roaming, he gets himself a home, he settles down, and has an anchorage in the world. (de Beauvoir 419, emphasis in the original)

Here, De Beauvoir takes up Darwin's argument about the ontological interdependency of the sexes but draws her readers' attention to the fact that what is supposed to be a reciprocal relationship is in fact a one-sided dynamic in favour of the man. The imagery of the "anchorage in the world" condemns woman to immobility while allowing man to move about without ever risking to lose himself in the way. Such an imagery is conveyed in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, as part of a characterisation process which demonstrates the key role of the heroine in the construction of the hero's identity. As he observes Sue, unbeknownst to her, during the morning service in the Cathedral-church of Cardinal College, Jude experiences his first contact with female immanence and instantly feels transcended by his cousin's presence:

> The girl for whom he was beginning to nourish an extraordinary tenderness was at this time ensphered by the same harmonies as those which floated into his ears; and the thought was a delight to him. She was probably a frequenter of this place, and, steeped body and soul in church sentiment as she must be by occupation and habit, had, no doubt, much in common with him. To an impressionable and lonely young man the consciousness of having at last found anchorage for his thoughts, which promised to supply both social and spiritual possibilities, was like the dew of Hermon, and he remained throughout the service in a sustaining atmosphere of ecstasy. (Hardy, *JO* 75)

Thanks to Sue's female presence, Jude here becomes a Christ-like figure who is able to be reborn into a perfected version of himself. What might at first come across as a scene of deep interconnection between the two protagonists, fostered by the spiritual and musical environment, quickly becomes a phallocentric scene as the heroine only represents a means to an end for Jude. Literally subjected to the male gaze, Sue is "ensphered", unaware, by Jude's will, and becomes responsible for the "social and spiritual possibilities" that will be offered to him. For woman to be an anchor to man's existence, she inevitably needs to put her own process of self-construction aside. De Beauvoir reasserts this idea as she declares that "the Other" – that is woman – "is posed as such by the One in defining himself as the One" (de Beauvoir 19). Simultaneous to the construction of the male self seems to be the effacement of the female self,

since “man seeks for his complement” (Lawrence, *Study* 58) in woman, rather than seeking for his equal. In the extract of *Jude the Obscure* quoted above, the critical tone of the narrator can be heard behind the protagonist’s inner thoughts, namely through his being described as “an impressionable and lonely young man” who appears to be largely making up the mystic dimension of the scene (“she was probably…; she must be…; [she] had, no doubt,…”). Hardy’s strategy in this scene demonstrates, in my opinion, his being aware of the limits of “using” woman as a foundation for one’s existence. In *Study of Thomas Hardy*, Lawrence argues quite the opposite in emphasising the need for the male process of self-construction to be supported, literally and metaphorically, by a female figure: “Man, the male, is essentially a thing of movement and time and change. (…) No man can endure the sense of space, of chaos, on four sides of him. It drives him mad. He must be able to put his back to the wall. And this wall is his woman” (Lawrence, *Study* 58). Whether it be through the imagery of the wall or the anchor, woman is again associated with stillness and stability, as key to Lawrence’s ideal of Positive Inertia which will be explored further in part two of this work. In *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, the two male figures, Clifford and Mellors, seem to share their creator’s belief in the power of femininity to regenerate one’s virility. In the first pages of the novel, Clifford’s desire to get married during the war is associated to an instinct of self-preservation on his part: “The gay excitement had gone out of the war –dead. Too much death and horror. A man needed support and comfort. A man needed to have an anchor in the safe world. A man needed a wife” (Lawrence, *LCL* 12). Here, the structural parallelism of the last three sentences serves to perform the direct association between femaleness and the concepts of “support, comfort”, and safety. As a beacon in the night of Jude’s uncertain life or as a regenerating power against war’s devastating consequences, the female figure in both Hardy and Lawrence is synonymous with life and growth, and more specifically that of man. Alone, Clifford is described by the narrator as “a lost thing” who “needed Connie to be there, to assure him that he existed at all” (Lawrence, *LCL* 16). More than symbolising comfort or a vision of hope, the meaningful contact with a woman in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* is an indispensable condition for the development and thriving of the male self. If it might have been unconscious in Clifford’s mind when he married Connie, the ontological power of love is much more asserted in the character of Mellors who declares to the young woman: “For me it’s the core of my life: if I have a right relation with a woman” (Lawrence, *LCL* 204). For Lawrence’s male characters, to be loved indeed fits the definition given by Andy Fisher in *Ecopsychology, Psychology in the Service of Life*. He writes: “To be loved is to have our own being affirmed, to feel connected to and embraced by others;

love is thus the source of our ontological security, of feeling grounded in our own being" (Fisher 99). Yet, if "he is the Subject" and "she is the Other" (de Beauvoir 16), how can a woman's self be affirmed by being "embraced" by others?

In "Embodied Love: D. H. Lawrence, Modernity and Pregnancy," Candis Bond argues that "embodied love", rather than helping them grow, "complicates the process of self-realization for Lawrence's female characters" (Bond 2). My own reading of Lawrence, and of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in particular, have tended towards validating such an assumption, despite Lawrence's apparent focus on the development of his heroine throughout the novel. Out of the six novels in the corpus, Lawrence's last novel is probably the one that fits best the "bildungsromance" denomination, insofar as the reader follows Connie's personal growth through different stages of her life that correspond to different relationships with men – first with Clifford (who will always be in the background), then Michaelis, and then Mellors. If it is undeniable that Connie does gradually liberate herself from a life that is literally boring her to death, it is also true to say that she does so through the help of another man. From the beginning of the novel, Connie's existence is introduced as co-dependent with those of male figures around her, and she is said to be "weav[ing] a steady life with [Clifford], all one fabric (…)" (Lawrence, *LCL* 45). Clifford himself, till the very end of the novel, considers his wife as an integral part of himself, describing her as "embedded in his will" (Lawrence, *LCL* 294). In finding shelter in the gamekeeper's hut, Connie frees herself from an oppressive and destructive relationship but is still far from recovering her individuality and from building a character for herself, which she never quite got the chance to build before. On the contrary, Connie's new and evolving personality feeds on her physical contacts with her lover and her self-perception becomes dependent on her lover's own perception of her. The male gaze applied to the female protagonist has once again ontological implications, since Connie seems to rediscover herself every time Mellors lays eyes on her: "He was sitting up in bed, looking down at her. She saw her own nakedness in his eyes, immediate knowledge of her. And the fluid, male knowledge of herself seemed to flow to her from his eyes and wrap her voluptuously" (Lawrence, *LCL* 248). In this passage, Connie's embodied womanhood is infused with the man's perspective to the point of becoming entangled with his own manhood. Rather than being a liberating movement of consciousness, the movement which is described here is one of entrapment, giving the impression that Connie's personality is stifled by Mellors' desiring gaze. The gamekeeper has literally got under the young woman's skin, despite Mrs Bolton's previous warnings: "It's terrible, once you've got a man into your blood!" (Lawrence, *LCL* 163). What is ambivalent

here, and makes the study of Lawrence's novel so interesting, is that Mellors breathes his manhood into Connie, just as he breathes life into her, thereby participating in defining her womanhood in turn. Through several sensual scenes, Lawrence conveys the idea that transmissions of flows in a relationship are at the roots of both love and self-development. "Knowledge of herself" but also feelings of peacefulness and happiness come from to her from her lover in one unique movement:

> She looked in his face anxiously. It was thin, and the cheekbones showed. But his eyes smiled at her, and she felt at home with him. There it was: suddenly, the tension of keeping up her appearances fell from her. Something flowed out of him physically, that made her feel inwardly at ease and happy, at home. With a woman's now alert instinct for happiness, she registered it at once. 'I'm happy when he's there!' Not all the sunshine of Venice had given her this inward expansion and warmth. (Lawrence, *LCL* 274).

Here again, Connie gladly receives Mellors's life flow which makes her own vital spark shine brighter. Only through the mediation of man does Connie reconnect with her inner self and desires, just as Clara, in *Sons and Lovers*, decides to leave her husband when the latter fails to bring her "into womanhood". When Clara tells her story to Paul, the young man asks in astonishment: "You went to sleep as you grew to be a woman? How queer! And he didn't wake you?" (Lawrence, *SL* 317). In a heteronormative relationship, Lawrence seems to suggest that the man's role is to reveal the woman to herself, thus implying that the state of complete womanhood could not be achieved without him. In Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, the young heroine is precisely defined as a woman by Alec d'Urbervilles, before her child consciousness could even be aware of it. In the following passage, Tess is prematurely sexualised through Alec's insistent gaze on her body:

> He watched her pretty and unconscious munching through the skeins of smoke that pervaded the tent, and Tess Durbeyfield did not divine, as she innocently looked down at the roses in her bosom, that there behind the blue narcotic haze was potentially the "tragic mischief" of her drama—one who stood fair to be the blood-red ray in the spectrum of her young life. She had an attribute which amounted to a disadvantage just now; and it was this that caused Alec d'Urberville's eyes to rivet themselves upon her. It was a luxuriance of aspect, a fulness of growth, which made her appear more of a woman than she really was. She had inherited the feature from her mother without the

> quality it denoted. It had troubled her mind occasionally, till her companions had said that it was a fault which time would cure. (Hardy, *Tess* 42-43)

Here, Tess's childish innocence contrasts with Alec's vision of her as a full-grown and sexually attractive woman. Via Alec's influence and controlling posture, the heroine is forced into womanhood without ever getting the chance to think about the kind of woman she would like to become. As a result, she will continue to be defined by men throughout her life, and most specifically by her husband, Angel, whom she adores and through whose love she is fleetingly "allowed to idolize herself" (de Beauvoir 612). To some extent, Angel's love does grant Tess the power to transcend herself, in that she becomes not only a woman but the epitome of womanhood, the representative of what a woman needs to be, from a man's perspective. As she is being observed by her lover under the light of dawn, Tess is idealised to the point of losing both her individuality and her materiality in the process:

> The mixed, singular, luminous gloom in which they walked along together to the spot where the cows lay often made him think of the Resurrection hour. He little thought that the Magdalen might be at his side. Whilst all the landscape was in neutral shade his companion's face, which was the focus of his eyes, rising above the mist stratum, seemed to have a sort of phosphorescence upon it. She looked ghostly, as if she were merely a soul at large. In reality her face, without appearing to do so, had caught the cold gleam of day from the north-east; his own face, though he did not think of it, wore the same aspect to her.
>
> It was then, as has been said, that she impressed him most deeply. She was no longer the milkmaid, but *a visionary essence of woman—a whole sex condensed into one typical form*. He called her Artemis, Demeter, and other fanciful names half teasingly, which she did not like because she did not understand them. (Hardy, *Tess* 130, my emphasis)

If Lawrence's Connie was allowed to expand herself through the contact with a man, Hardy's Tess is rather condemned to be restricted to pre-made boundaries of womanhood designed by man. Love does help Tess become Woman, and yet does not help her become *the* woman she has inwardly wanted to be. By the end of the novel, she is no longer Tess, but "Mrs Clare – the dear wife of dear he", as her friend Marian calls her (Hardy, *Tess* 282). Just as a woman's love is key to the development of male characters, a man's love is similarly crucial to the construction of female characters and their transition into womanhood. The only difference,

suggested by both Hardy and Lawrence's works, is that male characters get to be the men they want to be through their lovers, while female characters get to be the women their lovers want them to be. The ontological power of love, in any case, is not questioned by either author.

b. The Healing Power of Love

In *Psychosomatic Feminism and the Neurological Body*, Elizabeth A. Wilson explains how "it is the dynamics of intersubjective relations that allow the self to emerge and stabilize" (Wilson 44). As a consequence, she argues that a lack of interactions has destructive effects on the development of an individual and may lead to depression, which she defines as follows:

> Depression is a breakdown in relations to others. The sustaining effects of others have been removed, either chronically or suddenly, and the self is unable to hold itself together, disintegrating into either an affectless immobilization or agitation (or sometimes, paradoxically, both). Speaking psychodynamically, depression is a chronic, inflexible response to the loss of another. The self becomes depleted in the face of isolation and injury and is unable to access others (either internally or in the world). (Wilson 45)

At the other end of the spectrum, as a feeling resulting from the deep connection between two individuals, love then appears as an antidote to depression. Lawrence exemplifies this idea in his "bildungsromances" and especially in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* which starts by the introduction of a heroine withering away precisely because of the state of isolation she has been in. Indeed, the narrator explains how "she had never finally got at [Clifford]", who is himself referred to as "a negation of human contact" (Lawrence 2006, 16). Because she is married to Clifford and condemned to stay within the walls of Wragby, Connie is "so beautifully out of contact" (Lawrence, *LCL* 19) that she begins to feel a "growing restlessness" (Lawrence, *LCL* 20) which her own sister identifies as "depression" (Lawrence, *LCL* 78). If the heroine's recovery will be multifactorial and will have a definitive phenomenological implication which will be studied in part three of this work, it is relevant to note that her discovering true love with Mellors and the maternal longing that comes to accompany it will constitute key elements in her healing process. Even before properly meeting Mellors, Connie's main hobby is to go and watch the hens brooding their chicks, as if she were experiencing maternal love by proxy:

> And, one day when she came, she found two brown hens sitting alert and fierce in the coops, sitting on pheasants' eggs, and fluffed out so proud and deep in all the heat of the pondering female blood. This almost broke Connie's heart. She, herself was so forlorn and unused, not a female at all, just a mere thing of terrors. (…) Now she came every day to the hens, they were the only things in the world that warmed her heart. (Lawrence, *LCL* 113)

For the direct access it grants to the Other, love is represented, in Lawrence's fiction, as key to preserving one's mental health. In *Sons and Lovers*, when Paul has to face the loss of his mother and "things [lose] their reality" (Lawrence 2012, 454), his survival instinct leads him to turn to and seeks comfort in his first love, Miriam:

> He was very thin and lantern-jawed. He dared not meet his own eyes in the mirror; he never looked at himself. He wanted to get away from himself, but there was nothing to get hold of. In despair he thought of Miriam. Perhaps—perhaps—?
>
> Then, happening to go into the Unitarian Church one Sunday evening, when they stood up to sing the second hymn he saw her before him. The light glistened on her lower lip as she sang. She looked as if she had got something, at any rate: some hope in heaven, if not in earth. Her comfort and her life seemed in the after-world. A warm, strong feeling for her came up. She seemed to yearn, as she sang, for the mystery and comfort. He put his hope in her. He longed for the sermon to be over, to speak to her. (Lawrence, *SL* 457)

Ontologically speaking, it is through the mediation of the Other that Paul strives to get back to himself and through the eyes of the Other that he hopes to be able to "meet his own eyes" again. As this scene demonstrates, the loved one is endowed with the power, not only to heal a broken soul, but also to help the individual grow despite the trials life might throw at him or her. As such, love might even be represented as a driving force in the characters' lives and their achievements. In Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, for instance, a very practical kind of love is illustrated in the character of Eustacia, whose feelings turn towards Wildeve or towards Clym, depending on the prospects one or the other is able to offer. From the beginning of the novel, the narrator describes the female character's relation to love in terms which very much echo the longing felt by Lawrence's Lady Chatterley: "To be loved to madness – such was her great desire. Love was to her the one cordial which could drive away the eating loneliness of her days. And she seemed to long for the abstraction called passionate love more than for any

particular lover" (Hardy, *TRN* 71). Even as an abstract concept in the mind of a character who has never yet actually felt it, love is still represented as a healing tool that might even save her life. Indeed, just as Connie's health was impacted by her state of loneliness, Eustacia's emotional despair seems to suggest that her actual survival depends on her being able to love and be loved in return. In quite a melodramatic fashion, she implores an unknown and superior force to save her from her agony: "O deliver my heart from this fearful gloom and loneliness: send me great love from somewhere, else I shall die!" (Hardy, *TRN* 72). When a few weeks later, her prayers are answered, her meeting and falling in love with Clym still appears to result from her own scheme rather than from a gift from fate. Having her heart set on loving this mysterious man coming back from Paris, Eustacia brings about their encounter and demonstrates how "selfishness (…) is frequently the chief constituent of the passion" (Hardy,*TRN* 151): "She had undoubtedly begun to love him. She loved him partly because he as exceptional in this scene, partly because she had from the first instinctively determined to love him, chiefly because she was in desperate need of loving somebody" (Hardy, *TRN* 141). If the impersonal quality of Eustacia's love for Clym is suggested to the reader from the beginning of the novel, it becomes quite explicit when this love fails to perform the action the young woman had expected it would. Loving, to Eustacia, is associated to moving, and her love for Clym is bound to die out as the latter refuses to take her away from the heath, to Paris: "'If you'll go back again I'll—be something,' she said tenderly, putting her head near his breast. 'If you'll agree I'll give my promise, without making you wait a minute longer'" (Hardy, *TRN* 196). In this cue, Eustacia's first pleading words suggest an intricate link between the movement of her lover and her own growth: through her new love, Eustacia not only seeks to be taken away but hopes to be regenerated and allowed to become the fullest version of herself. In both Hardy and Lawrence, love may sometimes appear as a means to an end, but its self-centred dimension never serves to minimise the positive effects it may have on an individual's wellbeing and development.

If romantic love proves to be essential in the construction of Hardy and Lawrence's characters, the special bond between mother and child which was evoked in the first part of this chapter actually plays an equally important role in the characterisation process. The threats to the integrity of the self which might be posed by motherly love are most often compensated for by the prospect of growth and healing it offers. In fact, the stronger the bond is, the better the chances are for the individual to thrive through and be sustained by that love. Psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud never ceased, during his career, to stress the importance of the mother in the

development of the child, defining her presence as "unique, without parallel, established unalterably for a whole lifetime as the first and strongest love-object and as the prototype of all later love relations" (Freud quoted in Mary D. Salter Ainsworth 2). In Hardy's and Lawrence's novels, both the determinative dimension of mother-child love and its particular intensity are illustrated, including in Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, in which the bond between Clym and his mother seems unbreakable despite their disagreements and apparent estrangement. So as to reveal the complexity and the permanency of that type of connection, the narrator explains: "The love between the young man and his mother was strangely invisible now. Of love it may be said, the less earthly the less demonstrative. In its absolutely indestructible form it reaches a profundity in which all exhibition of itself is painful" (Hardy, *TRN* 187). Indeed, the love shared by Clym and his mother is so intense that their subjectivities intermingle so as to create an intangible but paradoxically very solid bond which transcends any difference of opinion. Even as her son goes against her advice in giving up his position in Paris and marrying an unsuitable young woman, Mrs Yeobright is bound to come around to his choice, as explained by the narrator:

> His theory and his wishes about devoting his future to teaching had made an impression on Mrs. Yeobright. Indeed, how could it be otherwise when he was a part of her—when their discourses were as if carried on between the right and the left hands of the same body? He had despaired of reaching her by argument; and it was almost as a discovery to him that he could reach her by a magnetism which was as superior to words as words are to yells. (Hardy, *TRN* 187-188)

Here, the ethereal dimension of their love is counterbalanced by the very material metaphor transforming Clym and his mother into hands belonging to the same body. The imagery of fusion between mother and son, as a return to the genesis of their relationship, demonstrates the ontological implications of that type of love. Indeed, as the only kind of relationship that starts before the birth of the infant, mother-child love seems to seal the two individuals' destinies together for a lifetime. In Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, the fusion between mother and child is conveyed through another corporeal metaphor which best exemplifies the abstract bond which connects Paul and his mother:

> In her arms lay the delicate baby. Its deep blue eyes, always looking up at her unblinking, seemed to draw her innermost thoughts out of her. She no longer loved her husband; she had not wanted this child to come, and there it lay in her arms and pulled

> at her heart. She felt as if the navel string that had connected its frail little body with hers had not been broken. A wave of hot love went over her to the infant. She held it close to her face and breast. With all her force, with all her soul she would make up to it for having brought it into the world unloved. She would love it all the more now it was here; carry it in her love" (Lawrence, *SL* 51)

In this passage, mother-child love is presented as the most intense kind of love and as the one type of connection that blurs the boundaries of the self in a permanent way. In terms of ontological implications for the mother, de Beauvoir explains how this type of love surpasses romantic love in that it alone has the power to emancipate woman. She writes:

> The fusion sought in masculine arms – and no sooner granted than withdrawn – is realized by the mother when she feels her child heavy within her or when she clasps it to her swelling breasts. She is no longer an object subservient to a subject; she is no longer a subject afflicted with the anxiety that accompanies liberty, she is one with that equivocal reality: life. Her body is a last her own, since it exists for the child who belongs to her. (e Beauvoir 467)

Paradoxically enough, what might be seen as a role imposed on woman, maternity is, according to the feminist philosopher, a way for woman to get back in control of her own body and, by extension, of her own life. As she merges with her son, Mrs Morel's existence becomes dependent on her son, the way it never had depended on her husband: "The two knitted together in perfect intimacy. Mrs Morel's life now rooted itself in Paul" (Lawrence, *SL* 171). As a result, her sons' successes become her successes and she is allowed to transcend her female state through them: "Now she had two sons in the world. She could think of two places, great centres of industry, and feel that she had put a man into each of them, and these men would work out what she wanted; they were derived from her, they were of her, and their works also would be hers" (Lawrence, *SL* 127). Here, the notions of ontological entanglement and of transcendence are intrinsically linked and are further explained by de Beauvoir as she writes that "through him she will possess the world – but only on condition that she possesses her son" (de Beauvoir 495). In such a perspective, for the ontological interminglement to be properly performed, the mother needs to belong to the son the way the son belongs to the mother. Indeed, what is true for the mother is true for the son, since the whole novel whose plot is based on the development of Paul is actually a book about the evolution of a mother-son relationship through time. Among all the relationships tied by Paul during his life, one bond remains and is the focus of the novel

– his relationship with his mother, which becomes crucial to the characterisation process: "There was one place in the world that stood solid and did not melt into unreality: the place where his mother was. Everybody else could grow shadowy, almost non-existent to him, but she could not. It was as if the pivot and pole of his life, from which he could not escape, was his mother" (Lawrence, *SL* 261). Again, the solidity of the mother-child tenderness is put forward, as a way to define it both as a source of strength and as a source of comfort.

The mother figure, in Hardy and Lawrence, is represented as very strong and powerful, drawing most of her strength from her children. Because "her existence is justified by the wants she supplies" (de Beauvoir 492), the mother's life force is also relative to her child's specific needs. If her child is in need, then the mother's survival instinct is all the more present, as exemplified by Hardy in both *The Return of the Native* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. In the former, a brief passage by the end of the novel hints at the mother's extraordinary robustness through the character of Thomasin who has just had her baby. As the tension of the scene reaches its climax and she realises that her husband is most likely drowning in the weir at the moment, the young mother manages to pull herself together only, as is suggested by the narrator, for the sake of her baby girl: "When she came to the covered car the horse, though fresh from the stable, was standing perfectly still, as if conscious of misfortune. She saw for the first time whose it was. She nearly fainted, and would have been unable to proceed another step but that the necessity of preserving the little girl from harm nerved her to an amazing self-control" (Hardy, *TRN* 362). The adjective "amazing" used by the narrator here suggests that the ability of the mother in this particular situation is extraordinary and fostered by the intensity of her love for her baby. The same thing is true for Tess who becomes a mother despite herself and yet, who finds out most of the strength she has in her through the necessity to protect her child against the world. The narrator explains: "The baby's offence against society in coming into the world was forgotten by the girl-mother; her soul's desire was to continue that offence by preserving the life of the child" (Hardy, *Tess* 92). In this quotation, the concept of offence is implicitly turned into that of defence, as Tess's love for her child prompts her to rebel against a cruel social system. When her child is dying without having been baptised, Tess moves heaven and earth, quite literally, to save her son's soul, to the point of taking up more-than-human traits and powers. In the absence of a minister, Tess takes it upon herself to baptise her child and immediately enters a state of transcendence of her female self in the process:

> Then their sister, with much augmented confidence in the efficacy of the sacrament, poured forth from the bottom of her heart the thanksgiving that follows,

> uttering it boldly and triumphantly in the stopt-diapason note which her voice acquired when her heart was in her speech, and which will never be forgotten by those who knew her. The ecstasy of faith almost apotheosized her; it set upon her face a glowing irradiation, and brought a red spot into the middle of each cheek; while the miniature candle-flame inverted in her eye-pupils shone like a diamond. The children gazed up at her with more and more reverence, and no longer had a will for questioning. She did not look like Sissy to them now, but as a being large, towering, and awful—a divine personage with whom they had nothing in common. (Hardy, *Tess* 95)

In this passage, the mother figure is made grander and greater by her devotion to her child, to the point of becoming a god-like figure, both to be admired and feared. As touched upon earlier, the love-child connection allows the mother to transcend the limitations of her sex and be considered even superior to man – and here, to non-mother humans as a whole. If she does not quite take up a divine dimension, Mrs Morel in Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* does draw much of her force from her children, including the strength to face the domestic violence she is subjected to. Maternal love, to Mrs Morel, represents first and foremost the end of her state of loneliness and isolation, and the discovery of allies who can help her defend herself against male domination:

> It was about this time that Mrs Morel was destroying her husband's authority. Until now, she had felt too much alone to stand away from him. But William was growing up, and all his young soul was his mother's. Annie too was against her father. Finally, there was this last baby. (…) Morel found his wife was not sufficiently subdued. (…) He shouted at her:
>
> 'I'll make you tremble at the sound of my footstep.' It was a historical phrase in her life." (Lawrence, *SL* 48-49)

Again, the idea of possession is here central to Mrs Morel's feeling of renewed confidence – it is precisely because mother and children are one and the same that she now feels so much stronger, as a multi-layered being, to face her husband's violence. Such fusion between mother and children results in a strong empathy that only enhances their bound. If her children cannot do much, during their childhood, to make their mother's daily life easier, they can surely share her pain and thereby soothe it: "The sense of his sitting in all his pit-dirt, drinking, after a long day's work, not coming home and eating and washing, but sitting drunk on an empty stomach, made Mrs Morel unable to bear herself. From her, the feeling was transmitted to the children.

She never suffered alone any more: the children suffered with her" (Lawrence, *SL* 85). However, Lawrence never fails to underline how pain and suffering are not the only things Paul and his siblings are drawing from their mother in order to give her strength in return. At several points in the novel, the reader is given to understand that Paul's entire life force and achievements rely on his mother's love rather than on any of his lovers' affections. The narrator explains the difference of impact between these two kinds of love: "In contact with Miriam, he gained insight, his vision went deeper. From his mother he drew the life warmth, the strength to produce" (Lawrence, *SL* 190). If Miriam's love allows him to explore the world and himself further, his mother's love is still posed as the founding element of his existence and of his art. Both Hardy and Lawrence therefore seem to share the same respect and fascination for the mother-child relationship, considering this type of love both crucial to the construction of their mother characters and to that of their child characters. Loving the one who begot us or, inversely, the one whom we engendered, seems indeed to be the first step towards connecting to the world and to the whole of Creation.

c. The Phenomenological Power of Love

Throughout this chapter, the relation between love and the field of phenomenology has been suggested by the intrinsically centrifugal dimension of this feeling. In phenomenology, consciousness, just like love, involves an outward movement, "going from the self to the targeted object" (Leroy 2018, 72).[7] Ontologically speaking, phenomenologists believe that "the revelation of the self to the self cannot be performed in a direct way" and that it is precisely "through his or her involvement in the world and in the action that the subject can fulfil himself or herself" (Leroy, *La Phénoménologie* 232).[8] While reminding their readers of the risks of falling in love, Hardy and Lawrence write romances which aim at advocating for a creative rather than a destructive kind of love, focusing, just like phenomenologists, on the ontological gains of opening up to the world and to the Other. In Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the heroine is indeed fulfilling herself entirely through her lover and is allowed to erase her past and be renewed:

> Her affection for him was now the breath of life of Tess's being; it enveloped her as a photosphere, irradiated her into forgetfulness of her past sorrows, keeping back

[7] My translation. Leroy writes: « Toute conscience est mouvement directionnel allant d'un égo à un objet visé. »
[8] My translation. Leroy writes: « La révélation de soi à soi ne saurait se donner de façon directe : c'est dans son engagement au monde et dans l'action que le sujet se réalise. »

> the gloomy spectres that would persist in their attempts to touch her –doubt, fear, moodiness, care, shame. She knew that they were waiting like wolves just outside the circumscribing light, but she had long spells of power to keep them in hungry subjection there. (Hardy, *Tess* 195)

In a very phenomenological way, Tess has found the way to herself through the mediation of her lover Angel, and yet, something is missing in their relationship for it to endure and to preserve the two lovers' integrities over time. As Tess is being healed by Angel's love, a part of her personal history, and therefore a part of herself, is being wiped out while her whole self is being absorbed by her lover's radiating aura (as conveyed by the photosphere metaphor). What is problematic here – and will lead to a tragic ending – is that the connection between the two lovers has gradually evolved into a fusion and has resulted in the loss of their individualities. Lawrence himself warned his readers against such a risk in his *Study of Thomas Hardy*, arguing that lovers have to remain "two, but that they are two-in-one" (Lawrence, *Study* 128). The subtlety that differentiates this type of ideal connection from a consuming passion is further explained by Andy Fisher in *Ecopsychology: Psychology in the Service of Life* where he contends that "the successful graduation into ever-more subtle and complex realms of relationship occurs only under conditions in which we are able to maintain a differentiated rather than a split relation to others" (Fisher 123). To support his argument and clarify the distinction between "differentiating" and "splitting", he then quotes psychoanalyst Nancy Chodrow who asserts that "differenciation (…) is not distinctness and separateness, but a particular way of being connected to others (…)" (Fisher 123). Here, differentiation, rather than being antithetical to connection, actually appears as an ally in building relationships. This delicate equilibrium described by philosophers is probably better illustrated in metaphorical terms by novelists like Hardy, who, in *The Return of the Native*, uses a stellar constellation imagery in order to describe the ideal connection between Eustacia and Clym in their first days of marriage: "Clym and Eustacia, in their little house at Alderworth, were living on with a monotony which was delightful to them. (…) They were like those double stars which revolve round and round each other, and from a distance appear to be one" (Hardy, *TRN* 235). Here, the metaphor of the double stars aptly illustrates the ideal of a two-fold union in love which both Hardy and Lawrence advocate for in their novels. In fact, Lawrence seems to have found in Hardy's imagery the exact illustration of his own conception of love, since the author uses practically the same metaphor in *Women in Love*, so as to convey the idea of differentiation in

connection. As Ursula and Birkin are confronting their different visions of a romantic relationship, Birkin sounds very much like Hardy's narrator in *The Return of the Native*:

> 'Yes –yes—' cried Ursula, pointing her finger at him. 'There you are—a star in its orbit! A satellite! –a satellite of Mars—that's what she is to be! There—there—you've given yourself away! You want a satellite, Mars and its satellite! You've said it—you've said it—you've dished yourself!' (…)
>
> 'I did not say nor imply, a satellite. I meant two single equal stars balanced in conjunction—' (Lawrence, *WL* 150-151)

In this passage, the distinction which is made between a satellite and the conjunction of "two single equal stars" serves as a perfect representation of the distinction between separateness (leading to inequality) and differentiation, which was introduced by Chodrow. In *Women in Love*, Lawrence formulates quite clearly, through the character of Birkin, his relationship ideal which he defines as "a freedom together" (Lawrence, *WL* 132) or as a "mutual unison in separateness" (Lawrence, *WL* 264). In his 1920 novel, Lawrence uses the relationship between Gudrun and Gerald as a counterpoint to the ultimately perfect relationship between Ursula and Birkin, condemning the first couple to a "juxtaposition" (Lawrence, *WL* 346) rather than allowing them to properly connect. On the other hand, as the plot unfolds, Birkin's thoughts about love are given more and more importance, in an attempt to convince Ursula to abandon herself to him and, on a metafictional plane, to convince the readers that this type of love is indeed the right type of love:

> There was the paradisal entry into pure, single being, the individual soul taking precedence over love and desire for union, stronger than any pangs of emotion, a lovely state of free proud singleness, which accepted the obligation of the permanent connection with others, and with the other, submits to the yoke and leash of love, but never forfeits its own proud individual singleness, even while it loves and yields. (Lawrence, *WL* 254)

This passage demonstrates how love, in Birkin's view, should not involve the loss of oneself to the loved one but should rather be about "recognis[ing] and admitt[ing] the law of the other person, outside and different from the law of one's own being" (Lawrence, *Study* 124). Throughout the novel, Lawrence proves how it is in the very act of love, when the boundaries of the selves are paradoxically the most porous, that this ideal is to be achieved.

If Hardy was undeniably "what we would call today 'sex positive'" (Spampinato 197), his treatment of sex and sexual desire in his novels remains quite indirect and reserved, as was the case with most Victorian authors. Sexual desire is not presented as shameful but is not introduced as the key element of any romantic relationship either. For Lawrence, on the other hand, sex has both a relational and an ontological function since it allows lovers to strengthen and perfect their connection while it lets each of them access a higher plane of existence. The scandalous *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is naturally the novel best fitted for the exploration of the ontological implications of sex, as conceived by Lawrence. In the following passage taken from his *Study of Thomas Hardy,* Lawrence articulates clearly the vital importance of sex in a man's life: "Upon [the sexual act] turns the whole rest of his life, from this emanates every motion he betrays. (…) The supreme desire of every man is for mating with a woman, such that the sexual act be the closest, most concentrated motion in his life, (…), the prime movement of himself, of which all the rest of his motion is a continuance in the same kind" (Lawrence, *Study* 56). If it may be argued that the phallocentric undertone which characterises this quotation pervades Lawrence's last novel, it is only fair to underline that the narrator of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* equally focuses on the ontological implications of the sexual act for the female lover and for the male lover. For Mellors, first, sex becomes "a moment of completeness and sleep" that serves to compensate for "his own unfinished condition of aloneness" (Lawrence, *LCL* 143). In other words, sex results in a deep connection with the Other, which in turn helps to enriching the self and opening it up to the world. What is being expressed in implicit terms would be formulated years later by phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty, who evokes the importance of sexuality in the development of the self, in *Phenomenology of Perception*: "In so far as a man's sexual history provides a key to his life, it is because in his sexuality is projected his manner of being towards the world, that is, towards time and other men" (Merleau-Ponty, *PP* 183). Through sex, man transcends himself, and so does woman – Lawrence suggests in his novel. Indeed, Connie is also said to be in the process of accessing a higher plane of existence, achieving the fullest version of herself, just after having had sex with Mellors:

> Connie went slowly home, realizing the depth of the other thing in her. Another self was alive in her, burning molten and soft in her womb and bowels, and with this self she adored him. She adored him till her knees were weak as she walked. In her womb and bowels she was flowing and alive now and vulnerable, and helpless in adoration of him as the most naive woman. It feels like a child, she said to herself it

> feels like a child in me. And so it did, as if her womb, that had always been shut, had opened and filled with new life, almost a burden, yet lovely. (Lawrence, *LCL* 135)

For its direct link with the female reproductive function, this passage may appear to reduce Connie's sexual experience to an anticipation of maternity. However, what comes across in this extract is also the outward movement that characterises Connie's experience and her openness to the world, as a renewed being. As such, the passage takes up a phenomenological dimension that is to be found again and again in the novel's erotic scenes. As the heroine explores her sexuality further, she becomes more and more connected, not only to her lover, but also to the world:

> She quivered again at the potent inexorable entry inside her, so strange and terrible. It might come with the thrust of a sword in her softly-opened body, and that would be death. She clung in a sudden anguish of terror. But it came with a strange slow thrust of peace, the dark thrust of peace and a ponderous, primordial tenderness, such as made the world in the beginning. (Lawrence, *LCL* 173-174)

The substance of Connie's feeling as she experiences pleasure is being compared to the actual substance of the world – an association which suggests a very phenomenological conception of the sexual act. In defining sex as "a creative act that is far more than procreative" (Lawrence 2006, 279), the narrator of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* presents sex as a medium for the characters to reconnect to the whole of Creation, through the process of creation that is the novel.

Ultimately, love, in both Hardy and Lawrence, serves to define further the relational ontology that is being developed in their novels. Not only does the contact with a loved one help to fortify the self, but, in its most perfect version, love is supposed to allow a transcendence of the limitations of the self, resulting not only in a deeper connection with the lover but with the world as a whole. Drawing from Merleau-Ponty, phenomenologist Emmanuel de Saint Aubert identified this process by suggesting that "a healthy relationship between two individuals implies a third party called 'the being,' which supports and carries each individual. 'The being' is in between one and the other, in the space which separates and gathers" (Leroy, *La Phénoménologie* 90).[9] In phenomenological studies, the ideal type of love is therefore the type of love that connects two individuals without blurring the boundaries of their respective

[9] My translation. Leroy writes: « A partir de Merleau-Ponty, Emmanuel de Saint Aubert suggère au contraire qu'une relation saine entre deux personnes implique un tiers: « l'être », qui soutient et porte chaque individu. « L'être » est entre l'un et l'autre, dans l'espace qui sépare et qui rassemble ».

selves or fusing them together. On the contrary, a phenomenological love is a love that draws sustenance from each being so as to create a greater, multi-dimensional Being. Decades before Merleau-Ponty or Emmanuel de Saint Aubert could have the chance to think about it or formulate it, Lawrence was already introducing this ideal of love in his *Study of Thomas Hardy.* In a phenomenologically-charged passage, the author explains how love is not about fusion but about co-creation:

> In love, in the act of love, that which is mixed in me becomes pure, that which is female in me is given to the female, that which is male in her draws into me, I am complete, I am pure male, she is pure female, we rejoice in contact perfect and naked and clear, singled out unto ourselves, and given the surpassing freedom. (…) For she is she and I am I, and, clasped together with her, I know how perfectly she is not me, how perfectly I am not her, how utterly we are two, the light and darkness, and how infinitely and eternally not-to-be-comprehended by either of us, is the surpassing One we make. (Lawrence, *Study* 80)

Lawrence's "surpassing One" sounds very much like an earlier version of de Saint Aubert's "third party called 'the being'", both concepts suggesting that the ultimate form of love is symbiosis, rather than endosymbiosis. Indeed, the former is defined as the "association of two different organisms which live attached to each other and contribute to each other's support", while the latter is "a form of symbiosis in which one organism lives inside another" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Whether it is called "the being" or "the surpassing One", this entity is created from a collaboration of the two parties, each investing their whole being so as to achieve the best versions of themselves. In Lawrence's fictional world, this idealised type of love implies, for Connie Chatterley, "the loss of herself to herself" (Lawrence, *LCL* 135). Here, the narrator's very enigmatic and paradoxical description of the process of falling in love actually reveals the secrets of its workings: first a transcending movement to overcome the limits of the self, and then a (re)discovery of one's true and most intimate self. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is not the only novel in which Lawrence's specific conception of love is being featured. In *Women in Love*, the author explores the way that ideal type of love can be achieved through the relationship between Ursula and Birkin. Following a very intense scene of physical and spiritual communion between the two lovers, the narrator's focalisation on both of them allows the reader to comprehend quite clearly what is at stake in the "surpassing One" mentioned in his non-fictional essay. What is described in the following passage is nothing but a fictional

illustration of what ecopsychologists and Buddhist ecologists call "interdependent co-arising, relational origination, or dependent origination" (Vakoch and Castrillon 73):

> It was something beyond love, such a gladness of having surpassed oneself, of having transcended the old existence. How could he say 'I' when he was something new and unknown, not himself at all? This I, this old formula of the age, was a dead letter.
>
> In the new, superfine bliss, a peace superseding knowledge, there was no I and you, there was only the third, unrealised wonder, the wonder of existing not as oneself, but in a consummation of my being and of her being in a new one, a new, paradisal unit regained from the duality. Nor can I say "I love you," when I have ceased to be, and you have ceased to be: we are both caught up and transcended into a new oneness where everything is silent, because there is nothing to answer, all is perfect and at one. Speech travels between the separate parts. But in the perfect One there is perfect silence of bliss. (Lawrence, *WL* 369)

Here, the narrator's mention of a "third, unrealised wonder" anticipates, practically word for word, the phenomenological concept of a third being quoted earlier. Ursula and Birkin are being reborn into a "paradisal unit" which Lawrence defines as the Cosmos and which Merleau-Ponty would call "the chiasm" (Merleau-Ponty, *VI* 215).[10] The British author's and the French philosopher's discourses concur to demonstrate that "all be-ing is 'interbeing'" (Nhat Hanh quoted in Vakoch and Castrillon 79), both in the sense that any existence is relational and in the sense that the core of life is to be found in the space between two (loving) beings. Through love, characters get to become integral parts of Creation and connect, on a deeper level, to their surroundings – to the space between. In Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, where love is more likely to be demystified than idealised, the heroine is allowed to experience, through her fleeting union with Angel, a phenomenological connection to the world,. It is precisely on the day of the legal and religious pronouncement of their love that the young woman experiences a state in which everything around her disappears and yet, everything is rediscovered:

> Upheld by the momentum of the time, Tess knew nothing of this, did not see anything, did not know the road they were taking to the church. She knew that Angel was close to her; all the rest was a luminous mist. She was a sort of celestial person, who owed her being to poetry—one of those classical divinities Clare was accustomed

[10] Merleau Ponty's concepts of chiasm and Flesh of the World will be extensively explored in Part III of this work.

to talk to her about when they took their walks together. The marriage being by licence there were only a dozen or so of people in the church; had there been a thousand they would have produced no more effect upon her. They were at stellar distances from her present world. In the ecstatic solemnity with which she swore her faith to him the ordinary sensibilities of sex seemed a flippancy. (…)

As they came out of church the ringers swung the bells off their rests, and a modest peal of three notes broke forth—that limited amount of expression having been deemed sufficient by the church builders for the joys of such a small parish. Passing by the tower with her husband on the path to the gate she could feel the vibrant air humming round them from the louvred belfry in the circle of sound, and it matched the highly-charged mental atmosphere in which she was living.

This condition of mind, wherein she felt glorified by an irradiation not her own, like the angel whom St John saw in the sun, lasted till the sound of the church bells had died away, and the emotions of the wedding-service had calmed down. (Hardy, *Tess* 212-213)

If there is no mention of a "surpassing One" or of a "third being" *per se*, Tess is surely experiencing a state of transcendence through the perfect symbiosis with her husband. In this scene, the lovers are both in their own little world and deeply connected to the outer world, as a way for the narrator to show how deep intimacy leads to deep awareness. Lawrence's Connie comments upon this paradox in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, arguing that "only people who are capable of real togetherness have that look of being alone in the universe" (Lawrence, *LCL* 271). In fact, a particularly enigmatic character from Hardy's fiction fits into the category of individuals touched upon by Connie in this quotation, that is the character of Diggory Venn, the reddleman, in *The Return of the Native*. Venn's reddish appearance not only grants him a superhuman dimension, but also demonstrates how permeable he is, and therefore, how connected to his environment he is. Much can and will be said about the implications of such a permeable aspect in the third part of this work, but what is relevant here is Hardy's choice of such a character to represent his ideal vision of love. The hero of the book, Clym, is not the one who exemplifies the perfect lover, in Hardy's view. Venn, on the contrary, is literally and metaphorically a third being: a being who gets involved and tries to interfere in a positive way in others' relationships, and a being who, for his half-human appearance, could be said to stand in the space between two lovers, between humans and the world around. This peculiar status grants him the power to love disinterestedly, which is an ability no other character in the novel

can boast of. At several points in the unfolding of the plot, Venn is shown to be leaving his own interest aside to "aid [Thomasin] to be happy in her own chosen way" (Hardy, *TRN* 82). The character's love is indeed defined by the narrator as "generous" (Hardy, *TRN* 82) and the relationship between Venn and Thomasin is the only one which is offered a happy ending at the end of the novel. Based on that analysis, it may be said that, to Hardy, the perfect kind of lover is characterised by his openness, both to the world and to the law of the Other.

To be in love, for the Victorian author, is a self-decentring process that, ultimately, allows to better define the centre of the self. In the end, the very abstract and philosophical "surpassing One" theorised by Lawrence is none other than Hardy's Diggory Venn, the humble reddleman who redefines, in a very modern way, the ideal of the prince charming. Love, for both Hardy and Lawrence, is to be found in the space between two individuals, in this grey area (or one should say red area, for Hardy) which involves both losing and gaining, both immanence and transcendence, but which, in any case, is worth losing oneself to oneself.

PART II:

Feeling Human:

Thomas Hardy's and D. H. Lawrence's Organic Fictions

In part one, I have tried to demonstrate how Hardy and Lawrence's relational ontology relies first and foremost on a process of centrifugal characterisation and on the creation of ontological dynamics between the different characters. The development of the two authors' characters therefore depends on the various backgrounds against which they are being shaped, and on the meaningful connections they are building with other characters. In an attempt to further delineate Hardy and Lawrence's relational ontology, I propose to explore their characters' being in the world[1], that is, their different ways of perceiving and understanding the world, along with their place in it. Thus, I will try and decipher the meaning of G.H. Lewes, as he declared that "the mind [was] an expression of organic and social conditions" (Lewes quoted in Rylance 260),[2] with a particular focus on the implications of the word "organic" and its use in literature and philosophy. Exploring the organic in Hardy's and Lawrence's fiction will lead me to identify the various literary devices and concepts that they are both using in order to strengthen the connection between their characters' bodies and minds. I find that a certain type of dualist thinking might be necessary for the two authors to unfold their relational ontology, since the prerequisite for any relation to be created is indeed the emergence of two different poles, or entities. While they are constantly reducing the gap between the psychical life and the physical life, Hardy and Lawrence are making sure to avoid any fusion of the two, thus presenting that life-generating circuit as key to their relational ontology. Precisely because there is no conflation, there is constant motion, in Hardy's and Lawrence's novels, whether it be through the fluidity of the characters' consciousnesses or through their motion, which in turn trigger emotions. Those emotions, according to psychologist Gisèle Apter and fellow authors, are not only "a change in the chemical organisation of the brain", but are first and foremost related to "the way the world is perceived by the subject" (Apter et al. 10). An analysis of processes of perception in the two authors' novels therefore comes hand in hand with an exploration of the way they treat emotions, and more specifically, the embodied experience of emotions. Thus, the present section is dedicated to identifying the ways in which Hardy and Lawrence are offering innovative modes of writing about the human experience, and are suggesting to their readers new ways of approaching a piece of literature, through the embodied process of reading organic fiction.

[1] Heidegger : *Dasein*.
[2] Rylance is quoting from Lewes, *Problems*, IV, 6.

CHAPTER THREE.
Making Sense of the World: Knowledge and the Restoration of the Senses

"Tess's passing corporeal blight had been her mental harvest"
(Hardy, Tess 124)

The present chapter posits that the relational dynamic which characterises the development of the protagonists as individuals, and which was introduced in the two previous chapters, is also at the core of perception processes, based on the cooperation between body and mind. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, philosophers and physiologists started to go against "the traditional Christian distinction between matter and spirit" in developing "what G. H. Lewes called 'a physiological psychology' – a biology of the mind" (Gilmour 139), or what emerged in the early-twentieth century as "dynamic psychology"[3] (Johnson 2). Taking a closer look at works published by Victorian philosophers like G. H. Lewes or Alexander Bain inevitably leads to a new qualification of the traditional boundary between Victorian literature and modernist literature, and therefore, of the gap that supposedly separates Hardy's writings from Lawrence's. On the subject of physiology, Candis Bond remarks on the distinction which is commonly made between Victorians who "viewed the mind and the body as separate entities" and "modern individuals," who, on the other hand, "sought to explore the connectedness of the two domains and privileged 'the body as a whole'" (Bond 7). Through close readings of Hardy's and Lawrence's fiction, this second part aims at simultaneously bridging the gap between the spiritual and the physical, and between the ontological beliefs of Victorians and those of modernists. Indeed, back in 1855, in his ground-breaking *The Senses and the Intellect*, Alexander Bain was already asserting that "Soul is to Body (…) not as a compound of like elements (…) but as a Relatum to is Correlate" (Bain 625). While the duality between soul and body is not cancelled by such an assertion, the choice of the words "Relatum" and "Correlate", both derived from the latin *relatio*, serves to place the idea of co-dependency at the centre of the mind-body debate and of the process of perception as a whole. Long considered as a tool used for the benefits of the soul, the body is lent credibility again from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, and is understood as the place in which the soul, and consciousness itself, could be best explored.[4] The access to knowledge which was until then strictly restricted to mental and intellectual abilities, is also gradually being attributed to various physical abilities, among which are the workings of the senses. In Hardy and Lawrence, characters are quite literally *making sense* of the world, in that they are most efficiently understanding the world through their senses rather than through their reason and intellect. From the fundamental

[3] Dynamic psychology relied on the belief that "reality about man's will and consciousness could be determined by examination of physical matter" (Johnson 2).

[4] It may be relevant to note that the belief in acquisition of knowledge through the senses had already been introduced in the early 18th century, namely with the notion of sensuous cognition which emerged with pre-Kantian aesthetics. Such a theory was cast away and reinvented in the nineteenth century.

process of getting to know the Other and connecting to him or her, to the empirical experience of the world and of one's place in it, the senses are placed centre-stage by Hardy and Lawrence who, transcending the Victorian/Modernist divide, write a fiction that appeals to the reader's "sense and sensibility."

1. Catching Feelings: a Psycho-Physiological Access to Otherness

If, as was argued in chapter two, the connection to the Other is central in the development of their characters, then Hardy and Lawrence need to display in their novels the best way to enact such a connection and to allow an immediate access to otherness. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty stresses how a corporeal, and more specifically, sensual experience is a prerequisite to the building of any meaningful relation with the Other. Underlining the fundamental role of the physical life, he argues: "We must eat and breathe before perceiving and awakening to relational living, belonging to colours and lights through sight, to sounds through hearing, to the body of another through sexuality, before arriving at the life of human relations" (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 185). Awakening the senses to awaken the self to "relational living" is a strategy that Hardy and Lawrence implement in their novels by returning to the body's original capacity to feel, in the encompassing sense of the word as "having a sensation, impression, perception, or emotion" (*OED*). So as to reconcile sensation and emotion, while emphasising the pre-eminence of the physical over the intellectual in the process of connecting to the Other, I argue that the two authors use the concept of affect, that is "the body's capacity to affect and be affected" (Anderson 9), which is defined in its various forms by Ben Anderson in *Encountering Affect*:

> The term 'affect' has been used to describe a heterogeneous range of phenomena that are taken to be part of life: background moods such as depression, moments of intense and focused involvement such as euphoria, immediate visceral responses of shame or hate, shared atmospheres of hope or panic, eruptions of passion, lifelong dedication of love, fleeting feelings of boredom, societal moods such as anxiety or fear, aliveness, waves of feeling… amongst much else. (5)

The characteristic common to all of the phenomena mentioned in this definition seems to be the immediacy with which they occur, thus making the concept of affect an efficient tool to allow an unmediated access to otherness. In fact, Melissa Gregg, in *The Affect Theory Reader*,

suggests that "affect is in many ways synonymous with 'force or forces of encounter'" (2) that can precisely be "found in those intensities that pass body to body" (1). While referring to emotional states ("background moods"), affect is therefore located primarily in the body, and more precisely, in the space between bodies which needs to be filled so as to connect to the Other. In Hardy and Lawrence, the "force of encounter" which defines affect is translated into the metaphor of electricity, referring in early use to a force of attraction ("the property of amber, glass, and certain other substances of attracting lightweight objects when rubbed"), but also used in a figurative way as "a state or feeling of great excitement, a thrill, a spark" (*OED*). In *The Return of the Native*, the special bond that unites Clym and his mother is given to the reader in what is left unsaid, in the immaterial and yet very physical force which allows them to understand each other: "His theory and his wishes about devoting his future to teaching had made an impression on Mrs. Yeobright. (…) He had despaired of reaching her by argument; and it was almost as a discovery to him that he could reach her by a magnetism which was as superior to words as words are to yells" (Hardy, *TRN* 187-188). As "materially embodied responses or reflexes, which emanate from the body and lie beyond language and cognition" (Cohen 4), affects, here represented through the imagery of magnetism, serve to overcome the limitations of mental interactions in order to foster meaningful communication and, ultimately, profound understanding between two individuals. Magnetism, characterised by "attractive and repulsive forces at work between objects", is part of Hardy's exploration of the electric imagery and is used by the author both as a representation of immediate and powerful connections, and as a tool to describe the failure of connections between characters. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the affect transmitted through the electric imagery has nothing to do with a desire to understand the other or to access his or her deeper self, but has rather everything to do with an impulse to reject the unwelcome other. Indeed, Alec D'Urbervilles' return in the form of "an excellent, fiery, Christian man" (Hardy, *Tess* 302) in chapter XLV instantly triggers in Tess a feeling of repulsion which is immediately transmitted to D'Urbervilles through an invisible current, and which has a physical effect on him, comparable to that of electrocution:

> As soon as the nerveless pause of her surprise would allow her to stir, her impulse was to pass on out of his sight. He had obviously not discerned her yet in her position against the sun.
>
> But the moment that she moved again he recognized her. The effect upon her old lover was electric, far stronger than the effect of his presence upon her. His fire, the tumultuous ring of his eloquence, seemed to go out of him. His lip struggled and trembled under the words that

> lay upon it; but deliver them it could not as long as she faced him. His eyes, after their first glance upon her face, hung confusedly in every other direction but hers, but came back in a desperate leap every few seconds. This paralysis lasted, however, but a short time; for Tess's energies returned with the atrophy of his, and she walked as fast as she was able past the barn and onward. (Hardy, *Tess* 306)

In this scene, as if struck by Tess's electric force, D'Urbervilles is immobilised while Tess's movements become swifter. This opposition between motion and inertness reminds the reader of the magnetic mechanism, as the two protagonists become two opposite forces, one attractive and the other repulsive. If the ultimate result of the magnetic process is supposed to be the inevitable coming together of two poles or, in a figurative way, of two individuals, both Hardy and Lawrence also use the electric imagery to depict dysfunctional relationships, in which the two partners are resisting each other's electrical force. In Lawrence's *Women in Love*, the atmosphere is indeed electric as Gudrun and Gerald are walking up the snowy mountains of Tyrol and getting ready to go sledging: "A fierce, electric energy seemed to flow over all his limbs, his muscles were surcharged, his hands felt hard with strength. They walked along rapidly up the snow-road, that was marked by withered branches of trees stuck in at intervals. He and she were separate, like opposite poles of one fierce energy" (Lawrence, *WL* 399). Just as it iss the case in the dynamics between Hardy's Tess and Alec, Gudrun and Gerald's respective affects seem to be transmitted as invisible forces that fail to unite into an encompassing life force which would connect them up. In Gudrun and Gerald's relationship, the spark is just not there, despite a very physical perception of each other. Between Gerald and the Pussum, on the other hand, the chemistry is palpable and the forces at work during their first encounter are again to be felt in the body rather than in the mind:

> Gerald could feel the electric connection between him and her so strongly, as she sat there quietly and withheld, that another set of conditions altogether had come to pass. Her silence and her immutability perplexed him. *How* was he going to come to her? And yet he felt it quite inevitable. He trusted completely to the current that held them. (…) Every one of his limbs was turgid with electric force, and his back was tense like a tiger's, with slumbering fire. (Lawrence 2007, 75, emphasis in the original)

Here, Gerald's access to the Pussum's core being is not guaranteed by reassuring or seducing words she might have uttered, but rather by the non-verbal language felt in his own body. Both a sense of immediacy and involuntariness characterise the above-quoted extracts from Hardy

and Lawrence's fiction, thus reminding one of the definition of emotion reported by Alexander Bain in *The Senses and the Intellect*. Quoting Dr Sharpey[5], Bain explains that "emotion (…) is an involuntary state of the mind, connected with some part of the brain, influencing the muscles through the medium of the nerves" (Bain 7).[6] In Hardy and Lawrence, the embodied dimension of emotion which is suggested here is not only conveyed through the electric metaphor but is indeed all the more striking in the specific descriptions of impulsive actions performed by characters. To describe the impulsivity and the mood-swings of Lawrence's characters, and especially those of Gerald, George M. Johnson uses the concept of allotropic states, initially theorised by Victorian psychologist and philologist Frederic W. H. Myers.[7] Originally used in chemistry, an allotrope figuratively refers to "each of two or more distinct versions or aspects of a person or thing" (*OED*) and can therefore be used in literature to explore the different facets of a character's personality or to the surprising gestures or decisions they may make. Beyond a mere displaying of his characters' complexities, I suggest that Lawrence uses allotropic states in his fiction in order to depict this elusive process through which, in a split second, the reconciliation of body and mind is performed. To achieve this tour de force, Lawrence needs to make his reader *feel* the suddenness and unexpectedness of a character's impulsive action, and manages to do so by avoiding any narrator's intervention that might explain in any way the action which is being depicted. The sudden physical movement is described as it happens and is not preceded by any lengthy description of an emotional state that may have led to that gesture. Thus, the reader of *Women in Love* is probably as much surprised as Birkin when, without her uttering a single word, Hermione's "blow [comes] down, almost breaking his neck, and shattering his heart" (Lawrence, *WL* 105). Hermione's emotional state is conveyed to the reader directly as a physical action, appealing to his or her senses to understand the situation, rather than to his or her reason and analytic abilities. The same strategy is used in *Sons and Lovers*, during a scene between young Arthur and his lady friend Beatrice Wyld who are engaged in a childish game of seduction. As they are fooling around, Beatrice suddenly starts to use violence, only to return to affection a few seconds later:

[5] Bain quotes Dr Sharpey from *Quain's Anatomy of the Nervous System*, 6th edition.

[6] In his study of realism entitled *The Antinomies of Realism* (chapter II: "The Twin Sources of Realism: Affect, or, the Body's Present"), Frederic Jameson makes a clear distinction between emotions and affects, which reads as follows: "Affects are bodily feelings, whereas emotions (or passions, to use their other name) are conscious states" (Jameson 32). It is interesting to note that in the 19th century, when the word "affect" had not been coined yet, "bodily feelings" were included in the definition of emotions by Bain.

[7] For the definition of allotropic states given by Myers, see introduction.

> Like a flash her small white hand went out and smacked his face. He started up, glaring at her. They stared at each other. Slowly the flush mounted her cheek, she dropped her eyes, then her head. He sat down sulkily. She went into the scullery to adjust her hair. In private there she shed a few tears, she did not know what for.
>
> When she returned she was pursed up close. But it was only a film over her fire. He, with ruffled hair, was sulking upon the sofa. She sat down opposite, in the armchair, and neither spoke. The clock ticked in the silence like blows.
>
> "You are a little cat, Beat," he said at length, half apologetically.
>
> "Well, you shouldn't be brazen," she replied.
>
> There was again a long silence. He whistled to himself like a man much agitated but defiant. Suddenly she went across to him and kissed him. (Lawrence , *SL* 288)

Again, no explanation is given to help the reader understand Beatrice's state of mind and all the emotions felt by the two characters are conveyed through the descriptions of physical modifications, gestures, or even silences. Beatrice herself seems to be at a loss to understand what she is truly feeling and to the meaning of her own actions. The two examples quoted above seem, at first glance, to serve as fictional renderings of Lawrence's theory according to which "women have the logic of emotion" while "men have the logic of reason" (Lawrence, *Phoenix II* 537).[8] In other words, applying the concept of allotropic states to his female characters might be a way for the author to show how women do not make sense. Indeed, "emotions have long been associated to women" who were deemed "less able to transcend the body through thought" (Ahmed 3). Yet, in Lawrence's novels, women are both associated to emotions *and* to the body, through the description of their changing affects. A closer analysis of Lawrence's fictional text therefore allows a subversion of our initial take on his gendered theory of reason and emotion, transforming a seemingly depreciating comment on women's intellectual faculties into an actual promotion of their specific ability to access and convey unmediated knowledge through feeling. If Lawrence does not entirely share William James's conception of consciousness[9], he appears to validate his argument that "consciousness is in its very nature impulsive" (James 526),[10] leading the reader to conclude that Lawrence's female characters, through their fluctuating emotional states and their physical manifestations of these states, are particularly apt to be actively conscious of the world and of others. A similar attention paid to women's

[8] This reference was brought to my attention by Macadré (187).
[9] For an exploration of Lawrence's definition of consciousness as opposed to William James's, see chapter 5.
[10] This reference was brought to my attention by Kay Young (139).

affects may be noticed picked up in the writings of Hardy who, as Young states, "writes character as mood" (Young 152). Affect, according to Frederic Jameson, is precisely characterised by a capacity for transformation and metamorphosis which can register the nuances of mood fully as much as it can mutate into its opposite" (Jameson 42). Exploring the variations of mood of Hardy's characters in her article "Hardy and the Value of Brains", Sarah Lyons remarks on *Jude the Obscure*'s "emphasis upon Sue's 'nerves,' arguing that the female character's "neurasthenic" state may be interpreted either as "a sexist denigration of her intellect" or as a reflexion of the "cultural stereotype of the New Woman" (Lyon 350). I, on the other hand, would like to suggest a third interpretation of Sue's unstable emotional state, in keeping with Lawrence's own use of allotropic states. As is the case with the narrative voice in Lawrence's fiction, the narrator of *Jude the Obscure* repeatedly draws the reader's attention to the opacity and impulsivity which characterise the female mind, and which leave the male protagonist, Jude, at a loss. Indeed, an internal focalisation on Jude allows the narrator to refer to Sue's "colossal inconsistency" (Hardy*JO* 140), when direct speech similarly voices the hero's irritation at his cousin's "sudden change of mind" (Hardy, JO 189) as she refuses to become physically intimate with him directly after she leaves Phillotson. Referred to as a "mystery" (Hardy, *JO* 189), I suggest that Sue's heart, rather than reflecting the New Woman's political commitment to independence, actually reveals the genuine fears and doubts of a woman whose fluctuating feelings follow the fluctuations in her state of bondage. Quite unconsciously done,[11] ,Sue's allotropic way of thinking allows her to regenerate herself and to avoid falling back into a vicious circle of servitude with Jude. Similarly to Lawrence's female characters, women, in Hardy, are indeed on the side of emotion, while men, like Jude, claim that they are on the side of reason. However, rather than supporting clichés relating to women, Jude's own analysis of his cousin's behaviour leads him, on different occasions, to reflect on its possible meaning and to question female stereotypes. When Sue asks Jude to give her away to his rival Phillotson, the narrator reports in free indirect speech the young man's thoughts and questionings: "How could Sue have the temerity to ask him to do it? – a cruelty possibly to herself as well as to him? Women were different from men in such matters. Was it that they were, instead of more sensitive, as reputed, more callous, and less romantic; or were they more heroic?" (Hardy*JO* 139). Jude's suggestion that Sue's decision might rather be about bravery than about cruelty and hypersensitivity performs a reversal of the emotional woman/reasonable

[11] So as to indulge Jude, Sue justifies her change of mind by saying: "assume that I haven't the courage of my opinion" (Hardy *JO*, 190). In reality, the reader is given to understand that she, herself, is quite unsure of the reasons of her change of heart.

man dichotomy, as it increases the value of the ability to follow one's impulses and instincts, however painful the result might be. A few chapters later, when the loss of her children makes her draw away from Jude and back, at least spiritually, to her lawful husband Phillotson, Sue's "extraordinary blindness" to her "old logic" (Hardy, *JO* 276) which enrages Jude becomes, to the reader, yet another demonstration of the female ability to be affected by circumstances and to let these new affects dictate her next steps. Rather than being a weakness, female sensitivity turns out to be, in Hardy's perspective, a strength whose rootedness in the body makes female characters particularly apt to make sense of the world. Still in *Jude the Obscure*, the narrator explains how Sue "was so vibrant that everything she did seemed to have its source in feeling. An exciting thought would make her walk so fast that he could hardly keep up with her" (Hardy, *JO* 83). Suggesting both an emotional and a physical stirring, the adjective "vibrant" emphasises Sue's peculiar ability to have an immediate (inter)reaction to the world around her – a world that she accesses through an attention to her senses (to be understood both as rational thinking and as sensations). While giving the impression that their female characters do not make sense, Hardy and Lawrence therefore achieve the tour de force of relocating rationality precisely within the senses. In the end, the less sense a female character makes, the more sensual she is, and therefore, the more sensible she is bound to be.

If affects, in their allotropic forms, perform the reconciliation of "sense and sensibility," to borrow Jane Austen's famous phrasing, their rootedness in the body suggests the preeminent role of the physiological in accessing knowledge, and more specifically, knowledge of the Other. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty defines "the psychic" as "the for-itself" and "the physiological" as "the in-itself" (Merleau Ponty 89), thus associating the mind with the notion of phenomenon, and more precisely, with the idea of self-perception, and linking the body with the notion of noumenon which, in this case, refers to the true and objective nature of the self. While Merleau-Ponty draws this dichotomy only to point out the need to transcend it, the different notions associated to the psychic and to the physiological constitute additional proofs of the body's centrifugal movement towards Otherness. Indeed, in order to get to know the Other, one literally needs to *get in touch* with him or her, that is, to physically connect to that person. This argument is first conveyed negatively in Lawrence's fiction, as the author chooses to warn his readers against the certain failure of disembodied love. In *Women in Love*, the relationship between Gudrun and Gerald illustrates Donn Welton's assertion that "the felt presence of the other (…) is primary" (Welton 187), in other words, that one needs to approach the other through the senses rather than from the intellect. Indeed, Gudrun's "senses" are

described as being "entirely apart from [Gerald], cold and destructive of him" (Lawrence, *WL* 443), suggesting that a non-sensual connection to the other performs an actual negation of that other and consequently makes impossible the access to his or her true self. The same thing is true for the relationship between Miriam and Paul in *Sons and Lovers*, and that of Connie and Clifford in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Those relationships are precisely characterised by their disincarnate dimension and by the realisation, by one of the partners, that this lack of physical contact constitutes the doom of their love. While the narrator of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* explains how Connie "had married [Clifford] because in a mental way he attracted and excited her" (Lawrence, *LCL* 97), Paul, in *Sons and Lovers*, writes the following words to Miriam: "In all our relations no body enters. I do not talk to you through the senses – rather through the spirit. That is why we cannot love in the common sense" (Lawrence,, *SL* 292). In both cases, the all-mental connection between the two characters leads to the failure of their relationship but also to the endangering of the self whose noumenon (in-itself) is threatened by the denial of the body. To Paul, the relationship with Miriam becomes "a form of death" (Lawrence, *SL* 323) and Connie, on the other hand, feels "reason [will] give way, or she [will] die" (Lawrence, *LCL* 112). Conveyed in a more implicit way so as to avoid hurting the feelings of conservative Victorians, the crucial importance of the physical dimension in the process of encounter is also very much present in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*. Throughout the author's last novel, the main female character, Sue, is reluctant to get physically intimate with her cousin Jude, for what seems to be, at first, religious considerations. During one of the numerous exchanges they have on the subject, Sue tells Jude: "Our life has been a vain attempt at self-delight. But self-abnegation is the higher road. We should mortify the flesh – the terrible flesh – the curse of Adam!" (Hardy, *JO* 270). As opposed to Lawrence's Connie, Hardy's Sue seems to pinpoint the issue in her relationship with Jude as stemming from the communion of their bodies which is to be replaced by "mental communion, and no more" (Hardy, *JO* 277). Yet, Sue's logic is challenged by Merleau-Ponty's definition of "sensation" as "co-existence or communion" (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 248), suggesting that no proper connection with the Other may happen without an appeal to the senses. Sue's vision of a love relationship is therefore doomed, insofar as a contradiction lies at the root of her sentiment. On the morning when the two lovers are supposed to get married, after months of brooding over the issue, Sue anxiously pleads Jude: "I want you to kiss me, as a lover, *incorporeally*" (Hardy, *JO* 222, my emphasis). Here, the impossibility which characterises Sue's love ideal is illustrated by the very antithetic demand she makes to Jude, as she envisions a type of relationship in which the bliss of physical

touch could be experienced by mere mental connection. Such a demand, in all its contradiction, may actually betray the repressed desires of a woman who was taught to fight against any "meanly sexual emotion" that may arise in her (Hardy, *JO* 211).[12] On the other hand, if Jude often reproaches his cousin for her lack of passion towards him, he does so not only from a self-interested desire to indulge in physical pleasures with her, but mainly, I argue, in an attempt to fully access her unfathomable otherness. In both Hardy's and Lawrence's fiction, the gateway to the loved one is the material body and characters seem to catch feelings as one catches a cold – feeling the symptoms developing in the body. Even in the case of Gudrun and Gerald's flawed and ultimately doomed relationship in *Women in Love*, powerful sensations were involved in the young woman's experience of their encounter. Indeed, a hyperbolic and expansive tone characterises the otherwise very fleeting moment when Gudrun lays eyes on her lover-to-be, in the first pages of the novel:

> And then she experienced a keen paroxyism, a transport, as if she had made some incredible discovery, known to nobody else on earth. A strange transport took possession of her, all her veins were in a paroxysm of violent sensation. "Good God!" she exclaimed to herself, "what is this?" And then, a moment after, she was saying assuredly, "I shall know more of that man." She was tortured with desire to see him again, a nostalgia, a necessity to see him again, to make sure it was not all a mistake, that she was not deluding herself, that she really felt this strange and overwhelming sensation on his account, this knowledge of him in her essence, this powerful apprehension of him. (Lawrence, *WL* 15)

What is striking here is both the deeply physical dimension of Gudrun's first impression of Gerald and the direct access to his core being through sensations felt in her own body. Indeed, the words "this strange and overwhelming sensation on his account, this knowledge of him in her essence", are structured around a parallel between Gudrun's physiological experience and Gerald's noumenon, that is his true being. Such a structure illustrates how the knowledge of the Other is not actually to be found in that Other (in the perception of the way he or she moves, talks or looks at oneself), but is to be found directly within the self, and more specifically in the physical self (through the way one is affected by him or her). In the light of this logic, Merleau-Ponty's initial dichotomy between phenomenon and noumenon loses its relevance, since they

[12] For a further exploration of Sue's immaterial dimension, the conflictual relationship with her body, and the feminist implications of these observations, see chapter 5.

become one unique way of experiencing the Other's *in-itself* through what he or she feels like *for-oneself.* If Gudrun's full access to Gerald's core being will eventually be prevented by his inability to exist materially, the psycho-physiological apprehension of the Other is finally complete with Ursula and Birkin who achieve a perfect communion in the chapter "Excurse", allowing them to get a deep understanding of one another, but also to find answers to more complex ontological questions:

> Unconsciously, with her sensitive fingertips, she was tracing the back of his thighs, following some mysterious life-flow there. She had discovered something, something more than wonderful, more wonderful than life itself. It was the strange mystery of his life-motion, there, at the back of the thighs, down the flanks. It was a strange reality of his being, the very stuff of being, there in the straight downflow of the thighs. It was here she discovered him one of the sons of God such as were in the beginning of the world, not a man, something other, something more. (Lawrence, *WL* 313)

From "the reality of [Birkin's] being", Ursula gets to grasp "the very stuff of being", a two-fold process which locates ontological knowledge in the flesh, and more specifically here, "in the straight downflow of the thighs". Lawrence's argument according to which one needs to literally get in touch with the Other in order to get to know him or her is conveyed in its ultimate form in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* through the relationship between Connie and Mellors, which serves as a counterpoint to the young woman's disincarnate relationship with her husband. As she meets her lover, Connie discovers that "complete intimacy" is not actually about "revealing everything concerning yourself to the other person, and his revealing everything concerning himself" (Lawrence, *LCL* 253), but rather about *feeling* the other person:

> 'I want to touch you like you touch me,' she said. 'I've never really touched your body.'
>
> He looked at her, and smiled again.
>
> 'Now?' he said.
>
> 'No! No! Not here! At the hut. Would you mind?'
>
> 'How do I touch you?' he asked.
>
> 'When you feel me.' (Lawrence, *LCL* 170)

Through the psycho-physical dimension of the verb "to feel", Connie suggests that for their intimacy to be complete, she needs to get in proper touch with Mellors too – touching him to get to know him. In Lawrence's last novel, sex, as "the closest of all touch" (Lawrence, *LCL* 277), serves as a medium towards an awakening of the senses and therefore towards a deeper, sensual apprehension of the Other and of the world. In one of the novel's most emblematic erotic scenes between Connie and Mellors, sexual climax is experienced by the young woman as "deepening whirlpools of sensation, swirling deeper and deeper through all her tissue and consciousness, till she [is] one perfect concentric fluid of feeling" (Lawrence, *LCL* 134). Here, the narrator uses a water metaphor to express the way pleasure is felt both physically and mentally, but also to illustrate how the process of getting to know the Other, of connecting to that Other, is an uneven process which comes in waves, as a succession of affects rather than as a succession of words: "Well, so many words, because I can't touch you. If I could sleep with my arm round you, the ink could stay in the bottle" (Mellors in a letter to Connie, Lawrence, *LCL* 301). Non-verbal communication, in Hardy's fiction, is similarly conceived as the most efficient type of communication and, more importantly, as the only medium allowing a direct, spontaneous access to the Other. In Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, not only is Clym able to read his wife's sudden change of complexion as a sign of guilt and fear, but his own pale complexion caused by grieving and anger after the death of his mother is indeed transmitted to Eustacia, thus materialising words that are yet too painful to utter or to be heard:

> She was not a woman given to speaking first at a meeting, and she allowed Clym to walk across in silence, without turning her head. He came behind her, and she saw his face in the glass. It was ashy, haggard, and terrible. Instead of starting towards him in sorrowful surprise, as even Eustacia, undemonstrative wife as she was, would have done in days before she burdened herself with a secret, she remained motionless, looking at him in the glass. And while she looked the carmine flush with which warmth and sound sleep had suffused her cheeks and neck dissolved from view, and the deathlike pallor in his face flew across into hers. He was close enough to see this, and the sight instigated his tongue.
>
> "You know what is the matter," he said huskily. "I see it in your face." (Hardy, *TRN* 318)

While Eustacia remains frozen by her own fears and does not dare utter a word, the description of sensations happening in the bodies of each character allows the narrator to get a sense of

Eustacia's complex inner feelings. For most Hardyan characters, sensations constitute various pathways towards knowledge, since they are the media through which they experience the world. In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, for instance, Angel reflects on the young woman's peculiar ability to experience the world exclusively through her senses: "Upon her sensations the whole world depended to Tess; through her existence all her fellow-creatures existed, to her. The universe itself only came into being for Tess on the particular day in the particular year in which she was born" (Hardy, *Tess* 154). In fact, as the story unfolds, the reader gradually realises that the tragic events which Tess has to face are not precipitated by an inability to trust her sensations, that is, her instincts, or by a failure to open up to the world around her, but are rather triggered by an incapacity on the part of others to get to know her, to *feel* (for) her:

> She might have seen that what had bowed her head so profoundly—the thought of the world's concern at her situation—was founded on an illusion. She was not an existence, an experience, a passion, a structure of sensations, to anybody but herself. To all humankind besides, Tess was only a passing thought. Even to friends she was no more than a frequently passing thought. If she made herself miserable the livelong night and day it was only this much to them—"Ah, she makes herself unhappy." If she tried to be cheerful, to dismiss all care, to take pleasure in the daylight, the flowers, the baby, she could only be this idea to them—"Ah, she bears it very well." Moreover, alone in a desert island would she have been wretched at what had happened to her? Not greatly. If she could have been but just created, to discover herself as a spouseless mother, with no experience of life except as the parent of a nameless child, would the position have caused her to despair? No, she would have taken it calmly, and found pleasure therein. Most of the misery had been generated by her conventional aspect, and not by her innate sensations. (Hardy, *Tess* 91)

The choice of describing Tess as "a passing thought" in other people's mind is here particularly relevant in that it proceeds to dematerialise the young protagonist, thus robbing her existence of any significance. In this passage, "innate sensations" are put forward as positive counterpoints to social norms, allowing the narrator to intimate that the readers should discard any pre-conceived opinions as he or she reads about the experiences of a fictional Other, and should rather try and identify with that character, through the specific experience of sensations. It is precisely because people only perceive the social, rather than sensual, dimension of Tess that they are unable to access her true being and empathise with her. Through the act of reading

Hardy and Lawrence, a reconciliation between the intellectual and the physical is underway, as the two authors lead us along a non-dualist pathway to knowledge.

2. The Performing of a Reconciliation of Body and Mind: Towards a Non-Dualist Access to Knowledge:

As was touched upon above, the psycho-physiological dimension of any meaningful connection to the Other is also required in any attempt from Hardy and Lawrence's characters to make sense of the world. "Knowledge" being defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "the fact of knowing or *being acquainted with* a thing, person, etc." (III.3.a, my emphasis), it is only natural for the two authors to apply their embodied conception of encounter to the process of gaining knowledge. For Hardy and Lawrence, the first step towards a proper dissolution of the body/mind dichotomy is in fact the rejection of the mind which had been considered the exclusive tool for accessing knowledge for centuries. The plot of Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* is precisely built around this ideal of accessing the highest forms of knowledge through a painstaking and laborious education of the intellect. As the plot unfolds and Jude becomes more and more obsessive about Christminster and getting a college education, priorities gradually shift for the young protagonist who ends up favouring his self-taught education over his vital needs and physical comfort. Indeed, when he finally gets to Christminster with great expectations, he finds himself reading at night in a cold room: "After buying a book or two he could not even afford himself a fire; and when the nights reeked with the raw and cold air from the Meadows he sat over his lamp in a great-coat, hat, and woollen gloves" (Hardy, *JO* 71). In Jude's life, the intellectual life comes before the physical life, and the dichotomy between mind and body, rather than being dissolved, is only reinforced by his obsession over what he believes to be higher education. Not only does the young protagonist minimise the importance of physical well-being, but he tends to entirely forget about it, being so absorbed in his thoughts: "He had become entirely lost to his bodily situation during his mental leap, and only got back to it by a rough recalling" (Hardy, *JO* 21). Here, the antithesis between "bodily" and "mental" allows the narrator to put forward the imbalance that is at the core of Jude's life, but also to introduce the other alternative that is the all-physical life. As Jude is contemplating the horizon, trying to get a glimpse of Christminster, he encounters two elderly carters who have travelled around and know what Jude's ideal place looks like. Talking about its inhabitants, one of the men declares: "'Em lives on a lofty level, there's not gainsaying it, though I myself med not think much of 'em. As we be here in our bodies on this high ground, so be they in their minds

– nobleminded enough, no doubt – some of 'em – able to earn hundreds by thinking out loud" (Hardy, *JO* 22). Here, the dichotomy between mind and body is again central, but the effect on the reader is quite different. While the old man is acknowledging the specific skills of Christminster students, an ironical underdone associated with a play on echoes throughout his speech lead to a proper devaluing of the mental life. Indeed, the carter takes care to set his lot and college students on an equal footing by locating them "on a *lofty* level" and locating himself and his fellow workers on "this *high* ground" (my emphasis), a phrasing which itself recalls the idea of moral high ground supposedly granted to educated people only. The very word "ground" then takes up its literal meaning as the place in which the villagers' bodies are rooted, whereas college students seem to be both disembodied and uprooted, living within their minds. In this instance, the exploration of the mind/body dichotomy therefore serves to suggest that Jude may not have chosen the right path to access genuine knowledge of the world, which condemns him to live a life that does not *matter*. Indeed, it seems that the first step for Jude to access higher knowledge would be to get down to earth, and get back into his own body. In Lawrence's *Women in Love*, Ursula reprimands her lover Birkin for his being disinterested in his body and his physical sensations. Just as she might have told Jude off for choosing books over a comfortable fire and healthiness, Ursula is indignant about Birkin's inability to answer the simplest question – "do you feel well?" – : "I think it's *criminal* to have so little connection with your own body that you don't even know when you're ill. (…) Really, you shouldn't be forgiven for treating your body like it – you *ought* to suffer, a man who takes as little notice of his body as that" (Lawrence, *WL* 196, emphasis in the original). The dichotomy between mind and body is persisting in Lawrence's work too, but some characters, like Ursula, are endowed with the mission of condemning that dichotomy and of striving to reduce the gap between the two entities. On the other hand, some characters are, like Jude in Hardy's work, representatives of the all-mental life, their experiences serving as cautionary tales for the readers. Hermione is one of those characters, in that she is constantly being defined by her rationality and her discriminating intelligence, rather than by any sensations or emotions she might be feeling. In an openly critical tone focalised on Ursula's inner thoughts, the narrator depicts the young woman as follows, in the chapter "Woman to Woman":

> She stared out all the time on the narrow, but to her, complete world of the extant consciousness. In the darkness, she did not exist. Like the moon, one half of her was lost to life. Her self was all in her head, she did not know what it was spontaneously to run or move, like a fish in the water, or a weasel on the grass. She must always know.

> But Ursula only suffered from Hermione's one-sidedness. She only felt Hermione's cool evidence, which seemed to put her down as nothing. Hermione, who brooded and brooded till she was exhausted with the ache of her effort at consciousness, spent and ashen in her body, who gained so slowly and with such effort her final and barren conclusions of knowledge, was apt, in the presence of other women, whom she thought simply female, to wear the conclusions of her bitter assurance like jewels which conferred on her an unquestionable distinction, established her in a higher order of life. She was apt, mentally, to condescend to women such as Ursula, whom she regarded as purely emotional. Poor Hermione, it was her one possession, this aching certainty of hers, it was her only justification. She must be confident here, for God knows, she felt rejected and deficient enough elsewhere. In the life of thought, of the spirit, she was one of the elect. (Lawrence, *WL* 292-293)

In this extract, Ursula's bitterness towards her rival mixes up with the narrator's supposedly objective description of Hermione and the initial dichotomy between mind and body becomes illustrated by the rivalry between the two women – Hermione as a representative of "extant consciousness" and Ursula as a representative of the emotional life, here interestingly associated with the body. According to the narrator (and Ursula), only "barren conclusions of knowledge" may be found in mental processes, thus suggesting that access to a deeper knowledge of the world is to be found through the one thing Hermione is lacking – embodiment. In fact, in Lawrence's terminology, knowledge seems to be synonymous with intellectual abilities only, as opposed to abilities allowing one to unveil "what *actually* is" (Lawrence, *WL* 41, emphasis in the original). During yet another argument between Hermione and Birkin, the latter condemns the young woman precisely for her favouring knowledge over sensuality, as if the two were opposites: "Because you haven't got any real body, any dark sensual body of life. You have no sensuality. You have only your will and your conceit of consciousness, and your lust for power, to *know*" (Lawrence, *WL* 42, emphasis in the original). Here, Birkin points at the vainness of trying to access knowledge without the help of one's senses or body as a whole, thus playing down the importance of the intellect in fathoming the world. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the same effect is to be pinpointed as Connie, despite her own dissociation from her body, is aware from the beginning of the novel of the limits of the intellect: "Connie quite liked the life of the mind, and got a great thrill out of it. But she did think it overdid itself a little (…). She had an immense respect for thought – and these men at least tried to think honestly. But somehow, there was a cat and it wouldn't jump" (Lawrence, *LCL* 36). The narrator's last

metaphorical words directly refer to that one element which is missing in intellectual processes and which makes Hermione, Clifford, or even Jude, unable to make sense of the world they are living in. For the cat to jump and for the characters' minds to leap into deeper knowledge, a proper use of physical strength and a return to the material body are indeed required. It is precisely this dysfunctional material body, deprived of any stamina, that Clifford is rejecting as he bases his life on his daily mental meanderings. "All that talk! All that writing! All that wild struggling to shove himself forward!" (Lawrence, *LCL* 97), Connie laments. Left without the basic ability to physically move forward, Clifford has found an escape in mental movements which give him the illusion that he is indeed progressing. Yet, whether it be a deliberate choice on the part of a character (Hermione) or a consequence of an unwanted disability (Clifford), the choice of the all-mental life is systematically condemned by Lawrence who seeks to subvert the traditional hierarchy between body and mind.

In Hardy and Lawrence's fiction, the initial persistence of the body/mind dichotomy is indeed justified by a commitment for the restoration of the physical life, performed through a recognition in their novels of the pre-eminence of the body. In that sense, both authors are putting forward a very modern argument which would be later corroborated by research in neuroscience led by contemporary scholars such as Antonio Damasio. In *Self Comes to Mind: Constructing the Conscious Brain,* Damasio writes that "primordial feelings result from nothing but the living body and precede any interaction between the machinery of life regulation and any object" (Damasio, 90). According to him, emotions which have remained for centuries in the realm of the mind are now to be transferred to the realm of the body and what has been encompassed in the notion of sensibility is therefore to be associated with sensuality. In *Women in Love*, sensuality is key to Birkin's understanding of the process of perception and takes up, in the young man's perspective, a new dimension that goes beyond the limits of its traditional association with "physical pleasure" (*OED*, 2.a). In another extract from the quarrel scene between Hermione and Birkin, the latter attacks her in the following words: "If one cracked your skull perhaps one might get a spontaneous, passionate woman out of you, with real sensuality. – As it is, what you want is pornography – looking at yourself in mirrors, watching your naked animal actions in mirrors, so that you can have it all in your consciousness, make it all mental" (Lawrence, *WL* 42). Through his condemnation of Hermione's all-mental way of life, Birkin demonstrates how sensuality is not only a concept or an idea relating to sexual intimacy that may be shaped in the mind but also needs to be unmediated, that is, to be experienced entirely through the body. As such, accessing sensuality is not so much about

indulging in erotic activity but rather about focusing back on one's sensations and making sense of them. A few lines further, Birkin sums up his argument by saying that "sensuality is a fulfilment – the great knowledge you can't have in your head – the dark involuntary being" (Lawrence, *WL* 43). With this new definition, Birkin shifts the perspective on knowledge acquisition by displacing intellectual abilities from the mind to the body, and by implementing a new hierarchy in which the body allows a deeper and more accurate understanding of the world than the mind. Not only neuroscientists but also contemporary psychiatrists like Iain McGilchrist have stressed the preeminent role of the body in the process of perception and understanding. In his study entitled *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*, McGilchrist states: "Feeling is not just an add-on, a flavoured coating for thought: it is at the heart of our being, and reason emanates from that central core of emotions, in an attempt to limit and direct them, rather than the other way about" (McGilchrist quoted in Phelps 6).[13] Indeed, for Lawrence, as for 21st-century scientists, to be sensible one needs to get back to one's senses instead of getting stuck in one's head and becoming, as Clifford in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, "a mummy tangled in its own bandages" (Mrs Bolton about Clifford in Lawrence, *LCL* 290). Page after page, Connie will – both literally and metaphorically – get back to her senses and realise that her own dissociation from her body has led to her living outside of reality. When, a few days before her going away for a holiday in Italy, her husband suggests to her that she should try to learn to "take a supreme pleasure in the life of the mind", Connie passionately answers: "No thank you! Give me the body. I believe the life of the body is a greater reality than the life of the mind: when the body is really wakened to life. But so many people, like our famous wind-machine, have only got minds tacked on their physical corpses" (Lawrence, *LCL* 234). Here, the traditional hierarchy between body and mind is unequivocally subverted as the mental life is deemed threatening to the physical dimension of one's existence, going from body to corpse. Stating that "the body is a greater reality than the life of the mind" amounts to arguing that reality itself is to be accessed only through the medium of the body rather than through any rational processes taking place in the mind. In Hardy's fiction, the body actually becomes a reliable entity used by narrators to give readers a direct access to the reality of the characters. In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, the numerous descriptions of Tess's body are not only meant to keep track of the protagonist's development into a grown woman but are more specifically used to offer a proper insight into her inner

[13] For the full reference see McGilchrist, Iain. *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009, 185.

character and the complexities of her existence. Instead of merely stating the discrepancy between Tess's mentality and her physical appearance, the narrator draws the readers' attention to the physical manifestation of the duality inherent to her being: "Phases of her childhood lurked in her aspect still. As she walked along to-day, for all her bouncing womanliness, you could sometimes see her twelfth year in her cheeks, or her ninth sparkling from her eyes; and even her fifth would flit over the curves of her mouth now and then" (Hardy, *Tess* 15-16). Stages of Tess's life which are not part of the plot and therefore not directly told to the readers are here conveyed through a close-up on the heroine's specific traits, allowing a deeper understanding of the character's background and inner conflict. As a blank slate on which the character's whole life experience is written, the body may also be used by the characters themselves to produce a truth which they have constructed and made theirs. In chapter XLV of Phase the Sixth entitled "The Convert", a detailed description of Alec D'Urbervilles' appearance serves to illustrate his double-dealing character, as the narrator underlines the persistence of the man's former features which the most pious words still fail to erase. Despite all its efforts at modelling his appearance into that of a benevolent preacher, his body cannot lie:

> It was less a reform than a transfiguration. The former curves of sensuousness were now modulated to lines of devotional passion. The lip-shapes that had meant seductiveness were now made to express supplication; the glow on the cheek that yesterday could be translated as riotousness was evangelized to-day into the splendour of pious rhetoric; animalism had become fanaticism; Paganism, Paulinism; the bold rolling eye that had flashed upon her form in the old time with such mastery now beamed with the rude energy of a theolatry that was almost ferocious. Those black angularities which his face had used to put on when his wishes were thwarted now did duty in picturing the incorrigible backslider who would insist upon turning again to his wallowing in the mire. (Hardy, *Tess* 305-306)

Here, the hypocrisy of D'Urbervilles' reformative process is conveyed by the description of an imperfect "transfiguration" in which facial features remain but are only meant by the character to be read differently. Neither the narrator nor Tess are to be misled by D'Urbervilles' show of piousness, just as the reader is implicitly led to understand the artificiality of such a transfiguration through the narrator's use of words which are semantically related, to describe both the man's former and present appearances. An aspect suggesting "sensuousness" is

developed into a sign of "passion," while the "seductiveness" of his lips is transformed into an expression of "supplication," suggesting that the ultimate intention is similar (to make Tess like him) but that only the approach differs, from force to persistent pleading. Other words like "ferocious," "black angularities" or "incorrigible backslider" which are still related to his present physical appearance finally serve to offer the readers a visual, and more specifically material, proof of D'Urbervilles' evilness which seems to be inscribed in his flesh. Because "intentionality", according to phenomenologists, "is not limited to so-called mental states but characterizes body actions as well" (Charles S. Brown 147), then authors may choose to depict specific body parts so as to reveal a character's true intentions, as Hardy does with D'Urbervilles. Hardy's well-known affinities with German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer's writing is likely to be at the origin of the Victorian author's own approach to embodiment and its connection with volition. Indeed, Daniel A. Schmicking reminds us, in his essay entitled "Schopenhauer on Unconscious Intelligence and Embodied Cognition", that the philosopher "is regarded, by some scholars, as *the* philosopher of the body and at the least must be regarded as one of – and probably the first of – the great Western body philosophers (on a par with Nietzsche, Sartre, and Merleau Ponty)" (Schmicking 89-90, emphasis in the original). Not only does Schopenhauer give pride of place to the body in his philosophical reflections on cognition, but he builds up a theory according to which the self's deepest desires and intentions are to be found in the flesh. Schmicking explains how the philosopher's theory relies on the belief that "while the intellect is secondary, subordinate and dependent on the body, the body as an objectification of the will is primary and provides the key to understanding the essence of human nature and the world" (Schmicking 103). As a material representation of a character's will, the body is used by Hardy in his novels in a way very similar to that of Schopenhauer in his philosophical essays. One example can be found in *Jude the Obscure* with the character of Sue who, throughout the whole novel, is the one character who strives to control her will and deny her deepest desires. As she has gone back to her rightful husband, Mr Phillotson, Sue decides that the only way to make herself tolerate his presence and act as a dutiful wife to him is to get her body – rather than her mind – under control. In one of her last conversations with Jude, she pleadingly declares: "'He is a kind husband to me—And I—I've wrestled and struggled, and fasted, and prayed. I have nearly brought my body into complete subjection. And you mustn't—will you—wake—'" (Hardy, *JO* 306). In this quotation, the word "body" and the word "will" seem interchangeable insofar as the young woman understands that her aversion towards her husband is first and foremost physical, and that only a different physical experience

of his presence can make possible the development of genuine love feelings for him. In the end, Schopenhauer and Hardy's association of the body with the will – through, paradoxically, demonstrating the preeminent role of the body –initiates a reconciliation between the two poles, mental and physical.

In "Psychic Evolution: Darwinism and Initiation in Tess", Eliott B. Gose, JR. explains how, "although he tends to make a dichotomy between mind and body, [Hardy] always ties them together" (Gose, 267). In that sense, Hardy's psycho-physiological approach to ontology is not only indebted to Schopenhauer's philosophy but was undoubtedly nourished by the latest theories in psychology, namely by Associationism which later led eminent philosophers like Alexander Bain to develop "a strongly relational theory, one that sets itself to explore connections not just between the contents of consciousness but also between mind and body, and mental organism and environment" (Rylance 170). These particular connections are central to numerous descriptions of Tess in Hardy's eponymous novel. Indeed, Tess's appearance is repeatedly depicted hand in hand with her emotional state, thus underlining the constant interaction between the two poles, to the point of representing them as co-dependent. In the following passage, the narrator uses a psycho-physiological approach to offer readers the most accurate description of the heroine and therefore emphasises how the young woman's physical appearance cannot be understood separately from her state of mind, and vice versa:

> Her face had latterly changed with changing states of mind, continually fluctuating between beauty and ordinariness, according as the thoughts were gay or grave. One day she was pink and flawless; another pale and tragical. When she was pink she was feeling less than when pale; her more perfect beauty accorded with her less elevated mood; her more intense mood with her less perfect beauty. It was her best face physically that was now set against the south wind. (Hardy, *Tess* 103)

Here, an association of parallel structures with antitheses creates a sense of collaboration without imitation which goes against the expected conception of the body as mirror of the soul. In other words, Hardy depicts the psycho-physical relation as dynamic and suggests that the ontological truth of his characters is to be found somewhere in this fluid space between body and mind, that is "in feeling, in sensually verifiable, and historically specific ways" (Rylance on Lewes's point of view, 262). In that sense, the Victorian author concurs with philosopher and physiologist G. H. Lewes who "did not view the mind as composed of separate, static elements, but instead believed that body, brain, and mind only had significance in relation to

one another" (Johnson 21). For the readers to fathom the whole complexity of Tess's character, they indeed need to look at her mental and physical states simultaneously without assimilating them, as exemplified by the following description: "Tess's passing corporeal blight had been her mental harvest" (Hardy, *Tess* 124). This powerful metaphor being built around the antitheses "corporeal/mental" and "blight/harvest", the reader may first get the impression that a duality between the two poles is being maintained here. Yet, rather than reflecting a dichotomy, Hardy's use of antitheses here produces quite the opposite effect in that it performs the causal relationship that exists between the character's mental and physical experiences. In this particular quotation, the narrator therefore puts forward the impact of physical trauma on the mind while reminding the readers that the effects may differ. The key to Tess's life story seems to lie in this space between a trauma inscribed in her flesh and a healing journey taken up in her mind. Such a psycho-physiological approach to characterisation allows Hardy to avoid reducing his female protagonist to that one traumatic event and to a status of victim, while, on the other hand, shifting the focus towards Tess's resilience. In addition, as Hardy reconciles the mental and the physical in his main character, he implicitly reverses the fragmenting effect of trauma and enables his heroine to heal and grow. Therefore, the subsistence of the two poles, in Hardy, paradoxically participates in leading the way towards a non-dualist access to a character's essence and to knowledge as a whole. Similarly, in Lawrence's fiction, the previously-mentioned focus on the preeminent role of the body does not result in an explicit fusion of the mental and the physical, but rather fosters a dialogue between the two poles, deemed equally important. In her essay "The Illogical Logic of Emotion in Women in Love", Brigitte Macadré remarks about Lawrence's 1920 novel: "All the characters (…) follow the pattern described in Damasio's lecture,[14] from the confrontation with an emotionally-competent external stimulus which generates or triggers a physical reaction in the body (…), out of which finally comes the perception of those changes, a perception that is the feeling induced by the emotion" (Macadré 196). I would like to suggest that the psycho-physiological interaction Macadré points out in relation to *Women in Love* is applicable to most of Lawrence's novels, and namely to his last novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. In the following passage, the narrator describes both features and symptoms that relate to the mental and to the material spheres, so that the reader is led to consider the description as a psycho-physiological whole rather than as the rendering of two different perspectives (mental and physical) of a scene: "He [Mellors] was

[14] Macadré is referring to Antonio Damasio's lecture entitled "Emotion, Feeling and Social Behavior: The Brain Perspective" (2003).

angry, but at the core of his anger, he liked her [Connie]. And his anger gave him a peculiar handsomeness, an inwardness and glisten that thrilled her and made her limbs go molten" (Lawrence, *LCL* 246). Here, the causal relation that the narrator puts forward between Mellors' emotional state and his physical appearance recalls the depiction of Hardy's Tess quoted above, insofar as it underlines the visible effect of an emotion on one's body without implying that this effect perfectly mirrors the said-emotion. In the case of Mellors, being angry surprisingly makes him look more handsome (at least to Connie). A closer analysis of the structure of this short passage actually allows to grasp Lawrence's literary representation of the psycho-physiological approach: an initial emotion (Mellors' anger) leads to a physical modification (Mellors' handsomeness), which itself triggers a new emotion (Connie's excitement), which in turn creates a physical sensation (Connie's limbs going "molten"). This circular movement between the mental pole and the physical pole suggests that the two are complementary and inseparable, in the same way as the two lovers cannot suffer to be apart. In the essay previously quoted, Macadré points out that such descriptions demonstrate Lawrence's psycho-physiological understanding of knowledge acquisition, declaring that "emotion, body reaction, feeling and thought can thus be combined so that the illogical logic of emotions can lead to the logic of reason" (Macadré 196). If Macadré focuses on *Women in Love*, it is probably because of its particularly high metaphysical content that allows an exploration of the different pathways towards the truth, whether it be the truth of one character or that of his or her experience of the world. Throughout the novel, Birkin is the character who is seeking for balance and who, consequently, is used by Lawrence to search for ways to get back to a psycho-physiological understanding of human life. In "A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover", Lawrence seems to be summing up in a few words the message conveyed by Birkin in *Women in Love*: "The last three thousand years of mankind have been an excursion into ideals, bodilessness, and tragedy, and now the excursion is over" (Lawrence, *LCL* 330). Indeed, as Birkin is striving to build the perfect relationship with Ursula in the Moony chapter, his thoughts go beyond love matters to reflect on ontological issues. The passage reads as follows:

> Suddenly he found himself face to face with a situation. It was as simple as this: fatally simple. On the one hand, he knew he did not want a further sensual experience—something deeper, darker, than ordinary life could give. He remembered the African fetishes he had seen at Halliday's so often. There came back to him one, a statuette about two feet high, a tall, slim, elegant figure from West Africa, in dark wood, glossy and suave. (…) She had thousands of years of purely sensual, purely unspiritual knowledge

> behind her. It must have been thousands of years since her race had died, mystically: that is, since the relation between the senses and the outspoken mind had broken, leaving the experience all in one sort, mystically sensual. Thousands of years ago, that which was imminent in himself must have taken place in these Africans: the goodness, the holiness, the desire for creation and productive happiness must have lapsed, leaving the single impulse for knowledge in one sort, mindless progressive knowledge through the senses, knowledge arrested and ending in the senses, mystic knowledge in disintegration and dissolution, knowledge such as the beetles have, which live purely within the world of corruption and cold dissolution. This was why her face looked like a beetle's: this was why the Egyptians worshipped the ball-rolling scarab: because of the principle of knowledge in dissolution and corruption.
>
> There is a long way we can travel, after the death-break: after that point when the soul in intense suffering breaks, breaks away from its organic hold like a leaf that falls. We fall from the connection with life and hope, we lapse from pure integral being, from creation and liberty, and we fall into the long, long African process of purely sensual understanding, knowledge in the mystery of dissolution. (Lawrence, *WL* 252-253)

In this particularly rich passage, Birkin deplores the severance of the body from the mind which, to him, characterises modern times. The African statuette becomes an allegory of this lost balance between the mental and the physical experiences of the world and a return to a primitive and spontaneous type of perception turns out to be the key to accessing deep knowledge. This "pure integral being" Birkin is striving towards actually represents the non-dualist ideal Lawrence, in his fiction, is trying to conjure up. "Knowledge such as the beetles have" seems to be the highest degree of knowledge one may achieve, suggesting the futility of modern and complex reasoning. This idea is moreover translated into more accessible terms in a dialogue between Connie, Clifford and their friends during dinner in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. This time, it is through the character of Tommy Dukes that Lawrence conveys his conception of knowledge. Indeed, the young man declares: "Real knowledge comes out of the whole corpus of the consciousness, out of your belly and your penis as much as out of your brain or mind" (Lawrence, *LCL* 37). Despite his own inability to act on his words and experience life in a psycho-physiological way, Dukes draws the readers' attention to the importance of breaking the boundaries between body and mind and reuniting the two poles. If the persistence of this dichotomy had initially been useful in underlining the equal importance of both, along with

their interdependence, the next step, to Lawrence, seems to be the proper unifying of the mental with the physical. "I'm not really intelligent," Dukes declares, "I'm only a mental-lifer" (Lawrence, *LCL* 39). If mental abilities fail to make one intelligent, then the key to making sense of the world lies in the cooperation of the sensible (which cannot be called the intellectual anymore) with the sensual. Lawrence's further experience of the modern world and the metaphysical dimension of his novels allow him to carry on the work started by Hardy and to lead it towards an ultimately non-dualist conception of knowledge acquisition. But then, if the mind alone cannot fathom the world, how can authors of fiction efficiently transmit any words of wisdom to their readers? How can they, from one mind (writing) to another (reading), access the deepest planes of their readers' existence and impact them?

3. New Sensation Fiction: Hardy and Lawrence's Sense of Truth

In *Hardy, Conrad and the Senses*, Hugh Epstein quotes American psychologist James J. Gibson who gives one (among others) definition of sensation as "the detection of an impression made on a perceiver while he is primarily engaged in detecting the world"[15] (Epstein 7). The process of "detecting the world" mentioned by Gibson refers to the process of perception as a whole, but may also be applied to literature as the practice of reading which, in itself, implies an intention to decipher and to discover. In that sense, for the reading of a novel to be effective, the reader needs to be literally *impressed* by the work, i.e. emotionally – and sometimes physically – impacted by it. This understanding of the reading process might very well be at the origin of the name "Sensation Fiction" given to a literary genre which emerged in the 1860s and which was characterised by a mix of romance and the Gothic, "melodrama and penny dreadful literature" (Mangham 1). In novels such as foundational Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1859), the aim of the authors was primarily to keep their readers in suspense, that is both emotionally and physically engaged in the novel as they were surprised, scared, deceived or confused by the plot. Because they wrote and experienced their adult lives in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, Hardy and Lawrence's own conceptions of writing and reading have been infused with Sensation Fiction, leading them to approach their arts with an intention to *move* their readers, in both senses of the word, and therefore to go beyond the traditional representation of the passive reader. According to David Sweeney, "reading for Hardy is a broadly aesthetic and affective act, encompassing modes of associative

[15] For the full reference, see Gibson James J., *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems* (1968), 99.

perception that operate on the full range of bodily sensations" (Sweeney 77). In other words, reading, for the Victorian author, is an embodied process that requires the creation of an equally embodied art form – the material novel. The first step towards achieving this goal lies in one of the most striking characteristics of Hardy's writing and more specifically in his descriptions. Indeed, Hardy's narrative strategy is built around the idea that realism must be "driven by the power of observation informed by a living heart" (Hardy, *Personal Writings* 138),[16] that is to say that his narrators need to be expressively embodied and physically located in the fictional space created by the author. Rather than a disembodied story-teller, Hardy's narrator sounds like a flesh-and-blood observer whose mission is to tell the reader what he saw with his own eyes. The embodied dimension of the narrator is probably most conspicuous in *The Return of the Native* whose narrative voice could be better defined as a narrative eye, for relying mainly on the sense of sight. In this novel, Hardy has a very cinematic (and therefore pioneering) way of approaching descriptions insofar as his narrator tends to reveal the scenes gradually, just like a camera which would move forward, and then around a character to unveil his or her physical features at it goes. Most often, the entrance of a character upon a scene is not described at once but is revealed from the perspective of another character, with all the imprecisions and the delay it might involve: "The *back* and *shoulders* of a man came between Mrs Yeobright's *eyes* and the fire. Wildeve, whose form it was, immediately turned, arose, and advanced to meet his visitors" (Hardy, *TRN* 45, my emphasis). Here, the metonymic introduction of Wildeve is not, I argue, a mere effect of the internal focalisation on Mrs Yeobright, but rather participates in materialising both character and narrator: the unknown character's identity is revealed to the reader through a focus on his body parts, and thanks to the sensory organ of another character who is physically standing on the scene. From the narrator telling the story to the reader reading the novel, by way of the book he or she is holding, everything in this complex process is granted a material existence. The tour de force of Hardy's narrative strategy lies in his allowing the reader to identify with the figure of the unknown observer, since he or she could be anyone. Just like this mysterious observer, the reader is indeed a bystander on the scene he or she is reading about and is allowed to stand in the shoes of the anonymous figure who is witnessing it. In the following extract, reader and narrator seem to be merging into a unique process of embodied perception made possible by the form of the novel: "The observer's eye was arrested, not by his [Yeobright's] face as a picture, but by his face as a page; not by what it was, but by

[16] This quotation can be found in Hardy's essay entitled "The Science of Fiction". It was brought to my attention by Brilmyer (29).

what it recorded. His features were attractive in the light of symbols, as sounds intrinsically common become attractive in language, and as shapes intrinsically simple become interesting in writing" (Hardy*TRN* 167). The metafictional function of this passage is achieved through the comparison of the protagonist's face to a page, both illustrating the actual reading process (the reader does picture Yeobright's face in his mind by looking at a page and reading the words) and the metaphorical argument according to which a character's history and true self are written all over his or her physical appearance. The passage quoted above is therefore a striking example of what I propose to call Hardy's material realism, in that it demonstrates the author's refusal to copy reality and his choice to "show more clearly the features that matter in those realities" (Hardy, *The Life* XXII). There is of course a double-entendre in the phrase "the features that matter," since it may refer to those characteristics that are most salient and important to get to know a character, but also to those physical features which alone can offer the reader a true insight into a character's inner self. More often than not, in Hardy's novels, the characters' inner conflicts or most intimate thoughts are best described in physical, that is, material terms. In *The Return of the Native*, "Eustacia looked for a moment what she felt" (Hardy, *TRN* 150), while in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Alec d'Ubervilles is described in the following terms: "What he looked he felt" (Hardy, *Tess* 325). In both instances, a sort of hypallage serves to draw a parallel between the character's physical appearance (*look*) and his or her emotional state (*feel*), and the reader is offered a more accurate description of the protagonists than would have been achieved by a thousand words detailing their thoughts and looks. The very stages of development a character might be going through are given to the reader in material rather than in intellectual terms, and this specificity is, to Brilmyer, what makes Hardy's take on realist fiction so special. In an attempt to define Hardy's realism, she argues that it "inheres in, among other things, a practice of description that attends carefully to qualities on the edges and exteriors of bodies and that, in so doing, emphasizes the capacity of bodies for slow, iterative change" (Brilmyer 105). In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the heroine's life struggles seem to be constantly written on the edges of her body and the reader is encouraged to visualise her development as a moving and growing shape in the distance. The words chosen by Hardy to open Phase the Second entitled "Maiden no More" is all but insignificant, insofar as they serve to offer a glimpse of the very tangible consequences of the sexual assault she has suffered. Instead of writing a detailed description of Tess's altered character and state of mind after the attack, Hardy chooses to open Phase the Second as follows: "The basket was heavy and the bundle was large, but she lugged them along like a person who

did not find any especial burden in material things" (Hardy, *Tess* 75). What might sound like a conventional description of a character at work becomes, in the context of Hardy's embodied narrative, a strategy to implicitly suggest a parallel between the material weight she has to carry and the emotional trauma weighing on her mind at the time. Here, it is indeed on the edges of Tess's body, through a focus on objects in contact with her body, that Tess's pain along with her ability for resilience are conveyed to the reader. In that sense, Hardy's novel could qualify as an embodied bildungsroman, revealing the various stages in the protagonist's development through descriptions of her physical appearance and movements which directly echo the different emotional states she is going through. In *Human Forms*, Ian Duncan explains how the bildungsroman has always been considered "'the symbolic form of modernity'– to the extent that realist novels are all in some sense novels of development" (Duncan 21). Associating the genre of the bildungsroman with an embodied approach of narration, Hardy's work therefore takes up a very modern dimension which did not go unnoticed by Lawrence. It is precisely this modern take on descriptions in which pride of place is given to sensations rather than to abstractions that led Lawrence to nuance his own harsh judgement of the Victorian author's work: "If it were not [that] the man is much stronger in feeling than in thought, the Wessex novels would be sheer rubbish, as they are already in parts" (Lawrence, *Study* 93). In Lawrence's half-praise half-condemnation of Hardy's writing lies the key to the younger author's own conception of realist fiction based, in a similar way to that of Hardy, on an embodied approach to story-telling. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the very medium of the novel is put forward as the most efficient tool for any writer to get to the truth, since it "can reveal the most secret places of life: for it is in the *passional* secret places of life, above all, that the tide of sensitive awareness needs to ebb and flow, cleansing and refreshing" (Lawrence, *LCL* 101, emphasis in the original). Through an oceanic metaphor, Lawrence conveys the cathartic power of the novel and associates that power with a particular experience of reading, rooted in the flesh and in physical sensations. Just like *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* may very well be considered an embodied bildungsroman in that the narrator explores the life experiences of the different characters from a material standpoint, focusing on what a character's life *feels* like so as to better invoke the authenticity of his or her experience. Indeed, rather than offering the reader straightforward indications about the personality of Connie's father, Lawrence's narrator makes the surprising choice of focusing on specific body parts – his legs – which seem to have so much to say and to conjure up so many thoughts in his daughter's mind:

> Connie sat next to him at the opera. He was moderately stout, and had stout thighs, but they were still strong and well-knit, the thighs of a healthy man who had taken his pleasure in life. His good-humoured selfishness, his dogged sort of independence, his unrepenting sensuality, it seemed to Connie she could see them all in his well-knit straight thighs. Just a man! And now becoming an old man, which is sad. Because in his strong, thick male legs there was none of the alert sensitiveness and power of tenderness which is the very essence of youth, that which never dies, once it is there. (Lawrence, *LCL* 254)

Just as in Hardy's work, the character's life history can be read on his body and especially on the appearance of his legs which become, to Connie herself, "more important (…) than faces, which are no longer very real" (Lawrence, *LCL* 254). It is indeed in search of realness and truth that Hardy's and Lawrence's narrators experiment new descriptive techniques, the last one being both a material and metonymic way of giving access to a character's true nature. In all occurrences quoted above, the narrative strategies taken up by the authors demonstrate a conception of writing as an embodied process that serves to allow the reader to properly *get in touch* with their reality.

The limits that may be attributed to conventional descriptions in their rendering of reality take their roots in their drawing from one sense only, that of sight. Indeed, descriptions, in the common sense, are those accounts which allow one to picture something or someone, that is, to have in mind a visual representation of the object or the person. The type of realist fiction Hardy and Lawrence are writing goes beyond the sole reliance on pictorial devices in that it appeals to other senses, deemed more efficient to grasp reality. Lawrence, on the one hand, chooses to explore the sense of touch which he considers to be the only sense "distributed all over the body" (Lawrence, *PFU* 98) and which has "the most profound significance for [him]" as "means of integration and of communication with others" (Cowan 121). Focusing on the sense of touch, Lawrence's realist approach aims at highlighting the difference between "mental feelings and real feelings" (Lawrence, *LCL,* "A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover" 311) through the creation of palpable narratives. The first strategic step towards rehabilitating the sense of touch is to undermine the one sense that has taken over the others and has long been considered superior, that is the sense of sight. In *Women in Love*, the character of Halliday serves as a spokesperson for Lawrence himself as he complains about things having "become much too visual. We can neither hear nor feel nor understand," he says, "we can only see. I'm sure that is entirely wrong" (Lawrence, *WL* 78). For his readers to properly understand the

reality he is creating in his fiction, Lawrence therefore needs to explicitly encourage them to take up an embodied approach to reading which would not rely exclusively on the sense of sight (eyes scanning the page and creating mental images) but which would require the readers to literally get in touch with the characters. As the narrator of *Women in Love* starts to describe the crucial night when Birkin and Ursula connect and lay the foundations of an enduring relationship, the sense of touch is put forward as the key to accessing the reality of the Other:

> She would have to touch him. To speak, to see, was nothing. It was a travesty to look and to comprehend the man there. Darkness and silence must fall perfectly on her, then she could know mystically, in unrevealed touch. She must lightly, mindlessly, connect with him, have the knowledge which is death of knowledge, the reality of surety in not-knowing (Lawrence, *WL* 319)

Here, the dialectic of knowing and not-knowing performs a reversal in the sensorial power dynamics – the sense of sight which is commonly associated with a direct access to knowledge is overcome by the sense of touch whose blindness and vulnerability paradoxically make it the most efficient tool to perceive the complexities of the world and of the Other. Just like Ursula, the reader is here invited to "touch the reality in [Birkin]," "with perfect fine finger-tips of reality" (Lawrence, *WL* 319), instead of merely picturing him in his or her mind. Yet, a challenge still needs to be taken up by the author, that of making his fictional characters palpable to his readers. To do so, Lawrence takes care to deprive the descriptive passages of his novels of any precisions pertaining to the sense of sight, rather focusing on what the scene *feels* like.[17] In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, for instance, the narrator often appeals to the reader's sense of hearing rather than his or her sense of sight, in order to make him or her get in touch with the reality of the scene being described. As a result, the most powerful scenes of the novels are often characterised by their synesthetic dimension, as exemplified in the following passage describing the first kiss between Connie and Mellors: "with a queer obedience, she lay down on the blanket. She felt the soft, groping, helplessly desirous hand touching her body, feeling for her face. The hand stroked her face softly, softly, with infinite soothing and assurance, and at last there was the soft touch of a kiss on her cheek" (Lawrence, *LCL* 116). Thanks to the use

[17] Such an approach to writing fiction brings to mind Joseph Conrad's own approach as he writes *The Nigger of the Narcissus*. In his famous Preface to the novel, he declares: "My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel – it is, before all, to make you *see*" (Conrad 7, emphasis in the original). If synaesthesia is at the core of Hardy's, Lawrence's and Conrad's writings, it seems relevant to note that Hardy and Lawrence wish to go beyond the primacy of the sense of sight, while Conrad introduces it as primordial in his Preface.

of alliterations in /s/ and in /f/, the reader is here able to *hear* the first physical contact between the two lovers and to better grasp its sensual nature – fricative consonants being traditionally associated with caress and sensual gestures. So as to further emphasise the prevalence of touch in this scene, the narrative voice then performs a sort of cinematic close-up on the very touching gesture as the use of a synecdoche transforms Mellors into "the hand". If the reading process requires for the reader to picture a scene in his or her mind, then Lawrence decides that his reader will have to picture a hand touching a face, associated with the sound of skins touching. In that way, the author manages to get around the pre-eminent function of the sense of sight in the reading process and offers a multisensory experience to his readers, based on the sense of touch and its association with various other senses (excluding sight). This approach to reading and writing is in fact quite similar to that of "a branch of psychology" which was "influential in Britain (…) until the end of the nineteenth century," that is associationist psychology (Sweeney 76). In *Reading with the Senses in Victorian Literature and Science*, Sweeney explains how "the fundamental tenet of the school was that any given idea or sensation automatically recalls to the mind other ideas and sensations connected to it by similarity and temporal or spatial contiguity" (Sweeney 76). In that sense, Lawrence's synesthetic writing seems to be rooted in a Victorian tradition that recognised the need to conceive perception as a sensory collaboration rather than a synonym for vision. So as to rehabilitate a long-deprecated sense, Lawrence takes care to build up an aesthetics of touch which aims at promoting a type of beauty that cannot be seen but can only be felt. "How beautiful he felt, how pure in tissue!" Connie exalts after having touched Mellor's skin (Lawrence, *LCL* 174). In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the beauty of the erotic scenes Lawrence is writing is to be found in sensations rather than in representations, drawing further away from pornographic writing by highlighting the "live, warm beauty of contact, so much deeper than the beauty of vision" (Lawrence, *LCL* 125). A conception of perception and of fictional description as multisensory processes rather than as exclusive results of visual abilities is a feature that can be found in Hardy's fiction as much as in Lawrence's. Indeed, Hardy's narrators also resort to synaesthesia to give a more realistic dimension to their descriptions, just as characters themselves are shown to be using several senses, simultaneously or successively, in order to perceive their environment. In the following passage taken from *The Return of the Native*, the narrator illustrates "what Hardy characterizes as the artist's gift for association via similarity" (Sweeney 85), through a demonstration of alternative ways of seeing or hearing:

> She [Eustacia] strained her eyes to see them, but was unable. Such was her intentness, however, that it seemed as if her ears were performing the functions of seeing as well as hearing. Dr Kitto[18] was probably under the influence of a parallel fancy when he described his body as having become, by long endeavour, so sensitive to vibrations that he had gained the power of perceiving by it as by ears. (Hardy, *TRN* 116)

In this instance, reality is to be heard or felt within one's body rather than to be seen clearly by the eyes, but the sense of touch, so omnipresent in Lawrence's work, is blatantly absent. The significance of this observation might be found in Hardy's personal life and character, and specifically in a sort of haphephobia which is mentioned by Florence Emily Hardy in *The Life of Thomas Hardy*. Indeed, accounts of his early childhood confirm that "to the end of his life he disliked even the most friendly hand being laid on his arm and shoulder" (Hardy *The Life* XVI). However touching Hardy's narratives might be, I argue that they focus on the space-between – on that space between bodies that exists right before the moment of touching. In *Hardy, Conrad and the Senses,* Hugh Epstein contends that in Hardy's descriptions, "the subject is not so much the registration of consciousness – as it would be in James, or Woolf – but the vibrations in the ether (…), the relations between things that make what is conventionally called 'atmosphere'" (Epstein 25). Despite his rejection of the sense of touch, Hardy's approach to embodied writing is similar to that of Lawrence in that he too strives to make the impalpable – here the atmosphere – palpable and accessible to the reader. Getting in touch with a character, in Hardy's fiction, amounts to perceiving his or her aura, that is what can be felt rather than seen, as in Lawrence's writing. In *The Return of the Native*, for instance, the arrival of Mrs Yeobright upon a scene is described in terms of changes in the atmosphere rather than in terms of her physical features: "Persons with any weight of character carry, like planets, their atmospheres along with them in their orbits; and the matron who entered now upon the scene could, and usually did, bring her own tone into the company" (Hardy *TRN*, 36). Hardy's use of an astronomical metaphor serves to express how the description of a character should not be limited to a description of his or her physical appearance but should transcend the boundaries of the skin, since a character's own existence and identity do not stop there. Thanks to Hardy's particular "attention to the thickened air" (Epstein 27), the reader then gets to be physically involved in the narrative, since he or she is able to stand in the specific atmosphere of the scene

[18] A note on the text explains that "Dr John Kitto (1804-1854) became deaf as a child and wrote of his adversity" (Hardy, *TRN* 412). The reference to a non-fictional person also participates in making multisensory perception a very realistic and universal type of process.

and breathe it in. To Epstein's assertion that "*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*'s realism is to offer scenes that in every way *involve* her" (Epstein 211, emphasis in the original), I would add that those scenes involve the reader just as much. He or she is indeed invited to step into the scene and stand beside the characters rather than being offered an insight into the characters' minds. Tess's emotions are most often conveyed in an indirect way, through a transferred focus on the setting and the very air which are shown to be impacted by her own mood. As she reproaches her mother for having let her father go to the public-house, Tess's angry and authoritative tone is not transmitted directly to the reader but is rather expressed through the impression that it leaves on objects and characters on the scene: "Her rebuke and her mood seemed to fill the whole room, and to impart a cowed look to the furniture, and candle, and children playing about, and to her mother's face" (Hardy, *Tess* 22). Here, unlike what can be found in most naturalist novels of 19th-century Europe, the reader is not offered a detailed description of the furniture or a full portrait of the mother's face, yet he or she is all the more able to grasp what the whole scene *really* feels like. In that sense, Hardy's narratives do have a tactile dimension which is better defined by the author himself in relation to realism, in his essay "Science of Fiction":

> What cannot be discerned by the eye and ear, what may be apprehended only by the *mental tactility* that comes from a sympathetic appreciativeness of life in all its manifestations, this is the gift which renders its possessor a more accurate delineator of human nature than many another with twice his powers and means of external observation, but without the sympathy. (Hardy, *Personal Writings* 137, my emphasis)

In this passage, Hardy puts forward a type of realism based on feeling, and more specifically, on transmitting a feeling of reality rather than an image of reality. Whether they be focusing on the palpable or the impalpable, Hardy and Lawrence therefore share a similar embodied approach to reading and writing, whose aim is to offer a *sense* of truth.

Still in his essay "Science of Fiction", Hardy declares that "realism is an unfortunate, and ambiguous word, which has been taken up by literary society like a view-halloo, and has been assumed in some places to mean copyism" (Hardy, *Personal Writings* 136). Such an assessment demonstrates Hardy's interest in the realist genre but also his desire to reform it, so as to restore its initial objective, that is to offer vignettes of reality to the reader. As he writes embodied narratives aiming at making the impalpable palpable, Hardy ultimately creates his own version of realism which involves a particular focus on sensations, triggered in characters and in readers alike. "Drawing on the ethological theory of the Victorian scientists A. F. Shand

and James Sully," Brilmyer explains, in *The Science of Character*, the intricate link that exists between sensations and realist fiction. She writes: "The power of realism inheres less in its insights into the human mind or the value of sympathetic exchange than in its ability to both represent and theorize of the sensorial experience of encountering a human being in the flesh" (Brilmyer 11). Indeed, the logic behind Brilmyer's theory is that, if a narrator describes with abstract words the emotions going through a character's mind, the reader is unlikely to properly identify to the character and feel those emotions in his own mind. On the other hand, if a narrator appeals to the reader's senses and invites him or her to feel along with the character, then the reader is likely to make those emotions his own and understand them. This is precisely how Hardy approaches the description of Eustacia in *The Return of the Native*, as the myriads of emotions felt by the young protagonist are conveyed to the reader through a description of sensations and their resulting physical manifestations, rather than through an enumeration of actual types of emotion:

> On such occasions as this a thousand ideas pass through a highly charged woman's head; and they indicate themselves on her face; but the changes, though actual, are minute. Eustacia's features went through a rhythmical succession of them. She glowed; remembering the mendacity of the imagination, she flagged; then she freshened; then she fired; then she cooled again. It was a cycle of aspects, produced by a cycle of visions. (Hardy*TRN* 117)

Here, the various changes in the character's emotional and physical states are further emphasised by alliterations in hard consonants (/g/, /c/) framing an alliteration in a softer consonant, the fricative /f/. This particular method allows Hardy to produce a synesthetic description of Eustacia's inner conflict which will be better heard and felt this way by the reader, rather than seen through the production of an artificial mental image of the protagonist. In a journal entry dated from January 14th 1888, Hardy makes an interesting offer to reinvent the genre of the sensation novel defined in the beginning of the present section. He writes:

> A 'sensation-novel' is possible in which the sensationalism is not casualty but evolution; not physical but psychical… the difference between the latter kind of novel and the novel of physical sensationalism (…) is this: that whereas in the physical the adventure itself is the subject of interest, the psychical results being passed over as commonplace, in the psychical the casualty or adventure is held to be of no intrinsic

> interest, but the effect upon the faculties is the important matter to be depicted. (Hardy, *The Life* 210)

From this remark, one could conclude that Hardy's realist sensationalism focuses only on the psychical aspect of the characters, while the close-readings of his work which have been put forward in this chapter demonstrate quite the opposite. In fact, I suggest that the specificity of Hardy's realism lies precisely in the combination of the material and the psychical in his fiction, in that he shows how the only efficient way to convey the reality of his characters' psyches is through descriptions of their embodied realities. The peculiarity of Hardy's own version of Sensation Fiction is that the sensational is to be found in the common, in those universal sensations felt by characters and directly transmitted to the readers. Decades later, in *La Nature*, Merleau-Ponty would confirm such an association between realism and sensationalism as he declared: "There is a sense of prime universality in sensation" (Merleau-Ponty 143).[19] Indeed, so as to write a novel that will seem realistic to the reader, an author must, first and foremost, build a narrative that will appeal to any reader's reality, and more efficiently, to his or her embodied existence. Lawrence's take on Sensation Fiction in his novels seems to draw a lot from Hardy's approach and his conception of sensation as universal. In *Women in Love*, a dichotomy between sentience and sententiousness is recurring throughout the book as a motif guiding one's reading. While the novel is made of numerous witty dialogues, the narrator takes care of reminding the reader of the emptiness and artificiality of such dialogues which, alone, cannot illustrate the reality Lawrence wants to convey. At times, the narrator even chooses to elide whole parts of conversations between characters, judging that the reader would not be getting any sense of truth out of those words:

> The talk went on like a rattle of small artillery, always slightly sententious, with a sententiousness that was only emphasised by the continual crackling of a witticism, the continual spatter of verbal jest, designed to give a tone of flippancy to a stream of conversation, that was all critical and general, a canal of conversation rather than a stream.
>
> The attitude was mental and very wearying. Only the elderly sociologist, whose mental fibre was so tough as to be insentient, seemed to be thoroughly happy. (Lawrence, *WL* 84)

[19] My translation. Merleau-Ponty writes: « Il y a une universalité première de la sensation. »

In addition to the association that is being made between sententiousness and insentience, a hardyan use of alliteration may be picked up in this passage, with the combination of hard consonants (/c/, /t/) and soft consonants (/f/, /s/), illustrating the blatant lack of appeal to sensations in an unsubstantial conversation.[20] Moreover, the narrator's metaphorical qualification of that conversation as "a canal" further emphasises the artificiality of it – a canal being a human creation, as opposed to a stream which flows freely and naturally. Thus, what is universal and relatable in Lawrence's fiction is not verbal language but rather body language. As Gudrun and Gerald are about to exchange their first kiss, "a sense of prime universality in sensation" can indeed be felt throughout the passage:

> So, the colliers' lovers would stand with their backs to the walls, holding their sweethearts and kissing them as she was being kissed (…). And the colliers' sweethearts would, like herself, hang their heads back limp over their shoulder, and look out from the dark archway, at the close patch of yellow lights on the unseen hill in the distance, or at the vague form of trees, and at the buildings of the colliery wood-yard, in the other direction. (Lawrence, *WL* 330-331)

Here, as is the case in Hardy's fiction, what is sensational is precisely the non-sensational dimension of sensation, that is the common experience of sensuality and physical connection.

In place of a sensational realism, Hardy and Lawrence offer their readers a sentient realism, a type of fiction that only makes sense in its appeal to the senses, and that, therefore, can only be fully achieved through the intermediary of an active reader. Against "the aspiration of scientific realists to unfeeling" and "scientific ideals of objectivity" (Brilmyer 29), Hardy and Lawrence's Sensation Fiction proposes subjective vignettes of reality and invites their readers to create their own truth out of them. Thus, I suggest that Lawrence finds inspiration in Hardy's "cultivation of a realism adequate to the task of revealing how character emerges, spontaneously, through interactions at the surface" (Brilmyer 109). The two author's realism is indeed to be found precisely at the surface of their books, on that specific spot where the reader's hand is touching the author's words on the page.

[20] In French, a hard consonant is referred to as "consonne sourde," which, in the passage above-quoted, would underline the unsubstantial dimension of a dialogue in which people are not really listening to each other or properly getting in touch.

CHAPTER FOUR.
Moving Stories:
The Dialectic of Motion and Emotion in Thomas Hardy's and D. H. Lawrence's Novels

"Living is moving, and moving on"
(Lawrence, LCL 276)

In Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Mellors declares: "living is moving, and moving on" (Lawrence 2006, 276). Such a polysemous assertion both serves to lay the foundation of Lawrence's conceptualisation of movement in his fiction and constitutes a suitable point of entry to this fourth chapter dedicated to a non-dualist exploration of movement in Hardy's and Lawrence's novels. As a verb used in its transitive and intransitive forms, "moving" may refer to an action involving the subject only or having an impact on a direct object (which may be human or non-human). In that sense, Mellors's assertion quoted above may refer to the action of moving one's body, physically, but also to moving others, emotionally. To professors Jordan Zlatev, Johan Blomberg and Ulf Magnusson, "such intermixing of expressions for something that can be intersubjectively observed – the motion of objects and animate creatures – and what is subjectively experienced (feelings) is far from being restricted to English and other European languages" and is actually "widely distributed in the world's language" (Zlatev et al. 424). Indeed, in English as in many other languages, the etymologies of "motion" and "emotion" share the same Latin root that is the verb *ēmovēre,* later leading to the Middle French *esmovoir* meaning "to set in motion, move the feelings" (Zlatev et al. 424). The psycho-physical dimension of motion that is being put forward in that last definition has been crystallised into an ontological concept by American philosopher Maxine Sheets-Johnstone. In her contribution to the multi-authorial work *Moving Ourselves, Moving others: Motion and Emotion in Intersubjectivity, Consciousness and Language* (2012) that I quoted above, she explains how the "key concept" of our ontological understanding of motion is *"animation":*

> We are essentially and fundamentally animate beings. In more specifically dynamic terms, we are animate forms who are alive to and in the world, and who, in being alive to and in the world make sense of it. We do so most fundamentally through movement, unfolding a temporal-spatial-energic dynamic, a kinetic aliveness that is in play throughout the course of our everyday lives from the time we are born to the time we die. (Maxine Sheets-Johnstone 29)

The central role of motion in human existence which is suggested by Mellors in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is here given a theoretical grounding as living is defined as a dynamic process one must embrace if one is to live a fulfilling life. As part of an exploration of Hardy and Lawrence's relational ontology, this chapter has been designed to offer a dynamic back-and-forth movement through the two authors' works so as to reveal the different ways they use

motion, but also stillness, to navigate the complexities of human existence. The tension between motion and emotion will be studied along with the tension between motion and stillness, in accordance with Merleau-Ponty's own definition of the state of being moved: "To feel emotion is to be involved in a situation which one is not managing to face and from which, nevertheless, one does not want to escape" (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 99).[1] As the reader feels various types of emotions along the pages, he or she is indeed being moved, while sitting comfortably in his or her chair and being unwilling to look up from the book, eager to read more about the characters' destinies. In order to better understand how emotions may be triggered by unmoving words on the page, I propose to open this study with an exploration of the different ontological and narrative functions of movement in the two authors' novels.

1. Moving along the Story: the Ontological and Narrative Functions of Movement

The first step towards a proper study of the dialectic between motion and emotion in Hardy and Lawrence's fiction is to determine what types of movement feature in their novels and what particular narrative functions those movements serve to fulfil. As a starting point, I propose to introduce the definition of motion given by Zlatev, Bomberg and David (2010),[2] which reads as follows:

> Motion (…) can be defined as the experience of *continuous change in the relative position of an object (the figure) against a background,* in contrast to stasis – where there is no such change and in contrast to a *dis-continuous* change, as when a light suddenly lights up in position A, "disappears" and then appears in position B. (Quoted in Foolen et al. 427, emphasis in the original)

This definition is key to our study of movement in fiction, since it suggests that any motion involves a journey, that is, a dynamic process along which characters are able to grow and plots are allowed to unfold. To readers of Hardy, the image of "a [moving] figure against a background" is likely to conjure up many scenes, from contemplative ones to more crucial episodes. Before putting forward some close readings of the six novels under study, an overview

[1] The French original quotation, through the use of the verb « émouvoir », is probably even more relevant in its emphasis on the motion/stasis dialectic: « être ému, c'est se trouver engagé dans une situation à laquelle on ne réussit pas à faire face et que l'on ne veut pourtant pas quitter » (Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie* 115).

[2] For the original quotation, see Zlatev, J, J. Blomberg & C. David (2010). "Translocation, language and the categorization of experience." In V. Evans and P. Chilton (Eds.), *Language, space and cognition* (389–418). London: Equinox, 393.

of the role of movement in the narrative arcs of each of the works seems essential and quite revealing of the dynamic dimension of the two authors' writings. In Hardy's fiction, to begin with, displacements always have narrative functions in the sense that movement tends to precipitate action and change. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, for instance, one may observe how all the key scenes of the novel are happening on the move, rather than in a definite place. The death of Prince – which is nothing less than the initial event triggering all the other events having an impact on Tess's destiny – happens during a nightly journey, as a consequence of Tess being lulled to sleep by the slow movement of the wagon. A similar state of drowsiness will then take hold of her a few chapters later, after having been – quite literally –led on by Alec D'Urbervilles in his coach without any control on the pace or the direction of the journey (Hardy, *Tess* 72-74). As the wagon is moving along the road, Tess is being sexually harassed and driven towards her tragic destination, that is the forest in which she will be raped. Movement therefore has a performative power over the heroine who is mostly shown as a figure moving against the background of her destiny, without being able to take control of her own life-motion. Even in more positive life-changing scenes such as the journey on the spring-wagon with Angel Clare (Hardy, *Tess* 190), during which Tess is being kissed by her lover for the first time and is being led, in spite of her fears and gut feeling, to consent to marry him, the young woman is still unable to take the helm of her own journey.[3] In fact, the only times Tess can be allowed to move of her own accord is when she is walking, moving by the sole force of her body. It is precisely in an attempt to escape her destiny that Tess keeps walking, at the end of the novel, unknowingly heading towards Stonehenge where she will feel the physical need to stop (Hardy, *Tess* 393). The very moment the heroine stops her course and lies still on the altar is also the (non-)action that marks the resolution of the plot – in other words, the story ends when Tess stops moving and "in her movement is her story" (Alcorn 3). In that sense, a mere overview of Hardy's plot line already suggests that motion has a proper narrative function as a driving force used by the author to make the story literally move forward. A closer look at Hardy's 1878 novel *The Return of the Native* helps to corroborate such an assertion since motion is included in the very title of the book. Indeed, it is Clym's homeward movement which constitutes the triggering event at the origin of the plot, just as it is the young man's mobility – his unwillingness to "stand still in the circumstances in which he was born" (Hardy, *TRN* 168) – which is attractive to Eustacia and is similarly at the roots of their relationship. As a matter

[3] For a full analysis of the parallel between the wagon scene between Tess and Alec and the wagon scene between Tess and Angel, see part two on the present chapter).

of fact, motion is both the precipitating factor and the disruptive element in their romance, insofar as the two lovers gradually discover how they are driven by two opposite life-forces – one yearning for change and displacement, the other yearning for stability and inertia. Such opposite forces are illustrated by the miscommunication that characterises most of their interactions and one exchange in particular, when Clym asks Eustacia to marry him:

> "But you must answer me. Shall I claim you some day—I don't mean at once?"
>
> "I must think," Eustacia murmured. "At present speak of Paris to me. Is there any place like it on earth?"
>
> "It is very beautiful. But will you be mine?"
>
> "I will be nobody else's in the world—does that satisfy you?"
>
> "Yes, for the present."
>
> "Now tell me of the Tuileries, and the Louvre," she continued evasively. (Hardy, *TRN* 195-196)

Leading the conversation away from present matters of love to the city of Paris, Eustacia unintendedly shows how she associates marriage with a movement away from home, as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself. This yearning for displacement ultimately leads her towards her tragic destiny, as she dies in a final attempt to escape the deadly stillness of the heath. Life impulse, in Hardy's fiction, is often synonymous with motion, which explains why his bildungsroman *Jude the Obscure* is similarly structured around movement. Indeed, the starting point of Hardy's last novel is, as opposed to that of *The Return of the Native*, a movement away from home, as the first scene describes Mr Phillotson's departure from Marygreen, along with little Jude's subsequent desire to follow his lead.[4] Such an opening to the story is in keeping with the structure Hardy chooses for his novel, dedicating each part to one particular place, from Marygreen (part first), to Christminster (part sixth). Each place corresponding to a different phase in Jude's life, the reader is invited to follow the evolution of his life through his geographical movements and to measure his progress in terms of the distance travelled. Inasmuch as the part titles could have been related to his marital status or to his career status (for instance, one could have read "Part two: Jude as a Stonemason"), Hardy's choice of structuring his novel in terms of displacement is not insignificant and has a proper function in supporting the narrative. In fact, the title of part sixth is not merely "at

[4] The very first line of the novel contains the verb *to leave*, which foreshadows the importance of movement in the story the reader is about to read: "The schoolmaster was leaving the village, and everybody seemed sorry" (Hardy, *JO* 9).

Christminster" but "at Christminster Again," since part two was already describing the hero's arrival at his dream place. In that sense, one can note an imperfect circular movement at work in the novel, illustrating Jude's similarly imperfect progress towards the achievement of his goals. Jude's failed attempts at moving up the social ladder are therefore represented by his scattered movements through the fictional Wessex and by a general circular movement which drives the plot of the novel and carries the hero's tragic destiny. As readers of Hardy, we are thus invited to embark on journeys along with the protagonists – journeys which are as much physical as spiritual, suggesting a psycho-organic conception of motion. One of the objectives of this chapter will be to determine whether such a conception may be found in Lawrence's writing too and whether it might be supported by a similar narrative approach. As opposed to Hardy's incipits mentioned above, the openings to Lawrence's novels tend, in the corpus under study, to take inertia rather than movement as a starting point to the story. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the novel opens on a state of stagnation representing the consequences of a deadly war. Clifford, crippled by the war, is denied motility and is condemned to live in stillness, thus sentencing his wife to a similar lethargic life. Rather than being a welcome state, inertia therefore serves as the initial issue which will paradoxically drive the narrative. It is precisely this unbearable sense of stagnation that will awaken a life-impulse in Connie Chatterley who will feel the need to move, to go on longer walks, further and further away from Wragby Hall. Only through Connie's displacement to the wood is the narrative allowed to move on and is the protagonist herself allowed to grow. Yet, inertia in Lawrence's fiction is not always acting as a mere starting point and may be rather represented as a state to be maintained throughout the narrative. The objective that motivates all of Paul's life choices in *Sons and Lovers* is indeed the preservation of things as they are, which explains the relatively few physical displacements that can be found in Lawrence's semi-autobiographical novel. If one had to sum up this novel in a few words, one might say that this is the story of a boy who will spend his whole life fighting to preserve his home, and more specifically, to make his mother live forever. I argue that a profound desire for permanency – quite contradictory to Jude's desire for change – is at the root of Paul's reluctance to marry, that is to move away from home. Despite the many scenes describing the protagonist on the move, on long walks or on cycling trips across the country, the reader is struck by a sense of immobility at the core of the narrative: as the story moves on, Paul stands still. In its treatment of (non-)mobility, *Sons and Lovers* is a unique form of bildungsroman in which the character paradoxically strives to control his personal growth by limiting his movements. A similar parsimonious use of motion can be found in *Women in Love*,

in which the two sisters, Ursula and Gudrun, tend to evolve in a restricted sphere, close to their home and their community. In this novel, no narrative arc seems to be based on specific physical movements and the few displacements of characters are often merely mentioned as events having taken place outside of the narrative – Gudrun, for instance, had been living with her artist friends in London but barely talks about it since she has been focusing on settling back home. The only significant movements that are part of the narrative are considered as "excurse[s]" (see the title of chapter XXIII during which Ursula and Birkin drive away together) or presented as vacations – that is, as temporary displacements – , such as the final trip to the Austrian Alps. What is noticeable, however, is the spiritual awakening that seems to systematically accompany such movements. Indeed, it is during their improvised getaway that Ursula and Birkin manage to create for themselves the intimate space they need to properly connect, and it is in the context of being away from home in a strange place that Gerald is faced with his demons and ultimately breaks down. Just as it is the case in Hardy's three novels mentioned above, motion in *Women in Love* seems to be used to foster change and to give impetus to the characters' most profound wishes. A preliminary overview of Hardy's and Lawrence's plots therefore allows to assert that motion comes hand in hand with an exploration of the self which naturally leads the two authors to include the use of movement in their characterisation strategies, as much as in their narrative ones.

In her book *The Science of Character*, Brilmyer puts forward "an understanding of character as the dynamic substrate of subjectivity – the ever-changing product of physical processes through which subjectively experienced events are transformed into objectively perceivable traits and behaviors" (Brilmyer 16). Two elements are particularly striking in this conceptualisation of character: its being defined by fluidity and its embodied dimension. Through this definition, Brilmyer suggests that character is not a fixed entity that may be offered to the reader in an immovable form through the description of one's intellect but that character is best expressed and understood through a particular attention granted to the various movements of the body. As realist writers, Hardy and Lawrence are naturally seeking the best tools to make their characters accessible and relatable to their readers. In that perspective, I argue that they make motion an integral part of their characterisation strategies, choosing to focus on the ever-moving body to reveal the complexities of the ever-evolving human self. Advocating against a conception of body motion as messy and deprived of clear meaning, Hardy and Lawrence often go as far as to describe a character's first appearance in terms of his or her movements rather than in terms of his or her physical traits. In *Jude the Obscure*, for

instance, what sticks in Jude's mind after having caught sight of his cousin Sue for the first time is not necessarily her physical appearance but rather the way she moved:

> When she was gone he continued his work, reflecting on her. He had been so caught by her influence that he had taken no count of her general mould and build. He remembered now that she was not a large figure, that she was light and slight, of the type dubbed elegant. That was about all he had seen. There was nothing statuesque in her; all was nervous motion. She was mobile, living, yet a painter might not have called her handsome or beautiful. But the much that she was surprised him. She was quite a long way removed from the rusticity that was his. (Hardy, *JO* 73)

From the mere observation of her body movements, Jude is able to get a first glimpse at Sue's personality and to lay the foundation of his adoration for her, which will only keep on growing through the novel. After having only seen her fixed face on a photograph, what seduces the young man as he lays eyes on his cousin that day in Christminster is her animated and dynamic figure which makes her so beautiful in his eyes, and moves him in turn. This type of embodied characterisation through motion is quite common in Hardy's work and demonstrates his affinities with phenomenological studies which posit movement as "the driving force in any organism's self-construction" (Jean-Luc Petit 288).[5] If motion has a key ontological function, then the use of movement in characterisation becomes a prerequisite to a realist rendering of the diversity of human experience. In Hardy's fiction, the characters' every moves and gestures are scrutinised by the narrator so as to best express their identities and natural dispositions. The procession of young girls walking for the May-Day dance in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is not described in a straightforward way but the character traits shared by this group of women are rather expressed through the similarities of their movements. Based on a particular motion on their faces or a particular gesture, Hardy is able to paint an accurate psycho-organic portrait of country girls: "A difficulty of arranging their lips in this crude exposure to public scrutiny, an inability to balance their heads, and to dissociate self-consciousness from their features, was apparent in them, and showed that they were genuine country girls, unaccustomed to many eyes" (Hardy, *Tess* 14). Through such descriptions, the narrator gives the reader a sort of observation handbook to allow him or her to navigate the Wessex country and understand the complexities of its inhabitants. The protagonist herself is characterised by the fluidity of her

[5] My translation. Petit writes : « Le mouvement est ainsi, [dès l'origine ontogénétique, et de la façon la plus pure,] opérateur de l'auto-constitution de l'organisme.»

figure, compared by her lover to "an undulating billow warmed by the sun" (Hardy, *Tess* 145). In fact, such a fluidity perceived by the young man might have been at the origin of the complex nature of Tess's relationship with men who might be encouraged to interpret the grace of her movements as intellectual malleability or flexibility. No movement made by any character in Hardy's fiction is done randomly or is deprived of meaning – on the contrary, movements give substance to the characters and often give hints at forthcoming events. In *The Return of the Native*, the threat posed by Wildeve to the women crossing his path is underlined from the beginning of the novel, based on the way he moves: "The grace of his movement was singular: it was the pantomimic expression of a lady-killing career" (Hardy, *TRN* 45). Just as the double-dealing character of Wildeve can be deciphered by a close attention to his movements, the intricacies of Mrs Yeobright's personality are rendered with precision through the description of her movements: "The philosophy of her nature, and its limitations by circumstances, was almost written in her movements. They had a majestic foundation, though they were far from being majestic; and they had a groundwork of assurance, but they were not assured" (Hardy, *TRN* 188). Here, the emphasis on the antithetic nature of her movements allows for a nuanced depiction of Mrs Yeobright's temperament which would have been impossible via the exclusive rendering of her words. In Hardy's fiction, just as in Lawrence's, a mere movement may say a lot more about a character than a thousand words about his or her state of mind. In the very first pages of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the physical description of the young protagonist is not limited to her stature or her hair colour, but includes an analysis of her body motion which is more telling about her current disposition than details about her features: "Constance, his wife, was a ruddy, country-looking girl with soft brown hair and sturdy body, and slow movements, full of unused energy" (Lawrence, *LCL* 6). Included as an integral part of Connie's physical description, the mention of her "slow movements" early on in the novel reveals the dynamism of her true nature, while foreshadowing the physical and emotional pain a static life will condemn her to. As was the case with Hardy, Lawrence's approach to characterisation demonstrates an awareness of the complexities of subjective experience, along with a belief that human character can be better read through one's daily movements than through one's language or action. Mr Morel, in *Sons and Lovers*, has a peculiar place in the family which is quickly attributed by the narrator to his own doing and more particularly to his choosing to move in a certain way. If Paul's father is isolated from his family, the narrator says, it is because his movements are not harmonious with the rest of the family's:

> Immediately he had finished tea he rose with alacrity to go out. It was this alacrity, this haste to be gone, which so sickened Mrs. Morel. As she heard him sousing heartily in cold water, heard the eager scratch of the steel comb on the side of the bowl, as he wetted his hair, she closed her eyes in disgust. As he bent over, lacing his boots, there was a certain vulgar gusto in his movement that divided him from the reserved, watchful rest of the family. He always ran away from the battle with himself. (Lawrence, *SL* 56)

Of course, the quickness and roughness of Mr Morel's movements are both the cause and the consequence of his isolated status, serving as physical manifestations of deep-rooted and complex feelings towards his wife and children. As was touched upon earlier in this second part, characterisation is indeed embodied, in Hardy's and Lawrence's fiction, and it is therefore only natural for the authors to associate different body movements to different characters, according to the personalities they want them to have. The violence inherent to Mr Morel's character can be perceived in the way he moves, just as Miriam's self-consciousness and unrealised potential can be told by observing her movements:

> All the life of Miriam's body was in her eyes, which were usually dark as a dark church, but could flame with light like a conflagration. Her face scarcely ever altered from its look of brooding. She might have been one of the women who went with Mary when Jesus was dead. Her body was not flexible and living. She walked with a swing, rather heavily, her head bowed forward, pondering. She was not clumsy, and yet none of her movements seemed quite *the* movement. Often, when wiping the dishes, she would stand in bewilderment and chagrin because she had pulled in two halves a cup or a tumbler. It was as if, in her fear and self-mistrust, she put too much strength into the effort. There was no looseness or abandon about her. Everything was gripped stiff with intensity, and her effort, overcharged, closed in on itself. (Lawrence, *SL* 184, emphasis in the original)

What is interesting here is that the particularities of Miriam's personality are not conveyed to the reader in a straightforward way, but rather through the prism of Paul's point of view as he observes her moving around the kitchen. Here, what is important is not so much what Miriam's movements say about her but how Miriam's movements are interpreted by Paul who uses those conclusions to feed his belief that something is wrong with her – which makes their romance impossible. In that sense, motion is here used by Lawrence not only to characterise Miriam but

to question Paul's own condemning attitude towards her. Through the sentence "none of her movements seemed quite *the* movement", the narrator uses the incarnate concept of motion to explore both Miriam and Paul's subjectivities, suggesting that the young woman's lack of confidence may be the consequence of Paul's behaviour rather than a natural disposition on her part. Generally speaking, then, Lawrence's narrators tend to use motion to suggest some personality traits in their characters which would have been less efficiently expressed by a straightforward description. As an ultimate example of this type of characterisation, Gerald in *Women in Love* is repeatedly associated with the dialectic of motion and inertia, and the exploration of the young man's motility allows the narrator to reveal the essence of a particularly complex and two-fold personality. At the beginning of the "Gladiatorial" chapter, as Gerald experiences boredom for the first time after having succeeded in the coal business, his feeling of ennui is translated into physical terms through a focus on his utter inertia:

> He went straight to Shortlands. There he found Gerald standing with his back to the fire, in the library, as motionless as a man is, who is completely and emptily restless, utterly hollow. He had done all the work he wanted to do—and now there was nothing. He could go out in the car, he could run to town. But he did not want to go out in the car, he did not want to run to town, he did not want to call on the Thirlbys. He was suspended motionless, in an agony of inertia, like a machine that is without power. (Lawrence, *WL* 266)

If a parallel could be made between Gerald's motionlessness and Connie's inertia at the beginning of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the feelings associated with such states are however very much different: Gerald is not moving because he does not have the will nor the energy to, while Connie is not moving because she is not given the chance to. In that sense, the exploration of immobility in relation to Gerald here serves to emphasise the mechanic dimension of the young man's existence which is being expressed by the narrator through the final simile. Motionlessness, associated with a lack of life-power and an inability to be outgoing, thus suggests a somewhat hollow and introverted personality which will be at the origin of the character's failure to build meaningful and lasting relationships. It is precisely because "motility (…) is at the root of our power to feel" (Henry 113)[6] that Gerald will be condemned to an insentient life and led to a tragic death. More than being a reflection of one's character, motion,

[6] My translation ; Michel Henry writes : « C'est donc l'exercice de la motilité, c'est-à-dire de la faculté de faire des mouvements et d'en avoir conscience, qui constitue la racine de notre pouvoir de sentir (…) ».

in Hardy and Lawrence, appears as a decisive force in shaping one's personality and allowing it to grow and thrive.

In his prologue to the book *Moving Ourselves, Moving Others: Motion and Emotion in Intersubectivity, Consciousness and Language*, Jordan Zlatev explains that what motivated the elaboration of such a work was the general negligence of "the degree to which movement is intimately linked to 'the passions', the 'movements of the souls', the emotions, feelings… – or to use a common recent term, *affectivity*" (Foolen et al. 2, emphasis in the original). In another chapter of this same book, Ralph D. Ellis and Natika Newton define emotion itself "as a system that motivates the organism to act in certain ways" (Ellis and Newton 57-58). The argument that stands out in both those assertions is the key role of emotions to set the body in motion and, ensuing from this, the general conception of human consciousness as embodied. In its attempt to explore the interconnections between the characters' movements and their emotions, this chapter therefore naturally aims at further delineating Hardy and Lawrence's non-dualist conception of consciousness. Indeed, a close look at the two authors' novels reveals their affinities with embodiment studies which would develop and be popular only decades later, in the second part of the twentieth century. Contemporary academics are actually still publishing studies on embodied cognition, in an effort to remind people of the cooperating relationship between their bodies and their minds. In the recent work mentioned above, American philosopher Maxine Sheets-Johnstone underlines the impact of one's state of mind on one's movements. She writes: "Species-specific kinetic/tactile-kinesthetic invariants are qualitatively perturbable coalescing patterns of movement, feeling, thought, and awarenesses of the world, thus malleable invariants. The speed of one's walk, for example, and its amplitude may vary according to intensities of feeling, train of thought, changing climatic conditions, encroaching or receding others, the surrounding world generally, and so on" (Sheets-Johnstone 31). Several fictional equivalents of Sheets-Johnstone's example may be found in Hardy's novels, such as in *Jude the Obscure* in which the two main protagonists are described to be moving in accordance with their thoughts. Daydreaming makes Jude slow down, while active planning and projecting makes Sue move faster: "In this deep concentration on these transactions of the future Jude's walk had slackened, and he was standing quite still, looking at the ground as through the future were thrown thereon by a magic lantern" (Hardy, *JO* 32); "[Sue] was so vibrant that everything she did seemed to have its source in feeling. An exciting thought would make her walk ahead so fast that he could hardly keep up with her" (Hardy, *JO* 83). In Lawrence, the effect of one's emotion on one's mobility is often expressed more

metaphorically, using the polysemy of the verb "to move" in order to underline the causal link between the emotion and the subsequent movement. In *Women in Love*, for instance, the intensity of Birkin's feelings towards Ursula and the apprehension that accompanies them in the first phase of their romance are presented as triggering factors leading Birkin's body to move in a certain way: "[Birkin] too was moved outside himself. She saw him agitated and shaken, a frail unsubstantial body silent like the node of some violent force, that came out from him and shook her almost in a swoon" (Lawrence, *WL* 144). Here, the words describing Birkin as being "moved outside himself" are quite relevant in that they suggest both a strong emotion and an outward movement of the body that in turn provokes physical shaking in the young man and faintness in the young woman. In phenomenological terms, this particular scene may be explained by the fact that "the body is the place in which the centripetal emotion is turned into centrifugal motility" (Leroy, *Phénoménologie de la Danse* 43).[7] In Hardy and Lawrence, the focus on motion to describe how characters feel is therefore a way for the authors to depict this peculiar instant during which the intentionality of consciousness is expressed and the development of human relationships is made possible. In Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, Eustacia's efforts to keep her feelings for herself are more often than not reduced to nothing by a gesture or a posture constituting the direct consequence of a strong emotion. As the reddleman is reproaching her with willingly standing in the way of Wildeve and Thomasin's relationship, Eustacia is moved to a further degree than she would have owned and her body is therefore compelled to move accordingly: "The moment had arrived when her lip would tremble in spite of herself, and when the gasp could no longer be kept down" (Hardy, *TRN* 92). Eustacia's involuntary movement of the lips along with her gasp here exemplify Leroy's argument of the centripetal-centrifugal process at work in the transition from emotion to motion, in the sense that her consciousness is naturally made to open up to a man who is yet her enemy. A close attention to Eustacia's motility actually allows the reader to see through the cold-hearted mask the narrator initially bestows upon her and to realise that she is, in fact, one of the most emotionally-complex characters in the novel. Not only are her movements triggered by her emotions but they more often than not reflect how she feels, as unmediated physical manifestations of her consciousness. Just as a character's personality may be read through his or her movements in Hardy, a character's mood and state of mind may be best understood by observing the way he or she moves. In chapter VII of Book Fifth, Eustacia has accepted

[7] My translation. Leroy writes: « Le corps est [donc] le lieu de conversion de l'émotion centripète en motricité centrifuge ».

Wildeve's help to run away and is torn between an urge to escape an unhappy life on the heath and guilt at the thought of abandoningher husband. Those conflicting feelings are not conveyed by the narrator through articulated descriptions of her thoughts but rather through the fluctuating motion of Eustacia's figure against the background of the heath:

> Anyone who had stood by now would have pitied her, not so much on account of her exposure to weather and isolation from all of humanity except the mouldered remains inside the Barrow; but for that other form of misery which was denoted by the slightly rocking movement that her feelings imparted to her person. Extreme unhappiness weighted visibly upon her. (Hardy, *TRN* 346)

As is customary in Hardy's writing, the narrator is first and foremost a distant observer of the scene, which explains the predominance of visual descriptions and of the strategical use of movement to deal with more introspective scenes. As for the passage quoted above, a parallel may be drawn between Eustacia's rocking movement denoting restlessness and Mrs Morel's non-rocking movement in Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, meant to mirror her resignation and her growing inability to be *moved* by her husband. If repetitive movements tend to reflect an overflow of emotions, the absence of movement logically serves to express a lack of emotional response to a situation one has learned to protect oneself from:

> Paul took up his brush again and went on painting. Arthur went outside for some coal. Annie sat looking dismal. And Mrs. Morel, in her little rocking-chair that her husband had made for her when the first baby was coming, remained motionless, brooding. She was grieved, and bitterly sorry for the man who was hurt so much. But still, in her heart of hearts, where the love should have burned, there was a blank. Now, when all her woman's pity was roused to its full extent, when she would have slaved herself to death to nurse him and to save him, when she would have taken the pain herself, if she could, somewhere far away inside her, she felt indifferent to him and to his suffering. It hurt her most of all, this failure to love him, even when he roused her strong emotions. She brooded awhile. (Lawrence 2012, 111).

Here, the motionless rocking-chair is a metaphor for the absence of feeling in a space once filled with love – just as the rocking-chair used to move back and forth, Mrs Morel's heart used to be moved by her husband. Despite their apparent opposite directions, the approaches chosen by the two authors, one focusing on movement and the other on non-movement, share the same ultimate goal, that of demonstrating how one's body motion is the reflection of one's soul. Yet, to consider movement as emotionally-generated or as having the mere function of mirroring a

character's consciousness may reveal to be a reductive approach to Hardy and Lawrence's own conception of motion in fiction. In fact, body movements may in turn be the generative forces and "giv[e] rise (…) to a variety of conscious states" (Bain 576). To be more precise, motion, in Hardy and Lawrence, can also facilitate emotional healing by triggering positive feelings in the characters' minds. In Lawrence's *Women in Love*, that effect is briefly evoked in relation to a specific type of body movement – dancing. Indeed, in the "Breadalby" chapter, the narrator associates Birkin's state of mind, after a dinner organised by Hermione at her place, with the act of dancing itself. The narrator describes the aftermath of the evening as follows: "Birkin went straight to bed. He was feeling happy, and sleepy. Since he had danced he was happy" (Lawrence, *WL* 93). A clear causal link is here drawn between the action of moving one's body to music and the serenity and peace of mind that follow.[8] In that regard, both Hardy and Lawrence concur to show that only motion has a healing power and that its opposite, immobility, can only lead to negative emotions – paradoxically, the more unmoving a character is, the more restless he or she is going to be. In Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, this idea is exemplified multiple times as Tess has to cope with emotionally-challenging situations. For instance, when Alec D'Urbervilles manages to find her again and insists that she lets him help her by becoming his wife, Tess seeks refuge in the movements of her body to keep her abuser out of the way and out of her mind. While Alec is making his point, the narrator describes the young woman's attitude as follows:

> She did not answer, and he watched her inquiringly as, with bent head, her face completely screened by the hood, she resumed her trimming of the swedes. By going on with her work, she felt better able to keep him outside her emotions. (…) Tess still did not more than listen, throwing down one globular root and taking up another with automatic regularity, the pensive contour of the mere field-woman alone marking her. (Hardy, *Tess* 315)

Here, by concentrating on her movements, Tess manages to shift the focus from Alec to her own body, making sure that she, and not her interlocutor, has control over it. For the young woman, "violent motion relieve[s] thought" (Hardy, *Tess* 346) and moving soon becomes a defence mechanism, to protect both her bodily integrity and her sanity. In Hardy and Lawrence, motion therefore serves a narrative function (in making the story take a specific turn) but also an ontological one, in that it works as an integral part of the characterisation process, revealing how characters feel and react in different types of situation, as unique human beings. In fact,

[8] For an in-depth study of the relational power of dance, see part three of the present chapter.

Merleau-Ponty declares, in *Phenomenology of Perception*, that "attention to life is the awareness we experience of 'nascent movements' in our bodies" (Merleau-Ponty 90-91). It is most likely this desire to pay "attention to life" which leads Hardy and Lawrence to explore motion in their narratives and to go beyond the boundaries of the self, as they often do, in order to redefine it in relation to otherness.

2. On Moving and Being Moved: the Impact of One's Motion or Stillness on the Other

In his book *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology and the Sciences of Mind* (2007), professor Evan Thompson sheds a phenomenological light on the etymology of "emotion" which itself reinforces its association with movement. He writes:

> There is thus a close resemblance between the etymological sense of emotion – an impulse moving outward – and the etymological sense of intentionality – an arrow directed to a target, and by extension the mind's aiming outward or beyond itself toward the world. Both ideas connote movement. This image of movement remains discernable in the abstract, cognitive characterization of intentionality in phenomenology. In genetic phenomenology, this intentional striving is traced back to its roots in "original instinctive, drive related preferences" of the lived body (Husserl 2001: 198). (…) Intentionality is no mere static aboutness, but rather it is a dynamic striving for intentional fulfillment. Husserl calls this type of intentionality drive-intentionality" (*Triebintentionalität*) (…). (Thompson 364)

In introducing motion as the meeting point between emotion and intentionality, Thompson posits that body movements serve not only to express or trigger feelings but first and foremost to engage the self in a centrifugal process which alone constitutes the original life-force. In phenomenology, consciousness is both dynamic and turned outward, towards what is not the self, that is the Other. In fact, it is precisely because of the natural tendency of human consciousness to be open to the world that it can be made dynamic and therefore achieve "intentional fulfilment". In his essay "How to Talk about the Body? The Normative Dimension of Science Studies", Bruno Latour argues that "if the opposite of being a body is 'dead' and there is no life apart from the body, then to have a body is to learn to be affected, meaning 'effectuated', moved, put into motion by other entities, humans or non-humans" (Latour 205).[9] What is particularly relevant in Latour's point of view is the added layer and nuance he brings

[9] This reference was brought to my attention by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth in *The Affect Theory Reader* (11).

to our present study: human experience would not only be about moving but also about letting oneself be moved. In that sense, as readers of Hardy and Lawrence, we must not limit ourselves to the association between a character's emotion and his or her body movements, but we must explore the impact one character's movements may have on another character's body and psyche. According to poet, novelist and critic Vasudevi Reddy, "being moved by others – in posture, in attitude, in stance, in thought and in feeling (…) – is an inborn human capacity fundamental to social life" (Reddy 139). From that perspective, the exploration of human relationships which is at the centre of Hardy's and Lawrence's novels, must necessarily include the dichotomy between motion and stillness, in an attempt to better differentiate healthy from unhealthy relationships. In the two authors' fiction, relationships – and in particular romantic ones – are indeed closely associated with motion, in accordance with Sara Ahmed's assertion that "attachment takes place through movement, through being moved by the proximity of others" (Ahmed 11). In Hardy, lovers are very often observed by the narrator as they are walking hands in hands, and the feeling of love in general tends to be introduced as an impetus for the body to be set in motion. We saw how Eustacia, in *The Return of the Native*, relied on her relationship with Clym to move away from the heath, and other examples can be found in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, in which the young woman is said to be emotionally stirred by the mere thought of being on the move with her lover: "She could answer no more than a bare affirmative, so great was the emotion aroused in her at the thought of going through the world with him as his own familiar friend" (Hardy, *Tess* 194). It is probably because "desire itself is movement" (Leroy, *Phénoménologie de la Danse* 146) that characters, in Hardy and Lawrence, can be moved (physically and emotionally) by a displacement that they are dreaming about or witnessing in the instant. In *Sons and Lovers*, the complexity of Miriam and Paul's relationship is conveyed in the following passage through a combination of a focalisation on the young woman and a close up on Paul's movements. In free indirect speech and reported speech, the narrator reflects on the effect Paul's way of moving has on Miriam's emotions: "Only why, as he sat there, had he still this strange dominance over her? His very movements fascinated her as if she were hypnotised by him. Yet he was despicable, false, inconsistent, and mean. Why this bondage for her? Why was it the movement of his arm stirred her as nothing else in the world could?" (Lawrence, *SL* 343). Here, motion appears as the driving force of the two lovers' relationship, going against Miriam's reasoning and having the power to keep alive a bond which is otherwise doomed. Unfortunately for Miriam, it is then the same intentional force which attracts Paul to Clara and makes him realise that he is "madly in love with her": "Every

movement she made, every crease in her garments, sent a hot flush through him and seemed adorable" (Lawrence, *SL* 356). The use of the polysemous verb "to stir" in relation to Miriam's feelings and the description of the physical effect created by Clara's motion on Paul, both serve to demonstrate Lawrence's psycho-physical conception of movement insofar as they suggest that a healthy romantic relationship can only be built if the two parties are letting themselves be moved both physically and emotionally by one another. Moreover, in both authors' writings, the type of movement initiated by the self and the type of reaction it triggers in the other can also say much about the durability and solidity of a relationship. Still in *Sons and Lovers*, Paul uses motion figuratively in order to justify his drifting apart from Miriam:

> "And I don't know," he repeated. "Don't you think we have been too fierce in our what they call purity? Don't you think that to be so much afraid and averse is a sort of dirtiness?"
>
> She looked at him with startled dark eyes.
>
> "You recoiled away from anything of the sort, and I took the motion from you, and recoiled also, perhaps worse." (Lawrence, *SL* 325)

Here, the parallel structure of the sentence reinforces the mirror function of motion which is put forward by Paul and serves to present him as a passive victim of a superior driving-force. Letting oneself be moved, Paul suggests, amounts to letting oneself be led in a specific direction that one may or may not have chosen to take. In other instances, mirror motion may have positive effects on the one witnessing the movement and may, as is the case for Ursula in *Women in Love*, soothe the self both physically and mentally: "There was a stillness in [Birkin's] motion that hushed the activities of her heart" (Lawrence, *WL* 36). Besides the dichotomy of stillness and motion which is at work here and which will be dealt with in details in a further part of this chapter, what is striking is the causal-link that exists between the way Birkin moves and the physical sensation such a sight triggers in Ursula. In a healthy relationship, one's motion fosters positive emotions in the other, while in an unhealthy relationship, the mirror effect observed in the two previous examples is often lacking or even reversed. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the antagonistic dimension of Tess and Alec's relationship is conveyed through the description of a discrepancy between the young woman's body movements and those of Alec. In a passage which was quoted in chapter three of this work in relation to the imagery of electricity, Tess sees Alec again for the first time after years and their ways to react to the situation, based on their movements, are quite opposite:

> But the moment that she moved again he recognized her. The effect upon her old lover was electric, far stronger than the effect of his presence upon her. His fire, the tumultuous ring of his eloquence, seemed to go out of him. His lip struggled and trembled under the words that lay upon it; but deliver them it could not as long as she faced him. His eyes, after their first glance upon her face, hung confusedly in every other direction but hers, but came back in a desperate leap every few seconds. This paralysis lasted, however, but a short time; for Tess's energies returned with the atrophy of his, and she walked as fast as she was able past the barn and onward. (Hardy, *Tess* 306)

In this scene, a clear dichotomy between Alec's stillness ("paralysis; atrophy") and Tess's restlessness ("energies") emphasises their incompatibility, along with the young woman's rejection of the man who assaulted her in the past. Here, as opposed to mirror motion, Tess's mobility seems unbounded and stands for her will to get back in control of both her body and her mind. Through her movements, Tess manages to visibly move Alec to the point of leaving him speechless, thus reaffirming her status as survivor of sexual violence. Indeed, "it is only if *you* move someone else – with your being or your actions or thoughts – that you have evidence that they are engaged with you" (Reddy 141, emphasis in the original). Then, so as to depict further engagement and intimacy, Lawrence often uses motion, and more specifically transportation, to create a connection between two characters.[10] If those two characters are set in motion, moving in the same direction and at the same pace, then the intensity of their emotions is likely to be heightened and they tend to fall into a deep harmonious state. This idea is exemplified in *Sons and Lovers*, in particular through the passionate relationship between Paul and Clara which seems to be facilitated by specific scenes describing the two lovers on the move. In the two following passages, whether their bodies be moving together at the pace of the tramway or falling into a regular rhythm as they walk together hand in hand, Paul and Clara are living the vivid and peculiar experience of being doubly moved:

> She rocked slightly to the tram's motion, and as she leaned against him, rocked upon him. He was a vigorous, slender man, with exhaustless energy. His face was rough, with rough-hewn features, like the common people's; but his eyes under the deep brows were so full of life that they fascinated her. They seemed to dance, and yet they were still trembling on the finest balance of laughter. His mouth the same was just going to

[10] Here, it is interesting to note that the French "transport" is also a literary term referring to a vivid emotion.

> spring into a laugh of triumph, yet did not. There was a sharp suspense about him. She bit her lip moodily. His hand was hard clenched over hers. (Lawrence, *SL* 351)
>
> Up Pentrich Hill Clara leaned against him as he went. He slid his arm round her waist. Feeling the strong motion of her body under his arm as she walked, the tightness in his chest because of Miriam relaxed, and the hot blood bathed him. He held her closer and closer. (Lawrence, *SL* 371)

If some say that loving is looking in the same direction, in Lawrence's fiction, loving is *moving together* in the same direction. Through motion, Lawrence's characters are not only able to connect to one another but they can be in proper communion with one another and in peace with themselves. Other types of transportation – sledging, ski-ing and skating – are used in *Women in Love* to underline the metaphysical dimension of swift movement which has the power to let characters transcend their status as human beings: "The first days passed in an ecstasy of physical motion, sleighing, ski-ing, skating, moving in an intensity of speed and white light that surpassed life itself, and carried the souls of the human beings beyond into an inhuman abstraction of velocity and weight and eternal, frozen snow" (Lawrence, *WL* 421). Here, the description of the experience of sliding down a mountain becomes phenomenological as the intensity of the physical motion allows for the characters to be propelled into the white Flesh of the World and to become part of a greater whole. In fact, it seems that the faster the motion is, the more profound the re-centring on the body is and the more likely characters are to ultimately find themselves. In Hardy and Lawrence, it is because "moving others matters" (Reddy 159) that moving their characters, both literally and figuratively, matters so much. In that perspective, even stillness needs to take up a dynamic dimension in their writings.

In his *Study of Thomas Hardy*, Lawrence puts an end to the dichotomy between motion and stillness, gathering the two entities into a dialectical whole rather than presenting them as contradictory. He writes: "If all things move together in one infinite motion, that is rest. Rest and motion are only two degrees of motion, or two degrees of rest" (Lawrence, *Study* 60). This understanding of motion and rest as co-dependent entities is the founding principle of Lawrence's concept of positive inertia which can be found in various forms in his fiction. To the author, there is no such thing as still life, since any type of life is, by definition, dynamic. In fact, Johnson, in *Dynamic Psychology in Modernist British Fiction*, claims that "the key word in Lawrence's psychology" is not so much "balance", as was suggested by Daniel Schneider "in his detailed study of Lawrence as psychologist", but "dynamic, since [his] psychology is in essence exactly that" (Johnson 150). In his fiction, this principle is translated

into detailed descriptions of scenes characterised by their stillness and yet rendered much more complex by a close attention to the invisible vitality they contain. In the following passage, Wragby Wood, in the first pages of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, first appears utterly inert and lifeless from the point of view of an equally lifeless heroine:

> In the wood all was utterly inert and motionless, only great drops fell from the bare boughs, with a hollow little crash. For the rest, among the old trees was depth within depth of grey, hopeless inertia, silence, nothingness.
>
> Connie walked dimly on. From the old wood came an ancient melancholy, somehow soothing to her, better than the harsh insentience of the outer world. She liked the inwardness of the remnant of forest, the unspeaking reticence of the old trees. They seemed a very power of silence, and yet a vital presence. They, too, were waiting: obstinately, stoically waiting, and giving off a potency of silence. Perhaps they were only waiting for the end; to be cut down, cleared away, the end of the forest, for them the end of all things. But perhaps their strong and aristocratic silence, the silence of strong trees, meant something else. (Lawrence, *LCL* 65)

Here, the description of the wood being performed through an internal focalisation on Connie who is wasting away, it is only natural that the general impression given by that passage be one of deadly stagnation. Yet, hints at Connie's forthcoming return to life are hidden in this passage, as words relating to the wood's stillness are mixed with words suggesting its dynamic potential. Indeed, words like "inertia, silence", or "nothingness" coexist with words like "power, potency, vital presence", or "strong (trees)". Such a hybrid description of the wood serves as a fictional rendering of Lawrence's concept of positive inertia, granting motility to any organism, human or non-human, regardless of its using this ability or, like Connie, its denying it. For Lawrence's characters, life motion is always there, whether or not they are able to see it and whether or not they are able to acknowledge it and engage with it. As Kalaidjian puts it, in his book *Exhausted Ecologies: Modernism and Environmental Recovery,* – in a chapter exploring the ecological implications of the concept – Lawrence's positive inertia should be understood "not as that which is inert and without life, but as a resting state that holds the key of new generation, the inner reserves of nature and human life" (Kalaidjian 45). In praising the virtues of slowness, Lawrence goes against "modernism's obsession with autonomy, excess, and limitless production" (Kalaidjian 45), and advocates a return to a pre-industrial relation to one's environment. In that sense, Lawrence once again bridges the gap between Victorian and

modernist preoccupations and modes of writing, thus echoing Hardy's own approach of natural settings as dynamic tableaux. When read concurrently, the description of Wragby Wood in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and that of the heath in *The Return of the Native* appear strikingly similar in their revelation of imperceptible motion to their readers:

> To do things musingly, and by small degrees, seemed, indeed, to be a duty in the Egdon valleys at this transitional hour, for there was that in the condition of the heath itself which resembled protracted and halting dubiousness. It was the quality of the repose appertaining to the scene. This was not the repose of actual stagnation, but the apparent repose of incredible slowness. A condition of healthy life so nearly resembling the torpor of death is a noticeable thing of its sort; to exhibit the inertness of the desert, and at the same time to be exercising powers akin to those of the meadow, and even of the forest, awakened in those who thought of it the attentiveness usually engendered by understatement and reserve. (Hardy, *TRN* 16-17)

As is the case in the excerpt of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* quoted above, Hardy here uses antitheses to draw a nuanced portrait of the heath and to underline the co-existence of motion and rest within nature. In the heath, what may come across as "the torpor of death" is actually a sign of "healthy life", "inertness" containing hidden "powers" in the service of life. Regarding "passivity" as "a state of sanity and health" (Alcorn 15), Hardy is in line with scientific discourses of the time, namely that of Albert Einstein who explored "the inertia of energy" and concluded "in a paper published in 1906" that "a body's inertia depends on its energy content" (Einstein quoted in Kalaidjian 51).[11] Years before Lawrence had the chance to conceptualise it, inertia was therefore already defined as a complex and dual entity representing "the visible façade of matter's deep, indwelling potentials, waiting to be released" (Kalaidjian 51). In Hardy's fiction, this potential is not only material but may be spiritual, as a representation of the invisible activity of the mind. Just like natural settings, urban settings such as Christminster in *Jude the Obscure*, are endowed with "indwelling potentials" which are directly related to their inhabitants. To a villager from his hometown arguing that there is not much going on in a place made of "crumbling buildings, half church" and " half almshouse", Jude retorts:

> 'You are wrong, John; there is more going on than meets the eye of a man walking through the streets. It is a unique centre of thought and religion – the intellectual

[11] See Albert Einstein. *The Collected Papers of Albert Einstein, Volume 2*, Trans. Anna Beck. Princeton University Press, 1989, 206.

and spiritual granary of this country. All that silence and absence of goings-on is *the stillness of infinite motion* – the sleep of the spinning-top, to borrow the simile of a well-known writer.' (Hardy, *JO* 91, my emphasis)

To readers familiar with Lawrence's concept of positive inertia, this passage appears as the genesis of the author's thinking, and more specifically as the one passage which might have inspired Lawrence's definition of inertia which was quoted above: "If all things move together in *one infinite motion*, that is rest" (Lawrence, *Study* 60, my emphasis). Both in Hardy's and Lawrence's fiction, the experience of human life is all about striving to find this balance between motion and stillness, this peculiar state in which one can be a steady actor of one's existence. According to Elaine Scarry, this tension between movement and rest is actually crucial to the development of any organism and therefore has a proper ontological implication. In *Work and the Body in Hardy and Other Nineteenth-Century Novelists*, she writes, in relation to Hardy's interest in trees:

> There are two major ways in which living things extend out into the world: the first, shared by the human and most of the animal world, is the capacity to move, to be detachable from the immediate ground on which one stands; the second, shared by most of the vegetable world, is to be fixed in one spot but to branch and reach, then again in each branch, branch and reach again, until the space in the world available to the live thing is vastly amplified. The two forms of access are not mutually exclusive; and though the human being is able to move, his basic form is like that of the vegetable world, so much so that even technical descriptions of his anatomy often make unavoidable the recognition of his kinship with a tree. (Scarry 109)

In underlining the natural dispositions we share with the vegetable world, Scarry performs a further reconciliation between the centripetal tendency to remain still and the centrifugal urge to move. If a healthy organism is able to grow through the cooperation of those two tendencies, then one can tell an unhealthy organism by its inability to overcome the dichotomy between motion and rest, and its experiencing life exclusively from one end of the spectrum. One representation of that type of being can be found in Lawrence's *Women in Love* with Hermione, who is repeatedly associated with stagnation and described in a depreciative way through Birkin's eyes. First, it is her own grandiose house, Breadalby, which is referred to as a "dead prison", "a snare and a delusion" that is the "beauty of static things" (Lawrence,, *WL* 97). As for her own appearance, Hermione is attributed a "handsome," yet "stiff, long body" and

"straight-stepping white legs", which give "a static magnificence" (Lawrence, *WL* 100) to her stature. Everything relating to Hermione's existence is exclusively associated to stillness, from her material belongings and physical appearance to her relationships with other characters. Regarding her relationship with Birkin, for instance, the narrator remarks that "he knew her statically, so finally, that it was almost like a madness" (Lawrence, *WL* 98). In all those occurrences, the imagery of stagnation serves to draw an unhealthy portrait of a secondary character who is not granted the liberty to grow and experience a fulfilled life, mainly because of her inability to connect with the material dimension of herself, and, by extension, to set her body in motion.[12] In fact, this specific type of inertia defined by its emptiness and sterility is a counterexample to Lawrence's concept of positive inertia, thus making Hermione's life a sort of cautionary tale for his readers. As the consequence of the disequilibrium between motion and rest within one character, his or her mental health is most often impacted. Lawrence's Hermione is gradually driven towards desperation and violence, while Hardy's Tess is led towards a mechanical and insentient life, in an attempt to heal from her traumas. As she has been abandoned by her husband, the young woman seeks refuge in work in order to fight against a growing tendency to remain dangerously still:

> Mentally she remained in utter stagnation, a condition which the mechanical occupation rather fostered than checked. Her consciousness was at that other dairy, at that other season, in the presence of the tender lover who had confronted her there—he who, the moment she had grasped him to keep for her own, had disappeared like a shape in a vision. (Hardy, *Tess* 273)

Despite her effort to move her body, the precarious balance between motion and rest has been upset in Tess, as a result of the adversity she has had to face. As opposed to positive inertia, it is a sort of negative motion that Tess is seeking through her work activity – that is, a type of motion which strives to eliminate stillness rather than to co-exist with it. Because there is no energy in Tess's mental inertia, her movements cannot be healing and will fail to give her the impetus she needs to move forward. In Hardy and Lawrence, then, not only may one character's motion or stillness have an impact on another character, but that other character may very well have an impact on one's ability to preserve a healthy balance between motion and rest. As a matter of fact, it seems that female characters, in both authors' works, are more likely to lose that balance and be condemned to a lethargic life.

[12] For a full study of Hermione as a character experiencing an immaterial life, see part II, chapter 3.

In the first chapter of their book entitled *Gendered Mobilities*, Tim Cresswell and Tanu Priya Uteng contend that each aspect of mobility "is in some way constructed in a gendered way and (…) contributes to the production, reproduction and contestation of gender itself" (2). According to those two researchers in mobility and travel behaviour, "how people move (where, how fast, how often, etc.) is demonstrably gendered and continues to reproduce gendered power hierarchies" (Cresswell and Uteng 2). In order to support their argument, they put forward various studies, among which is that of Iris Marion Young who observed the way "male and female students used their bodies while engaged in throwing a ball" (Cresswell and Uteng 3). This study concluded that boys "would use their whole body to launch the ball towards its target while girls would generally use just the arm. The rest of the body would remain stationary" Cresswell and Uteng 3). Through the observation of a simple ball game, Young was able to demonstrate how one's motion is unknowingly dictated/directed by norms associated to one's gender, encouraging men to be active and women to be passive. What Cresswell and Uteng identify as women's "inhibited mobility" (3) is indeed represented in Hardy's and Lawrence's novels through a common association of female characters with states of stillness and stagnation which seem to have been imposed upon them. In Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, Eustacia is often described as being limited in her movements by the heath, as if her circumstances were imprisoning her in a state of forced immobility:

> There she stood still around her stretching the vast night atmosphere, whose incomplete darkness in comparison with the total darkness of the heath below it might have represented a venial beside a mortal sin. (…)
>
> Her reason for standing so dead still as the pivot of this circle of heath-country was just as obscure. Her extraordinary fixity, her conspicuous loneliness, her heedlessness of night, betokened among other things an utter absence of fear. (…)
>
> One point was evident in this; that she had been existing in a suppressed state, and not in one of languor, or stagnation. (Hardy, *TRN* 55-57)

Here, what is particularly interesting in Hardy's treatment of gendered mobility is his representation of Eustacia's unmoving state as both unwished-for and imperfectly still. Indeed, the narrator associates the young woman's "extraordinary fixity" to bravery ("an utter absence of fear") and takes care of differentiating a situation caused by restriction ("a suppressed state") from a lethargic natural disposition ("languor" and "stagnation"). In that sense, Hardy manages to display the close relation that exists between gender and motility, without risking to reaffirm

that type of power-dynamic in his own fiction. This is yet another sort of positive inertia which is presented to the reader – the inertia coming from external forces and the positive dimension being found in the female capacity for resilience and continued motion, as imperceptible as it might be. In fact, the main difference between Hardy's and Lawrence's treatment of gendered mobility lies in the interpretation each of them makes of the positive dimension of inertia. As Simone de Beauvoir would do, decades later, Hardy rejects the pre-conceived argument that "those who are condemned to stagnation are (…) happy on the pretext that happiness consists in being at rest" (de Beauvoir 27). On the other hand, Lawrence deems positive the supposed natural tendency in women to stand still, since only this disposition can make male motion possible. In his essay "Of Being and Not-Being", Lawrence expresses his theory in metaphorical terms, declaring that "in a man's life, the female is the swivel and centre on which he turns closely, producing his movement" (Lawrence, *Study* 56). Some of the most relevant occurrences of this theory may be found in his last novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, in which various erotic scenes serve to perform the dichotomy between female inertia and male mobility:[13]

> And when [Mellors] came into her, with an intensification of relief and consummation that was pure peace to him, still she was waiting. She felt herself a little left out. And she knew, partly it was her own fault. She willed herself into this separateness. Now perhaps she was condemned to it. She lay still, feeling his motion within her, his deep-sunk intentness, the sudden quiver of him at the springing of his seed, then the slow-subsiding thrust. That thrust of the buttocks, surely it was a little ridiculous. If you were a woman, and a part in all the business, surely that thrusting of the man's buttocks was supremely ridiculous. Surely the man was intensely ridiculous in this posture and this act!
>
> But she lay still, without recoil. Even when he had finished, she did not rouse herself to get a grip on her own satisfaction, as she had done with Michaelis; she lay still, and the tears slowly filled and ran from her eyes. (Lawrence, *LCL* 125-126)

[13] Lawrence's choice of exploring the dichotomy between female inertia and male motion within erotic scenes is most like deliberate since such a dichotomy seems to be rooted in readings about the human reproductive system. In *Gendered Mobilities*, Cresswell and Uteng mentions how anthropologist and feminist Emily Martin has noted "how the mobility of sperm has been described with awe while the relatively stationary egg has been equated with passivity. Only recently has medical science indicated that the relatively stationary egg might be an active partner in the reproductive process" (Cresswell and Uteng 2).

Through the description of a sexual intercourse between Connie and Mellors, the narrator illustrates a type of female inertia which differs from that represented by Hardy, in its emphasis on the welcome and even desirable dimension of such a state. In fact, the scene quoted above encapsulates the essence of the author's thinking, expressed in unequivocal terms in his non-fiction:

> Upon [the sexual act] turns the whole rest of his life, from this emanates every motion he betrays. (…) The supreme desire of every man is for mating with a woman, such that the sexual act be the closest, most concentrated motion in his life, (…) the prime movement of himself, of which all the rest of his motion is a continuance in the same kind. (…) And the vital desire of every woman (…) is that his motion shall portray her motionlessness, convey her static being into movement, complete and radiating into infinity, starting from her eternality and reaching eternity again, after having covered the whole of time. (…) This is the complete movement: man upon woman, woman within man. (Lawrence, *Study* 56)

As was mentioned in part one, chapter two of this work, Lawrence's view on gender tends, at first sight, to limit women to immanence and to represent man as the incarnation of transcendence (De Beauvoir 419). To feminist philosophers like De Beauvoir, such a discourse is ontologically wrong, since "every human existence involves transcendence and immanence at the same time" (de Beauvoir 419). Even as woman is not denied any possibility of movement by Lawrence, she is indeed denied motility, insofar as her body can only move when set in motion by a man. In another erotic scene taken from *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the young woman experiences intense physical pleasure derived from the communion with Mellors' body and "her whole darkness" is said to be set "in motion", as a consequence of such contact with a male body (Lawrence, *LCL* 174). In Lawrence, men have this peculiar power to *move* women, both literally and figuratively, for the better or for the worse. In *Women in Love*, the way Gudrun is being physically moved by Gerald illustrates her irresistible attraction towards him but also the unhealthy power-dynamic which is at the core of their relationship: "As they walked, he seemed to lift her nearer and nearer to himself, till she moved upon the firm vehicle of his body. He was so strong, so sustaining, and he could not be opposed. She drifted along in a wonderful interfusion of physical motion, down the dark, blowy hill-side" (Lawrence, *WL* 329). Here, what first sounds like the description of a metaphorical magnetic attraction between the two lovers, does have some problematic undertones for the female character who seems to suffer

the physical force of Gerald and to have her motion dictated by his. A parallel may be drawn with a scene between Gerald and Pussum, in which the young man's motion seems again to be asserting his power over her: "They all moved to the door. The girl [Pussum] kept near to Gerald, and seemed to be at one in her motion with him. He was aware of this, and filled with demon-satisfaction that his motion held good for two. He held her in the hollow of his will, and she was soft, secret, invisible in her stirring there" (Lawrence, *WL* 72). In Lawrence, motion is undeniably linked with gender and, more specifically, with the power-dynamics that govern the relationships between men and women. If, as a rule, motion is associated with men in Lawrence's fiction, the two examples quoted above suggest that the use of one's movements to subdue the other might not correspond to what the author had in mind when writing about the perfect equilibrium between female inertia and male motion, and might not, in fact, be validated by the author. In his essay, he actually makes very clear that "life consists in the dual form of the Will-to-Motion and the Will-to-Inertia" and that no particular Will is meant to be superior to the other (Lawrence, *Study* 59). In that regard, he is in accord with Hardy's view on gendered mobility, sinsofar as the Victorian author denounces the restriction relating to women's movements, as opposed to men's unlimited motion. In *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy uses motion to condemn the harsh and authoritarian treatment of young women who, like Sue, decide to enter a Training College in the hope of becoming assistant professors. After only weeks of being deprived of her freedom, a change in health and character is visible through Sue's physical appearance and the way she moves:

> Though she had been here such a short while, she was not as he had seen her last. All her bounding manner was gone; her curves of motion had become subdued lines. The screens and subtleties of convention had likewise disappeared. Yet neither was she quite the woman who had written the letter that summoned him. That had plainly been dashed off in an impulse which second thoughts had somewhat regretted; thoughts that were possibly of his recent self-disgrace. Jude was quite overcome with emotion. (Hardy, *JO* 105)

In an institute that teaches women to spend their lives atoning for being women and to renounce any kind of pleasure, it is their motility which is first impacted, as a gauge assessing the amount of freedom they have left. This association between motion and freedom can be found in Lawrence's *Women in Love*, in an even more straightforward way, at the beginning of chapter IV entitled "Diver". First, a discrepancy is introduced between the immobility of Gudrun and

Ursula's position by the bank, and Gerald's agitation in the Willey Water lake: "[Gudrun] stood watching the motion of the bosom of the water, as if fascinated. (…) In the faint wash of motion, they could see his ruddy face, and could feel him watching them" (Lawrence, *WL* 47). Despite their position as distant and fully-dressed observers, it seems that Gerald's naked moving body gives him the upper-hand in this scene, condemning the two women to a state of passivity and powerlessness ("fascinated," "could feel him watching them"). In observing a male body moving freely in water, the two sisters are suddenly faced with their own restricted motility as women and, by extension, with their limited freedom:

> "He was happy, thrusting with his legs and all his body, without bond or connection anywhere, just himself in the watery world. (…)
>
> 'God, what it is to be a man!' she cried.
>
> 'What?' exclaimed Ursula, in surprise.
>
> 'The freedom, the liberty, the mobility!' cried Gudrun, strangely flushed and brilliant. (Lawrence, *WL* 47-48)

Here, the narrator's choice of words as he describes Gerald's "thrusting" movement is not insignificant since within this word is encompassed the mere movement that allows one to swim, but also the more figurative idea of one's will being forced on someone else.[14] Metaphorically then, this swimming scene suggests not only that men can move more freely and more rapidly than women, but also that this motility is a sign of a patriarchal superiority. Through this scene, Lawrence seems to be condemning a society in which only men are allowed to move, and in their movement, to push women away and toss them around as they wish. As complex as ever, the author's view on gendered mobility both participates in strengthening gender norms and in fostering female empowerment. The privilege of moving freely does sound desirable to Gudrun who seems to understand, in a flash, what her life could be like if she had been born a man. As she cries out "the freedom, the liberty, the mobility!", a ternary rhythm serves to put the three entities on an equal footing and a gradation in the number of syllables conveys a gradation in intensity, suggesting that mobility is not merely a synonym for freedom but is most importantly the highest form of freedom one may achieve. If that type of motion seems to be kept for men only, then Hardy and Lawrence need to find new types of motion that

[14] The *OED* subdivides the definitions of "to thrust" in three different semantical sections: I. Senses relating to pressing or pushing; II. Senses relating to pushing forcibly; III. Senses relating to putting someone or something forcibly into a condition.

could reconcile men and women, giving them the power to connect without giving up on fulfilling themselves as individuals.

3. Making the First Move: the Relational Power of Motion

We saw how motion, for Hardy and Lawrence, has ontological functions, insofar as movements in their fictions often have the power to build characters, and to impact the protagonists and their destinies. Not only does motion create encounters, but it makes those encounters all the more meaningful by fostering emotions. As part of a study of Hardy and Lawrence's relational ontology, the exploration of motion then requires a closer look at those crucial connecting moments in their novels, in order to assess whether or not motion is used as a tool to bridge the gap between self and Other. As a starting point, I suggest we go back to one of the crucial scenes in Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, preceding the carriage scene briefly mentioned in the beginning of this chapter in relation to its illustration of the way motion participates in the unfolding of the plot (Hardy, *Tess* 72-74). Structured in a similar fashion, the scene I will focus on now features Tess seated on a carriage driven by Alec in the direction of Tantridge. What is particularly relevant in this scene is the way Hardy uses motion to illustrate an incompatibility between the two characters – Alec being attracted by speed and Tess being only comfortable when riding at a slow pace. In an attempt to get control over the situation and over Tess herself, Alec is the one deciding the pace at which Tess's body will have to move, thus creating a disequilibrium at the root of their relationship. When used as a tool to subdue the Other, motion seems to be deprived of any relational power and may, on the contrary, foster chaos:

> Down, down, they sped, the wheels humming like a top, the dog-cart rocking right and left, its axis acquiring a slightly oblique set in relation to the line of progress; the figure of the horse rising and falling in undulations before them. Sometimes a wheel was off the ground, it seemed, for many yards; sometimes a stone was sent spinning over the hedge, and flinty sparks from the horse's hoofs outshone the daylight. The aspect of the straight road enlarged with their advance, the two banks dividing like a splitting stick; one rushing past at each shoulder. (Hardy, *Tess* 54)

Here, the violence of the motion portrayed by the narrator can also be interpreted as mirroring Tess's own distress, as she "clutche[s] D'Urbervilles' rein-arm" in spite of herself (Hardy, *Tess*

54). The fear which was triggered in the young woman by a kinesthesic sensation of rapidity will then be imprinted in her mind and associated with the one who held the reins. More than the motion itself, it is precisely the sensations that are felt within the body in motion which have a great impact on the characters' emotions and on their ability to forge ties with others. In Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, a similar disharmonious kinesthesis is illustrated by the swing scene, featuring Miriam and Paul in the chapter entitled "Lad-and-Girl Love". Quite similarly to that of Hardy, Lawrence's scene shows Paul being in control of Miriam's movement as he gives her pushes on the swing in order to make her go higher and higher. Just as Tess is afraid of speed, Miriam is afraid of height, which creates a discrepancy between Paul's strong thrusting motion and the young woman's desire for a smooth ride on the swing:

> She felt the accuracy with which he caught her, exactly at the right moment, and the exactly proportionate strength of his thrust, and she was afraid. Down to her bowels went the hot wave of fear. She was in his hands. Again, firm and inevitable came the thrust at the right moment. She gripped the rope, almost swooning.
>
> "Ha!" she laughed in fear. "No higher!"
>
> "But you're not a bit high," he remonstrated.
>
> "But no higher."
>
> He heard the fear in her voice, and desisted. Her heart melted in hot pain when the moment came for him to thrust her forward again. But he left her alone. She began to breathe.
>
> "Won't you really go any farther?" he asked. "Should I keep you there?"
>
> "No; let me go by myself," she answered.
>
> He moved aside and watched her.
>
> "Why, you're scarcely moving," he said.
>
> She laughed slightly with shame, and in a moment got down.
>
> "They say if you can swing you won't be sea-sick," he said, as he mounted again. "I don't believe I should ever be sea-sick."
>
> Away he went. There was something fascinating to her in him. For the moment he was nothing but a piece of swinging stuff; not a particle of him that did not swing. She could never lose herself so, nor could her brothers. It roused a warmth in her. It was almost as if he were a flame that had lit a warmth in her whilst he swung in the middle air. (Lawrence, *SL* 182)

Beyond Paul's desire to control Miriam's motion, what foreshadows the failure of their relationship is their inability to *move together*, that is, to yearn for the same kinesthesic sensations and to let themselves be encompassed within one type of motion. Miriam and Paul have turns on the swing, as if only one's stillness could allow for the other's motion. If Miriam is indeed moved by the observation of Paul's swinging body, she is unwilling to feel, in her own body, the sensations her lover feels through going up and down at such speed. In that sense, Miriam is unable to feel any kinesthesic empathy for Paul and will ultimately fail to comprehend his otherness. Indeed, Christine Leroy, in *Phénoménologie de la danse: de la chair à l'éthique*, makes clear that kinesthesic empathy should not be understood as "the transmission of a content which would be identical to the original". She goes on: "emotion is not conveyed from body to body, like an object. (…) My understanding of the other is indeed mediated by my own body, in which alterity is imprinted" (Leroy 52).[15] What Leroy refers to as kinesthesic empathy then, is the ability to feel, in one's own body, the sensations felt by the moving body one is observing. Going beyond the strictly mental definition of empathy, put forward by neuroscientists in the 1990s through the notion of "mirror neurons" (Zlatev et al. 4),[16] Leroy's concept of kinesthesic empathy is in line with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology positing *Einfühlung* as "a corporeal process" (Merleau-Ponty, *La Nature* 139).[17] The two scenes quoted above are therefore counterexamples of kinesthesic empathy, since Alec and Paul are trying to impose a type of movement upon Tess and Miriam who, on the other hand, are unwilling to feel the bodily effects of such a movement. In the scenes in which Hardy and Lawrence want to facilitate kinesthesic empathy between their characters, they often choose to use motion as a common experience that both characters can live at the same time, in the same way. If the carriage journey between Tess and Angel in the chapter "The Consequence" may have been designed as an echo to the carriage journey between Tess and Alec quoted above, the effect produced by the movement of the wheels on the characters is nevertheless quite different. In this scene, Tess consents to marry Angel and the two lovers are described "[driving] on through the gloom, forming one bundle inside the sail-cloth, the horse going as he would, and the rain driving against them" (Hardy, *Tess* 190). As opposed to the chaotic journey Tess had to suffer

[15] My translation ; Leroy writes : « Aussi ne faut-il pas penser l'empathie kinesthésique comme transmission d'un contenu identique à l'original : l'émotion ne se transmet pas de corps à corps tel un objet. (…) Mon appréhension d'autrui est bel et bien médiatisé par mon corps propre, en lequel s'imprime l'altérité ».

[16] Shaun Gallagher reminds us of the definition of mirror neurons: "Briefly, mirror neurons are located in the premotor cortex and parietal areas and are activated in two conditions: (1) when the subject engages in intentional actions of a specific sort (e.g. actions that involve reaching and grasping) and (2) when the subject sees someone else engaging in the same kind of action" (Gallagher 168).

[17] My translation ; Merleau-Ponty writes: « L*'Einfühlung* est une opération corporelle ».

with Alec, this journey is slower and liberating for both Tess and the horse. Indeed, in the previous scene, the mare was induced by Alec to display "the reckless performance expected of her" (Hardy, *Tess* 54), while here the horse is free to go as he pleases, choosing to move at a moderate pace. As their bodies are moving along at the same, peaceful pace, the two lovers seem to be uniting into one whole being that Merleau-Ponty would call the Flesh. In fact, Leroy explains that there is indeed a "co-subjectivisation of fleshes in kinesthesic empathy" (Leroy, *Phénoménologie de la danse* 53)[18] – in other words, Tess and Angel are recognising each other's bodies as subjects and are therefore properly comprehending each other's otherness. From the carriage to the car, in Lawrence's *Women in Love*, the effect of peaceful motion on lovers is quite similar as Ursula and Birkin get in the car, "[leaving] behind them this memorable battle-field" where their last fight happened. Letting their bodies be carried along the road by the car, the two lovers are experiencing a metaphysical awakening which allows the revelation of themselves to the other, but also the revelation of themselves to themselves:

> They drifted through the wild, late afternoon, in a beautiful motion that was smiling and transcendent. His mind was sweetly at ease, the life flowed through him as from some new fountain, he was as if born out of the cramp of a womb. (…)
>
> He drove on in a strange new wakefulness, the tension of his consciousness broken. He seemed to be conscious all over, all his body awake with a simple, glimmering awareness, as if he had just come awake, like a thing that is born, like a bird when it comes out of an egg, into a new universe. (Lawrence, *WL* 311-312)

If that sudden awakening has been precipitated by the passionate altercation Ursula and Birkin have just had, it is undoubtedly fostered by their bodies being set in motion by the car, allowing what Leroy calls "co-subjectivisation". As an ultimate form of kinesthesic empathy, concurrent movement therefore allows the self to feel *with* the other, rather than to feel *for* the other. When a character perceives another character's movements mirroring his or hers, the effect is an increase in emotions and the development of a deeper intimacy between them. Lawrence has explored these specific binding moments in *Women in Love*, not only with Ursula and Birkin but also with Gudrun and Gerald. Indeed, in the chapter "Death and Love", a whole passage is dedicated to the description of the two lovers walking together, side by side, which also seems to be the precise moment when Gerald falls in love with Gudrun:

[18] My translation ; Leroy writes: « Il y a co-subjectivation des chairs à l'occasion de l'empathie kinesthésique ».

> He wanted to put his arm around her. If he could put his arm around her, and draw her against him as they walked, he would equilibrate himself. (…) He seemed to balance her perfectly in opposition to himself, in their dual motion of walking. (…)
>
> She nestled against him. He felt her all soft and warm, she was the rich, lovely substance of his being. The warmth and motion of her walk suffused through him wonderfully. (…)
>
> As they walked, he seemed to lift her nearer and nearer to himself, till she moved upon the firm vehicle of his body. He was so strong, so sustaining, and he could not be opposed. She drifted along in a wonderful interfusion of physical motion, down the dark, blowy, hill-side. (…) But he and she were walking in perfect, isolated darkness, outside the world. (Lawrence, *WL* 328-329)

As is the case with Birkin, Gerald's yearning for proximity and concurrent movement is associated with a profound desire to feel complete as a human being. Through the description of a common walk between two lovers, the narrator is here illustrating a process of kinesthesic communion in which Gudrun and Gerald are becoming one loving entity, simply via an acute perception of the similarity between their own motion and that of their lover. Simply put, Gerald is moved as he feels Gudrun moving the way he moves. Paradoxically enough, it is not so much the comfort of a woman's stillness that Gerald seems to be looking for here, but a woman's ability to move along with him and to balance his being through her own motion. In fact, kinesthesic empathy can only work if the two parties have the ability to move, mentally or physically, which excludes the notion of stillness purportedly associated with the female gender. Christine Leroy indeed stresses how important kinesthesic empathy is in the shaping of healthy relationships; she explains that it "contributes to awakening our ethical conscience and to encourage us to care for others – two attitudes that are essential to life in society" (Leroy, *Phénoménologie de la danse* 101).[19] Assuming that Hardy and Lawrence write novels which are meant to teach readers how to connect with others in a meaningful way, then they naturally need to favour scenes in which characters are moving their bodies rather than remaining still.

"Making the first move", in Hardy's and Lawrence's fiction, is to be taken quite literally: in order to initiate a relationship, a character needs to physically move. There is a type of movement which seems to be particularly apt to foster connections, in both authors' works, and that is dance. The ontological function of motion which was mentioned earlier in this chapter,

[19] My translation ; Leroy writes « [Les pratiques motrices, facilitant] l'expérience d'empathie kinesthésique, concourent à l'éveil d'un sens éthique et au souci d'autrui vitaux pour la vie en société ».

reaches its highest form in dancing, for it "exalts bodies in a transcendental movement which simultaneously reveals ourselves to ourselves, as material subjects and burdened subjects" (Leroy, *Phénoménologie de la danse* 66).[20] In that it allows the self to be fully aware of itself, dance first appears as a primordial condition for any ties to be forged with the Other. In her contribution to *The Edinburgh Companion to D. H. Lawrence and the Arts*, Susan Jones explores the use of dancing in the author's fiction and declares that Lawrence seems to consider dance as "the only form through which to address radical questions of 'being'". To substantiate her argument, she adds: "The dancer's gesture constitutes action not yet completed, aligning itself with the notion of process, of passage, of incomplete identity moving towards the act of becoming" (Jones 274). This is precisely this on-going process that the reader gets to witness in chapter XV of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, as Connie is experiencing a rebirth through her connection with Mellors. Serving as an illustration of this rebirth experience, the following scene uses dance movements to convey Connie's ontological awakening:

> She opened the door and looked at the straight heavy rain, like a steel curtain, and had a sudden desire to rush out into it, to rush away. She got up, and began swiftly pulling off her stockings, then her dress and underclothing, and he held his breath. Her pointed keen animal breasts tipped and stirred as she moved. She was ivory-coloured in the greenish light. She slipped on her rubber shoes again and ran out with a wild little laugh, holding up her breasts to the heavy rain and spreading her arms, and running blurred in the rain with the eurythmic dance-movements she had learned so long ago in Dresden. It was a strange pallid figure lifting and falling, bending so the rain beat and glistened on the full haunches, swaying up again and coming belly-forward through the rain, then stooping again so that only the full loins and buttocks were offered in a kind of homage towards him, repeating a wild obeisance. (Lawrence, *LCL* 221)

The second part of this passage is characterised by an extensive use of the present participle associated with verbs of movement, which allows an emphasis on the fluidity of Connie's motion and on the definition of the scene as an on-going process. Moreover, the characterisation of the young woman's dance as "eurythmic" is not insignificant, since it refers to "a European expressionist dance" which includes "unrestricted leaping, reaching for asymmetrical attitudes and off-balance gestures and poses", in an attempt to "bring the body back into harmony with

[20] My translation ; Leroy writes: « La danse sublime les corps dans un mouvement transcendantal qui, en même temps, nous révèle à nous-mêmes comme sujets de chair et sujets pesants ».

itself" (Jones 277, 278). In that sense, eurhythmics seems to be a form of dance particularly fitting to the exploration of the self, in keeping with Leroy's conception of dance as a very similar movement to that of jumping, for its equally important focus on trying to "free oneself from gravity" (Leroy, *Phénoménologie de la danse* 144).[21] This tension between "elevation and fall, suspension and gravity" (Leroy *Phénoménologie de la danse* 139) which is clearly conveyed in the scene quoted above, is, to Leroy, both at the origin of dance and at the origin of the centrifugal will to live. In *Women in Love*, a similar ontological power is granted to the art of dance as Lawrence uses again eurhythmics to illustrate the upward-downward movement which is at the core of human existence. In the "Water-Party" chapter, while Gudrun is feeling "outside of life", she feels like dancing and asks Ursula to sing while she does "Dalcroze movements":[22]

> Gudrun, looking as if some invisible chain weighed on her hands and feet, began slowly to dance in the eurythmic manner, pulsing and fluttering rhythmically with her feet, making slower, regular gestures with her hands and arms, now spreading her arms wide, now raising them above her head, now flinging them softly apart, and lifting her face, her feet all the time beating and running to the measure of the song, as if it were some strange incantation, her white, rapt form drifting here and there in a strange impulsive rhapsody, seeming to be lifted on a breeze of incantation, shuddering with strange little runs. (Lawrence, *WL* 166)

Here, the extensive use of the present participle is coupled with a paratactic syntax which serves to enhance the fluidity of Gudrun's motion and to illustrate, through syntax, the succession of her unbroken movements. To the young woman, dancing becomes a way to belong and to free herself from "the chain weigh[ing] on her hands and feet", since only dance can "perform subjectivity and shape the contours of the flesh, by making the bodies lighter" (Leroy, *Phénoménologie de la danse* 63).[23] In setting her body in motion through those specific movements, not only is Gudrun able to find herself as a human being through the experience of kinesthesis, but she is also being finally recognised as a unique being by the Other, her sister.

[21] My translation ; Leroy writes: « [en latin, on signifie l'activité de danser par le verbe *saltare* : danser, c'est « sauter », c'est-à-dire tenter de s'affranchir de la pesanteur ».

[22] Emile Jaques-Dalcroze is a Swiss composer, musician and music educator who is at the origin of eurhythmic dance.

[23] My translation ; Leroy writes: « [Peut-être pourrait-on définir la vocation de la danse de la sorte :] subjectiver et détourer les chairs en allégeant les corps. »

Indeed, while Ursula is sitting, singing for Gudrun and watching her dance, she seems captivated by her movements and is suddenly able to properly connect with her sister:

> Ursula sat on the grass, her mouth open in her singing, her eyes laughing as if she thought it was a great joke, but a yellow light flashing up in them, as she caught some of the unconscious ritualistic suggestion of the complex shuddering and waving and drifting of her sister's white form, that was clutched in pure, mindless, tossing rhythm, and a will set powerful in a kind of hypnotic influence. (Lawrence, *WL* 166)

In her chapter on dance, in *The Edinburgh Companion to D. H. Lawrence and the Arts*, Susan Jones asserts that this particular scene shows how Lawrence wanted to "dr[a]w attention to the psychological effects of (…) kinaesthetic empathy" (Jones 276) which allows a character to move vicariously, only by watching another character dance. In its power to affect the people watching, dance is not an art which should be reduced to a succession of postures. On the contrary, Leroy contends that dancing amounts to "stitching together what had been undone, connecting so as to weave a meaning" (Leroy, *Phénoménologie de la danse* 161).[24] When several people dance together then, we can only assume that the healing and connecting power of dance will be increased and its effects multiplied. Still in *Women in Love*, another dance scene, in the "Breadalby" chapter, illustrates yet again the liberating power of dance but suggests, however, a tendency to refocus on oneself rather than to open up to others:

> Alexander played some Hungarian music, and they all danced, seized by the spirit. Gerald was marvellously exhilarated at finding himself in motion, moving towards Gudrun, dancing with feet that could not yet escape from the waltz and the two-step, but feeling his force stir along his limbs and his body, out of captivity. He did not know yet how to dance their convulsive, rag-time sort of dancing, but he knew how to begin. Birkin, when he could get free from the weight of the people present, whom he disliked, danced rapidly and with a real gaiety. And how Hermione hated him for this irresponsible gaiety. (Lawrence, *WL* 92)

Here, if a communion is suggested by "the spirit" of dance, Gerald seems to be experiencing a sort of self-awakening through kinesthesis, while the burden weighing on Birkin and which dance is supposed to lift is nothing but "the weight of the people". In this particular scene,

[24] My translation ; Leroy writes: « Danser, ce n'est pas se faire se succéder des postures, mais plutôt recoudre ce qui s'était délié, articuler pour tisser un sens. »

dancing is seen to be consolidating the bounds that are already tied – that between Gudrun and Gerald for instance – while giving the final blow to relationships that have been withering away – namely that between Hermione and Birkin. In fact, dancing is not granted the power to create feelings but rather to accelerate the emotional process leading to the fulfilment of the self and to the doing or undoing of relationships, according to their relevance for the well-being of the self. Indeed, the narrator of Hardy's *The Return of the Native* sums up in unequivocal terms the effects of dancing on the dancers' hearts as follows: "To dance with a man is to concentrate a twelvemonth's regulation fire upon him in the fragment of an hour. To pass to courtship without acquaintance, to pass to marriage without courtship, is a skipping of terms reserved for those alone who tread this royal road" (Hardy, *TRN* 131). The hyperbolic tone of this passage, along with the chiasmic effect rendered by the repetition of "courtship", both contribute to present dancing as a powerful art, able to enhance one's feelings and to urge forward a nascent relationship. It is precisely such a promise that prompts Eustacia, in Book Second, to disguise herself and join the mummers in the hope that her lover-to-be, Clym, will observe her and, hopefully, dance with her. Then chapters later, in Book Fourth, an irrepressible desire to dance again takes hold of her during the East Egdon festival where she meets her old lover, Wildeve. In that scene, dancing seems to heal old wounds and to foster feelings of remorse which had already started to take roots in Eustacia's mind:

> Eustacia floated round and round on Wildeve's arm, her face rapt and statuesque; her soul had passed away from and forgotten her features, which were left empty and quiescent, as they always are when feelings goes beyond their register.
>
> How near she was to Wildeve! it was terrible to think of. She could feel his breathing, and he, of course, could feel hers. How badly she had treated him! yet, here they were treading one measure. The enchantment of the dance surprised her. A clear line of difference divided like a tangible fence her experience within this maze of motion from her experience without it. Her beginning to dance had been like a change of atmosphere; outside, she had been steeped in arctic frigidity by comparison with the tropical sensations here. She had entered the dance from the troubled hours of her late life as one might enter a brilliant chamber after a night walk in a wood. Wildeve by himself would have been merely an agitation; Wildeve added to the dance, and the moonlight, and the secrecy, began to be a delight. Whether his personality supplied the greater part of this sweetly compounded feeling, or whether the dance and the scene

> weighed the more therein, was a nice point upon which Eustacia herself was entirely in a cloud. (Hardy, *TRN* 256-257)

In this passage, dance is perceived as an art which can transcend reality and liberate the most deep-rooted feelings, by putting characters in a state of exaltation and oblivion. A dichotomous pattern gives structure to the scene and serves to illustrate the discrepancy between Eustacia's day-to-day reality and her "dancing reality": the two old lovers' disagreements are resolved within "one measure", the "arctic frigidity" she had been living in is suddenly cancelled by "tropical sensations", and Wildeve's presence, which had always come as an "agitation" to the young woman, now becomes "a delight" to her. A sort of mystic atmosphere characterises the whole scene as the reader is invited to decide the degrees of responsibility that are to be imputed to the act of dancing and to Eustacia's own profound desire, in this unexpected process of reconciliation between the two characters. Whichever way the reader may decide to interpret the scene, the narrator takes care to demonstrate that this dance between Eustacia and Wildeve goes beyond a mere nostalgic interlude and is used to illustrate the levelling power of dance. Indeed, the consequence of such a scene is not simply a rekindling of old feelings but a reversal of social norms which had originally contributed to separate the two lovers. In a carnivalesque fashion, dancing gives them the energy and courage to go against norms that their languorous bodies had been suffering in silence until then: "Thus, for different reasons, what was to the rest and exhilarating movement was to these two a riding upon the whirlwind. The dance had come like an irresistible attack upon whatever sense of social order there was in their minds, to drive them back into old paths which were no longer regular" (Hardy, *TRN* 257). Because dancing carries in its movements "an ethics rooted in the lively flesh" (Leroy, *Phénoménologie de la danse* 101), dancing scenes are often used by Hardy to offer his readers alternative realities in which bodies are moving together in harmony, deprived of any social status. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the May Dance has this particular power to attract people beyond the boundaries of the community and to foster the coming together of different social classes. Among the "three young men of a superior class" (Hardy, *Tess* 16) observing the girls dancing is Angel Clare who, despite his brothers' attempt to talk him out of it, decides to take part in the celebrations by dancing with a lucky girl. By doing so, Angel gives the readers the first hint of his disregard for social classes which will lead him to marry a country girl, Tess. Within this dance scene lie the seeds of Angel and Tess's future relationship, its unexpected and romantic beginnings along with its tragic ending. Indeed, Tess is not the one Angel chooses to dance with and she is consequently condemned to live in Angel's memory as a "white figure st[anding] apart by the

edge alone" (Hardy 2003, 18), until they see each other again. In Hardy, the levelling and reconciling effect of dance thus seems to meet its limits, as a temporary and often fleeting experience whose effects one fails to protect and embrace in the long run.

If dance is regarded by Lawrence as "a universal expression of individual and social identity" (Jones in Brown and Reid 287), then one may assert that Hardy and Lawrence share the same conception of this art which they use in their fiction to encourage a primarily emotional liberation. This liberating process, then, is not to be limited to the characters in their stories, but is meant to extend beyond the boundaries of the book. Just like spectators watching a ballet, readers of Hardy and Lawrence are invited to move and be moved vicariously, by picturing characters in motion. In fact, American philosopher Shaun Gallagher contends that "our mature ability for understanding (…) others (…) is enhanced by a different kind of practice" which "involves communicative and narrative competency" (Gallagher 184). If empathy is increased by the practice of writing or reading narratives, then stories that include in their plots and characterisation various uses of motion appear to be the fittest forms of narratives to foster empathic feelings in their readers. Because empathy is understood as a psycho-physical process by both authors, one tends to believe that their novels were made to be read on the move, on board a train, a plane, for the twenty-first century reader, or even while walking for the steady ones among us. I suggest we, as familiar readers of both authors, give it a go and allow ourselves to be moved indeed.

CHAPTER FIVE.
Embodiment and Abstraction:
An Organic Exploration of Human Consciousness

"It seems as if the great aim and purpose in human life were to bring all life into the human consciousness and this is the final meaning of work: the extension of human consciousness" (Lawrence, Study 41)

In the two previous chapters, I have demonstrated how D. H. Lawrence's and Hardy's characters were given access to the world via a primarily embodied experience. The exploration of the way characters gain access to knowledge or to otherness, but also the study of the way they move along their destinies, all concur to suggest that the two authors, in rehabilitating the body and emphasising its pre-eminence, did to some extent participate in preserving the mind-body dichotomy. Yet, if one is to shift the focus from the access to the world and to otherness, to the access to the self and self-awareness, such dualist remnant seems to be annihilated in favour of a proper reconciliation of the mental and the physical. Indeed, the study of Lawrence and Hardy's relational ontology requires that we take a closer look at "the totality of the impressions, thoughts, and feelings, which make up a person's sense of self or define a person's identity" (*OED* 4.a), that is consciousness. In fact, the mind-body issue is at the core of the conception of consciousness, defined by the *OED* as "the state or fact of being mentally conscious or aware of something" (1), but also as "the state of being aware of and responsive to one's surroundings, regarded as the normal condition of waking life" (5). While the first definition locates human consciousness in the brain, having the faculty to be "responsive to one's surroundings" would suggest more than a mere appeal to the intellect, and therefore implicitly include physical responses rendered possible by a body that is awake. Then, what does it really mean, for Hardy and Lawrence, to be conscious, as a human being? In this chapter, I argue that the two authors share a similar conception of consciousness that they display in their fiction, through their protagonists, and that they use as an ultimate tool to broach the mind-body issue. In "Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious" (1921), Lawrence discusses extensively the notion of consciousness and proposes to redefine it, in the light of more modern studies. "Mental consciousness", he writes, "is not a goal; it is a cul-de-sac" (Lawrence, *PFU* 43). Drawing on 19th-century physiological theories and on Hardy's writing itself, I suggest that mental consciousness, as conceived by Lawrence, had run into a cul-de-sac long before the author ever came to such a conclusion. As it happened, modernist writers – among whom Lawrence is often included – had been refocusing on the discarded concept of mental consciousness and had been exploring different literary techniques in an attempt to reveal the deepest secrets of man's intellect. In doing so, may modernism be accused of using stylistics and the art of fiction to reopen the mind-body debate? Hume's bundle dualism is precisely based on a conception of consciousness as a dynamic "collection of perceptions" that may vary without altering one's identity (Pitson 288). What is more, the modernist representation of the body as "fragmented" and consequently "unequipped to continue post-Enlightenment ways of

knowing" (Hall and Watts 13), only reinforces the pre-eminence of the mind and its dissociation from a defective body. In that sense, modernist writing seems to be in line with the dualistic tradition, in maintaining a hierarchical dynamics between body and mind. Yet, I suggest that the type of dualism modernist writers are drawing from does not pertain to the Cartesian tradition, but rather to the Humean tradition that seeks to go beyond the dichotomy of immaterialism and materialism (Pitson 282), in allowing for the "interaction between immaterial mind and material body" (Armstrong 30).[1] In fact, the exploration of consciousness, more than being restricted to mental events, might very well be the key to finally solve the mind-body problem. Then, in the midst ofa Humean rehabilitation of consciousness by modernists, where does Lawrence's own notion of consciousness lie? More generally, how does Hardy and Lawrence's redefinition of consciousness help to bridge the divide both between body and mind, and between Victorian and modernist studies?

1. From Stream of Consciousness to "Stream of Tenderness" in Hardy's and Lawrence's Novels[2]

In his seminal book entitled *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel*, Robert Humphrey defines "stream-of-consciousness fiction as a type of fiction in which the basic emphasis is placed on exploration of the levels of consciousness for the purpose, primarily, of revealing the psychic being of the characters" (Humphrey 2-3). For decades now, stream-of-consciousness techniques have therefore been unequivocally associated both with a specific scientific field – psychology – and a specific literary genre – modernism. The origin of the phrase itself has long been attributed to Henry James's brother, psychologist William James, who defined consciousness as "nothing jointed". In *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), he writes: "It flows. A 'river' or 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. In talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life" (James 239). Only recently have critics begun to revise the history of the phrase and look for its origins beyond the boundaries of modernism and those who inspired it. In *Victorian Psychology and British Culture (1850-1880),* Rick Rylance actually dates back stream of

[1] In *A History of the Senses, from Antiquity to Cyberspace,* Robert Jütte explains how Hume came to be convinced of the interaction between body and mind: "His nervous breakdown in the spring of 1730 altered the course of his life and made him realize that thinking could not be disconnected from sense impressions, and that sense impressions were rooted in the body" (Jütte 128).

[2] Part of this section is quoted from Bertrand, Marie. "Between Stream of Consciousness and 'Stream of Tenderness': D. H. Lawrence's Psycho-organic Ontology in *Women in Love*". *Horizons Anglophones/Present Perfect*, Presses Universitaires de la Méditerrannée. 2025.

consciousness to the writings of the Victorian Philosopher George Henry Lewes, and more precisely to his 1859 book *The Physiology of Common Life*. Rylance asserts that "Lewes wrote not only of 'the general stream of Consciousness' that characterises the action of our minds as we fall between voluntary, conscious and unconscious states, but also of the 'general stream of Sensation' which constitutes his [the reader's] feeling of existence – the consciousness of himself as a sensitive being" (Rylance 11). Drawing on the definitions Lewes gives of those two streams, Rylance contends that, "taken together, [they] suggest not just a sense of mental freewheeling (…), but a rich, physical, ontological grounding to that activity" (Rylance 11). In attributing the original coinage of "stream of consciousness" to George H. Lewes, Rylance therefore relocates a famously-modernist concept in the Victorian era and adds a material layer to it, which seemed to be lacking in James's use of the phrase and in his more general conception of consciousness as "correspond[ing] to the entire activity of the brain" (James 177). It is precisely James's understanding of "stream of consciousness" that Lawrence openly condemns in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*:

> Immortal phrase of the immortal James! Oh stream of hell which undermined my adolescence! The stream of consciousness! I felt it streaming through my brain, in at one ear and out at the other. […] And sometimes I felt it must bubble up in the cerebellum and wind its way through all the convolutions of the true brain. Horrid stream! Whence did it come, and whither was it bound? The stream of consciousness! (Lawrence, *PFU* 8)

So strongly did he feel about the inadequacies and limits of James's concept that it is quite easy for his readers to understand his desire to create his own alternative conception of consciousness that he was to introduce and flesh out in his two philosophical essays in 1921 and 1922, but that, I argue, already existed quite clearly in his mind a few years earlier as he was writing *Sons and Lovers* or *Women in Love*. In *Dynamic Psychology in Modernist British Fiction*, George M. Johnson argues that Lawrence found James's phrase "'horrid' because (…) it emphasized the consciousness of mental activity rather than pre-mental, or what Lawrence termed 'blood-consciousness'" (Johnson 151). Lawrence's concept of "blood-consciousness" was touched upon in chapter three of this work in relation to embodied cognition, and I would like now to follow up on this initial analysis in demonstrating how such a concept takes up a more complex dimension when studied hand in hand with that of "stream of tenderness". This intriguing phrase appears in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, during one of the love-making scenes between

Connie and Mellors, when the gamekeeper is said to be "feeling a stream of tenderness flowing in release from his bowels to hers" (Lawrence, *LCL* 279). Beyond its primary function as a metaphor aimed at emphasising the intensity of the connection between the two lovers, this phrase cannot be understood outside of the context Lawrence was writing in, and its obvious resonance with the modernist stream of consciousness therefore cannot be eluded. Written years after his first theorisation of embodied consciousness in his fiction and non-fiction, I argue that "stream of tenderness" constitutes the ultimate conclusion of Lawrence's long reflection on human consciousness. Indeed, Lawrence's understanding of human consciousness seems to go beyond a mere non-dualist thinking aimed at bringing body and mind back together. Common to both "blood-consciousness" and "stream of tenderness" is the association of embodiment and fluidity, representing consciousness as a flow rather than as a fixed and abstract entity. In Lawrence, what characterises a healthy human consciousness is actually its changeability, that is, its ability to take up different forms and to remain in a state of constant evolution, however minor the changes may be. The most accurate representation of his theory of consciousness is probably to be found in his writing style itself, famously known for its convoluted sentences and often condemned for its use of "continual, slightly modified repetition" (Lawrence, Foreword to *WL* 486). Reading Lawrence is accepting to be taken along an uninterrupted flow of words and taking the risk to drown or be tossed back and forth, when the current intensifies. To his critics who were not keen on taking such a risk, Lawrence replied in his Foreword to *Women in Love*, written in 1919, that "the only answer is that it is natural to the author: and that every natural crisis in emotion or passion or understanding comes from this pulsing, frictional to-and-fro, which works up to culmination" (Lawrence, Foreword to *WL* 486). Rather than being a fault in style, Lawrence argues that any redundancy in his writing comes from a desire to render a realistic representation of the human "struggle for verbal consciousness" that the author also refers to as "*the passionate struggle into conscious being"* (Lawrence, Foreword to *WL* 486, italics in the original). Just as human consciousness does not come in one definite form, the "stream of tenderness" technique used by Lawrence in his writing is therefore defined by a fluidity similar to the modernist stream-of-consciousness technique, and is characterised, not unlike some canonical stream-of-consciousness passages (such as in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*), by a peculiar focalisation that goes beyond first-person narrators and their psyches, to explore the embodied experience of third-person narrators. In *Women in Love*, for instance, the representation of consciousness as a flow is not limited to direct speech from characters, or to interior monologues, but rather weaves its way into the third-person narrative voice, at times

blurring the boundaries between the character's consciousness and that of the narrator. Throughout the novel, the focalisation is constantly shifting, from one character to the other, and the use of free indirect speech often creates a deliberate confusion as to whose consciousness is currently being displayed. The following extract is one instance among many of different streams of consciousness coming into one unique narrative voice:

> He smiled, slightly. He wanted her to come to him. But he was angry at the bottom of his soul, and indifferent. He knew she had a passion for him, really. But it was not finally interesting. There were depths of passion when one became impersonal and indifferent, unemotional. Whereas Ursula was still at the emotional personal level—always so abominably personal. He had taken her as he had never been taken himself. He had taken her at the roots of her darkness and shame—like a demon, laughing over the fountain of mystic corruption which was one of the sources of her being, laughing, shrugging, accepting, accepting finally. As for her, when would she so much go beyond herself as to accept him at the quick of death? (Lawrence, *WL* 304)

In this passage as in the whole novel, Lawrence offers his own understanding of the stream of consciousness which is not dissimilar to the interpretation contemporary ecopsychologists have had of the phrase, as "an ever-unfolding state of experiencing" that is crucial in "recogniz[ing] other subjectivities in the natural world" (I. Hébert 29). Beyond its added material dimension which will be dealt with later in this chapter, Lawrence's concept of "stream of tenderness" therefore also qualifies the understanding of the term "stream", using it as a foundational principle for its representation of a dynamic, multi-layered human consciousness. If the narrative voice remains more stable in Hardy's fictional work as a whole, I argue that the conception of consciousness as a flow rather than as a static entity is similarly conveyed by the author in the corpus under study, in accordance with the Victorian origins of the phrase "stream of consciousness". In Hardy's fiction, the characters' conscious states are constantly shifting – protagonists change their minds again and again, see the world in very different ways in every chapter, and seem to be concurrently floating along Lewes's streams of consciousness and of sensation. The mood swings which were analysed in a previous chapter as allotropic states and were attributed, for most part, to female characters[3], can, in the context of the present study, be interpreted as tokens of Hardy's representation of a dynamic and embodied consciousness. Indeed, when characters experience a succession of different states of consciousness, those

[3] For the complete analysis of allotropic states in female characters, see chapter two.

variations are conveyed through an imagery similar to that of the stream and are located in the body rather than in the mind. In *The Return of the Native*, for instance, when young Thomasin is discovered by her aunt, asleep in the back of Diggory Venn's van after a failed attempt at marrying Wildeve, the whirlwind that is her consciousness is described as follows:

> The lips then parted with something of anticipation, something more of doubt; and her several thoughts and fractions of thoughts, as signalled by the changes on her face, were exhibited by the light to the utmost nicety. An ingenuous, transparent life was disclosed, as if the flow of her existence could be seen passing within her. She understood the scene in a moment. (Hardy, *TRN* 41)

This precise moment, when Thomasin literally regains consciousness after being asleep, is characterised by its fluidity which is emphasised by the use of the metaphor of the "flow of (…) existence". In Hardy, the "stream of consciousness", as it would later be understood by modernists, is actually rendered very much visually and materially, through a shift of focus from the character's mind to the character's face. Rather than to be sought within the depth of the mind, the continuous stream of consciousness, in Hardy, is to be found in the flickers of one's face, in the quivers of one's mouth, or in any transient facial expressions. In that sense, both Hardy and Lawrence seem to be in accord with Lewes's original coinage of the phrases "stream of consciousness" and "stream of sensation", defining human consciousness as a dynamic entity – just as modernists did – but locating this fluidity within the materiality of the body rather than within the abstract realm of the mind.

Yet, Lewes's "stream of sensation" remains different from what Lawrence calls "stream of tenderness", insofar as tenderness does not only refer to a physical process, but is defined by the *OED* both as "physical softness or delicacy; fragility", and as "the quality of being tender in regard or treatment of others; gentleness, kindness, compassion, love". Within the definition of tenderness therefore appears the notion of otherness and the idea of a movement directed towards the Other. Just as one is always conscious *of* something, *of* someone, then one is similarly always tender *to* something or feels tenderness *towards* someone. Through the phrasing "stream of tenderness", Lawrence thus underlines the affinities between the two notions of consciousness and tenderness, both founded on the phenomenological concept of intentionality. In *Modernism and Phenomenology: Literature, Philosophy, Art* (2017), Ariane Mildenberg presents intentionality both as "the activity of consciousness" and as "the starting-point and basis of phenomenology" (Mildenberg 21), turning to the etymology of the term to

remind us of the centrifugal dimension of consciousness. Indeed, she writes that intentionality comes from the Latin "*intendere,* meaning primarily 'stretching out,' 'straining towards' or even 'directing'" (Mildenberg 21), suggesting a dynamic activity resembling that of a stream flowing down from its source to its mouth, towards its ultimate reunion with another stream or ocean. In fact, a mere look at the word "tenderness" and the Latin *in*tende*r*e confirms the common etymology of "intentionality" and "tenderness", thus bringing together the two notions of consciousness and tenderness, to the point of making them interchangeable. The representation of a consciousness that stretches outward is common to both Hardy and Lawrence, and is often best conveyed in crucial scenes of encounters that tend to foster the naturally open disposition of a character's consciousness. In Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, for instance, one of the first peaks Jude can take of his cousin Sue becomes a very phenomenological process allowing the author to display the complexities of human intentional consciousness. While the two characters have not properly met yet, the following passage gives the reader the impression that the extension of Jude's mind towards his cousin is already performing the first stage of the encounter:

> The girl for whom he was beginning to nourish an extraordinary tenderness was at this time ensphered by the same harmonies as those which *floated* into his ears; and the thought was a delight to him. She was probably a frequenter of this place, and, *steeped* body and soul in church sentiment as she must be by occupation and habit, had, no doubt, much in common with him. To an impressionable and lonely young man the consciousness of having at last found a*nchorage* for his thoughts, which promised to supply both social and spiritual possibilities, was like the *dew* of Hermon, and he remained throughout the service in a sustaining atmosphere of ecstasy. (Hardy, *JO* 75, emphasis added)

Here, Hardy uses an extended metaphor of ocean and fluidity ("floated; steeped in; anchorage; dew") which participates in representing Jude's consciousness as a stream, without, however, using any literary device similar to any of the modernist stream-of-consciousness techniques. Indeed, Jude's stream of consciousness flows out of his own mind towards his cousin's, and the "atmosphere of ecstasy" thus created becomes the mouth of the two characters' respective streams, coming together as one. Rather than using descriptive words to illustrate Jude's growing tenderness for Sue, Hardy therefore chooses to explore his consciousness, thus suggesting to the reader that the young man's feelings for Sue appear simultaneously with a

more complete version of his conscious being. This process of ultimate coming into consciousness is comparable to the phenomenological process of epiphany[4] that Mildenberg associates with the exploration by modernist texts of "ordinary life and the everyday" (Mildenberg 15). From the critic's point of view, epiphanic episodes actually demonstrate how the modernist representation of consciousness is not entirely limited to the mind and also has an intentional dimension which is characteristic of phenomenological consciousness. She writes: "Rejecting the traditional mind/world split that informs Cartesian dualism and extant views of modernism as upholding a mind/world opposition, the epiphanic moment is a momentary shift of attitude that does not reject the real world; rather, it restores openness to the world, affirming the pre-theoretic *in-each-other* of the subject and the world" (Mildenberg 15, emphasis in the original). If a conception of consciousness as open to the Other and to the world is indeed a modernist feature, then Hardy's writing becomes very much avant-garde and the dividing line separating Victorian and modernist literature becomes all the thinner. Through the phrasing "stream of tenderness", Lawrence acknowledges his debt to Hardy's intentional conception of consciousness and to phenomenological theories of consciousness, while taking this representation a step further, by locating the starting point of that intentional movement both in the mind *and* in the body. Just as the metaphorical use of electricity in Hardy's and Lawrence's novels was previously analysed in relation to affect and embodiment theories,[5] I argue that this imagery cannot be understood to its full extent without drawing a parallel between the notions of stream and of (electric) current. Indeed, both imageries serve to materialise the intentional movement of one life towards the Other, characterised by the paradox of invisible materiality – both notions of stream of tenderness and electric current being invisible to the eye and yet very much rooted in the physical reality of the body. In his contribution to *The Cambridge Companion to the Body in Literature*, Steven Connor explains that electricity was "thought to be what animated the body", thus suggesting that "it ran through, across, or between bodies, dissolving boundaries and leaping across gaps" (Connor 188). In that sense, the "electric connection" or "current" holding Gerald and the Pussum together in Lawrence's *Women in Love* (Lawrence, *WL* 75) is not only an illustration of their respective embodied emotions, but also, most importantly, of the author's own concept of "stream of tenderness" which could be defined as a psycho-physical surging towards the Other. In fact, it

[4] Mildenberg explores the etymology of "epiphany" so as to demonstrate its affinities with phenomenological studies: "The root of both phenomenology and epiphany is 'phaneien', meaning to show, appear or bring to light. Phenomenology is the logos or study of the phainómenon,'that which appears', that is to say, an occurrence perceptible by the senses" (Mildenberg 13).
[5] See chapter 3.

is Gerald's acute sense of self and his ability to be conscious of his attractive features that allow him to let the stream of his existence flow towards a woman he is starting to feel tenderness for: "Still she stared into his face with that slow, full gaze which was so curious and so exciting to him. He was acutely and delightfully conscious of himself, of his own attractiveness. He felt full of strength, able to give off a sort of electric power. And he was aware of her dark, hot-looking eyes upon him" (Lawrence, *WL* 64). In this passage, a state of acute consciousness of oneself is associated with a state of psycho-physical extension towards the Other, thus illustrating the notion of embodied intentionality inherent to Lawrence's "stream of tenderness". In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, where the original coinage of the phrase is to be found, the materiality of intentional consciousness achieves its highest form through the exploration of Mellor's conscious state when in contact with his lover Connie. In the following passage, Lawrence's phrase becomes a literary version of the author's advocacy of sensual life, based on the original conception of human consciousness as turned towards the body of the Other:

> 'Oh, you love me! You love me!' she said, in a little cry like one of her blind, inarticulate love cries. And he went in to her softly, feeling the stream of tenderness flowing in release from his bowels to hers, the bowels of compassion kindled between them.
>
> And he realized as he went into her that this was the thing he had to do, to come into tender touch, without losing his pride or his dignity or his integrity as a man. After all, if she had money and means, and he had none, he should be too proud and honourable to hold back his tenderness from her on that account. 'I stand for the touch of bodily awareness between human beings,' he said to himself, 'and the touch of tenderness. And she is my mate. And it is a battle against the money, and the machine, and the insentient ideal monkeyishness of the world. And she will stand behind me there. Thank God I've got a woman! Thank God I've got a woman who is with me, and tender and aware of me. Thank God she's not a bully, nor a fool. Thank God she's a tender, aware woman.' And as his seed sprang in her, his soul sprang towards her too, in the creative act that is far more than procreative. (Lawrence, *LCL* 279)

Human consciousness, for the author, becomes synonymous with "the touch of bodily awareness between human beings", thus rooting his conception of consciousness in the physical experience – of the self in connection to the Other – and alleviating the dualist limitations that may be associated with the modernist stream of consciousness, despite its Humean (rather than Cartesian) heritage.

When studied in the light of Lawrence's concept of "stream of tenderness", the author's last novel cannot possibly be read as an obscene piece and needs, on the contrary, to be

understood as the epitome of Lawrence's philosophy of consciousness that requires an ability to "*think* sex, fully, completely, honestly, and cleanly" (Lawrence, *LCL*, "A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover" 308, emphasis in the original). The struggle of Lawrence's fellow humans to "think sex" is dealt with through various characters in the novel, and obviously through Connie Chatterley who, in the first pages of the novel, seems to be trying to convince herself that the life of the mind surpasses that of the body, and therefore, that sex is insignificant:

> Since Michaelis, she had made up her mind she wanted nothing. That seemed the simplest solution of the otherwise insoluble. She wanted nothing more than what she'd got; only she wanted to get ahead with what she'd got: Clifford, the stories, Wragby, the Lady-Chatterley business, money and fame, such as it was...she wanted to go ahead with it all. Love, *sex*, all that sort of stuff, just water-ices! Lick it up and forget it. If you don't hang on to it in your *mind*, it's nothing. *Sex* especially...nothing! Make up your *mind* to it, and you've solved the problem. *Sex* and a cocktail: they both lasted about as long, had the same effect, and amounted to about the same thing. (Lawrence, *LCL* 64, my emphasis)

Written in free indirect style to enhance the focalisation on Connie, this passage is, in appearance, meant to demonstrate how one can deliberately and easily choose to live a fulfilled life without sex. Yet, sex is actually invading the whole passage, being similarly omnipresent on the page as in Connie's mind, through the creation of a rhythm alternating between the notions of sex and of mind ("sex (…) mind (…) sex (…) mind (…) sex").[6] A passage which might initially sound as an instance of stream-of-consciousness, actually serves to plant the seeds of the notion of stream of tenderness, which is to be primarily found in the sexual act – that is, in the physical act that requires the furthest extension of the self, towards the Other. Gradually, throughout the novel, consciousness becomes more and more embodied, as sexuality is connected back to spirituality. Talking openly about his personified penis, Mellors declares that "he's got his root in [his] soul" (Lawrence, *LCL* 211) while the narrator, a few lines later, refers to the character's growing sexual desire for Connie as follows: "The quiver was going through the man's body, as the stream of consciousness again changed its direction, turning downwards" (Lawrence, *LCL* 211). Here, "the stream of consciousness" seems to be referring to the very material flow of Mellor's blood, which itself becomes the binding unit between mind

[6] On the relation between stream-of-consciousness and the rhythm of sentences, it might be relevant to quote Kalaidjian's definition of stream-of-consciousness as a process in which "bodily rhythms take on the weight of giving the text shape and form" (Kalaidjian 21).

and body during sex. Because "obscenity only comes in when the mind despises and fears the body, and the body hates and resists the mind" (Lawrence, *LCL*, "A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover 309), Lawrence uses erotic scenes to reconcile body and mind without trying to fuse them together. Indeed, what is referred to by the narrator of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* as "stream of tenderness" or by Birkin in *Women in Love* as "pure culture in sensation, culture in the physical consciousness, really *ultimate* physical consciousness, mindless, utterly sensual" (Lawrence, *WL* 79, emphasis in the original), is nothing but the result of Lawrence's search for a third entity, different from body and mind, and alone capable of ending the Cartesian debate. In fact, recent embodiment theorists and in particular theorists of the Enactive Approach, Varela, Thompson and Rosch, have argued that "the notorious mind-body problem can (…) only be solved if we stop trying to reconcile the huge gap between our conception of the 'physical' (understood as 'material') and 'the mental' and realize that 'the organic' lies in the gap between them" (Spahn 85). Written two years before 'Fantasia of the Unconscious', *Women in Love* seems to be the place where Lawrence first elaborated his theory of blood-consciousness and proceeded to offer a concrete solution to the Cartesian dilemma, which later took a modernist turn with the phrase "stream of tenderness":

> He [Birkin] knew what it was to be awake and potent in that other basic mind, the deepest physical mind. And from this source he had a pure and magic control, magical, mystical, a force in darkness, like electricity. (Lawrence 2007, 318)
>
> For the blood has a unity and consciousness of its own. It has a deeper, elemental consciousness of the mechanical or material world. In the blood we have the body of our most elemental consciousness, our almost material consciousness. (Lawrence, *PFU*179)

At the root of Lawrence's "stream of tenderness" is therefore a further exploration of the materiality of consciousness, which had started with Victorian psychologists, neurologists, and, by extension, novelists. As Elaine Scarry reminds us, Hardy was part of those Victorian writers who wanted to explore Lewes' "Stream of Sensation" as much as "Stream of Consciousness". She writes: "Human consciousness is always, for Hardy, embodied human consciousness: hence all states of being not just overt, physical activity but even what appear to be forms of physical inactivity like reading or perceiving or feeling inevitably entail reciprocal jostling with the world" (Scarry 91). How, then, are we to interpret Lawrence's analysis of several of Hardy's

characters as disembodied creatures, victims of the "curse upon the birth in the flesh" and characterised by an "unconscious adherence to the flesh" (Lawrence, *Study* 94)? Indeed, if Hardy's own conception of consciousness is rooted in the materiality of the body, the protagonists of his novels often serve as representatives of a long-standing Cartesian tradition which was very much associated with the Catholic religion. Just as Lawrence wishes, through his novels, to reconcile spirituality and sexuality, Hardy's writing aims at displaying the Victorian belief in the incompatibility between the intellect and any forms of passion, so as to better reveal its dangers and its ultimate failure in allowing characters to live a fulfilled life. In *The Return of the Native* which Lawrence considered as "the first tragic and important novel" (Lawrence, *Study* 23), this dichotomy is primarily illustrated through the character of Eustacia, whose passion for Clym is deemed devoid of any reasoning from the first pages of the novel: "The fantastic nature of her passion, which lowered her as an intellect, raised her as a soul" (Hardy, *TRN* 119). Here, a parallelism reinforced by the use of an antithesis between "lowered" and "raised" leaves no doubt as to the impossible coexistence between reason and desires of the flesh. On the other hand, Hardy makes sure to associate Eustacia's passion with her soul, thus paradoxically elevating her strong physical desire for Clym to a higher, nobler level than that of the intellect. Despite their repressed or "unconscious adherence to the flesh", Hardy's protagonists tend to find themselves in the position of reconnecting with their material consciousness. Clym's sudden blindness, for instance, unexpectedly allows him to turn away from an entirely intellectual life and to focus back on physical experience, as his stream of consciousness seems to flow out of his mind and back to his body: "The monotony of his occupation soothed him, and was in itself a pleasure. A forced limitation of effort offered a justification of homely courses to an unambitious man, whose conscience would hardly have allowed him to remain in such obscurity while his powers were unimpeded" (Hardy, *TRN* 247). The word "obscurity" used by the narrator can refer to Clym's physical condition (his inability to see) but also to a state of intellectual ignorance which was condemned as a low condition of existence by the Church at the time. Because he cannot study anymore and is forced to engage in physical work, Clym suddenly seems to be able to see in the dark, that is, to visualise for the first time his physical consciousness. Such a compelled condition is probably what would have saved Jude too, from a "desire (…) not to live in the body" and from a general tendency to "dra[g] his body after his consciousness" (Lawrence, *Study* 108; 117). Indeed, in *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy explores his protagonist's consciousness as a place where the inner-battle between the intellectual and the sensual experience of life is fought. Rather than being

interchangeable entities as they should be, consciousness and tenderness are considered by Jude as two opposite forces that can only exist through the cancellation of the other:

> He now returned with feverish desperation to his study for the priesthood – in the recognition that the single-mindedness of his aims, and his fidelity to the cause, had been more than questionable of late. His passion for Sue troubled his soul, yet his lawful abandonment to the society of Arabella for twelve hours seemed instinctively a worse thing – even though she had not told him of her Sydney husband till afterwards. He had, he verily believed, overcome all tendency to fly to liquor – which, indeed, he had never done from taste, but merely as an escape from an intolerable misery of mind. Yet he perceived with despondency that, taken all round, he was a man of too many passions to make a good clergy man; the utmost he could hope for was that in a life of constant internal warfare between flesh and spirit the former might not always be victorious. (Hardy, *JO* 154)

In this passage focalised on Jude's perception, intellectual and religious purposes are explicitly opposed to human vices, and his own tenderness for Sue becomes, in turn, a vice comparable to drinking alcohol. In fact, this passage represents the meeting of two conflictual streams coming from two opposite directions, the stream of consciousness and the stream of sensation. As much as Jude may want the stream of consciousness to overcome and engulf the other, it is the opposite that seems to be happening throughout the book, as Jude is compelled to accept that "the human [is] more powerful in him than the Divine" (Hardy, *JO* 164). Through this apparent admission of weakness, Jude actually wins back his human status and is able to reconcile his tender feelings for Sue with his natural condition as an embodied human being. Thus, if the Victorian period in which Hardy was writing might not have allowed him to explore what Lawrence later called the "stream of tenderness" through explicit erotic scenes or through characters having an unapologetic experience of consciousness as embodied, he did draw his readers' attention to the importance for humans to seek an ontological balance in this gap between the mental and the physical, in this organic space-between that alone opens up new ways to explore human consciousness. In fact, it is probably the process of coming into consciousness, rather than consciousness itself, that led both Hardy and Lawrence, to stretch the limits of the study of human consciousness, towards the unconscious.

2. A Redefinition of the Unconscious as Embodied

In her collection of essays entitled *The Second Common Reader*, Virginia Woolf dedicates a whole essay to the exploration of Hardy's fiction ("The Novels of Thomas Hardy", in which she declares that there is always about them "a little blur of unconsciousness, that halo of freshness and margin of the unexpressed" (Woolf 225). Through this assertion, Woolf underlines yet another aspect of Hardy's modernity, based on his affinities with the notion of the unconscious which was explored and theorised by psychiatrists, philosophers and novelists of the early twentieth-century, but which actually originates in the nineteenth century. In "L'histoire mouvementée de l'inconscient", Jean-François Dortier notes that the notion of unconscious first appeared in nineteenth-century German philosophy, and in particular in the writings of Theodor Lipps who expressed, in his *Basic Facts of Mental Life* (*Grundtatsachen des Seelenlebens*), a definition of the notion very similar to the one Freud would offer a few years later (Dortier 61).[7] Given that the theme of the "unconscious" had been explored in earlier works by philosophers such as Arthur Schopenhauer and that the very concept was being theorised in the late nineteenth century, it is only natural that the notion should be found in the literary work of an author who read German philosophers and who had an interest for physiology and the new field of psychology. According to John Alcorn, Hardy actually laid the foundations for a concomitant and interrelated study of human embodied consciousness and the human unconscious. In *The Nature Novel from Hardy to Lawrence,* Alcorn writes: "Hardy's "alphabet" is a language of spiritualized physiognomy, physiology, botany, and topography. The next generation of novelists will be deeply indebted to Hardy for pointing the way toward a new novelistic language to express the unconscious life of man" (Alcorn 14-15). That "new novelistic language" Alcorn is referring to here is performed by Hardy through different literary devices and narrative strategies, and namely through the use of indirect characterisation, aiming at revealing the deeper subjectivities of characters via a focus on their physical appearances. Indeed, even as the omniscient narrator tends to offer an insight into the characters' most intimate thoughts and desires, the gateway towards their unconscious self seems to be their bodies and all their movements which become physical manifestations of their unconscious. One instance of that type of characterisation may be found in *The Return of the Native*, in which the reader is invited into Eustacia's subconscious as she overhears villagers mention the upcoming arrival of her lover-to-be, Clym: "While the furze-gatherers had desultorily

[7] Dortier explains how Lipps's and Freud's theories appeared to be so similar that Freud himself started to fear that Lipps might get ahead of him and his work. In a 1898 letter to his friend Wilhelm Fliess, Freud writes: "I found in Lipps my own principles, very clearly exposed, a little bit better, perhaps, than I should have hoped" (Dortier 61, my translation of Freud's quote).

conversed thus Eustacia's face gradually bent to the hearth in a profound reverie, her toe unconsciously tapping the dry turf which lay burning at her feet" (Hardy, *TRN* 110). Here, Eustacia's nascent feelings for a man she has not met yet and she cannot therefore be properly conscious of, are already visible in the movements of her body. So as to offer the reader an insight into thoughts which are not even fully realised in the characters' minds, the narrator leads him or her away from the mind towards the body, which becomes the seat of the unconscious. Such a narrative strategy has undoubtedly constituted a source of inspiration for Lawrence who wrote, in "Psychoanalysis of the Unconscious" that the unconscious "is not a shadow cast from the mind", but "the spontaneous life-motive in every organism" (Lawrence, *PFU* 15). On one hand, for Hardy as for Lawrence, the common and early-Freudian understanding of the unconscious as deeply rooted in the far reaches of the mind is replaced with a modern conception of the unconscious as primarily embodied. Through a particular focus on the character's body, the narrator is then able to reveal his or her most repressed thoughts or desires, as they are about to reach the edge of consciousness. On the other hand, those physical movements described by the narrator actually bring to mind Freud's own concept of drive that he defines as a "transitional concept, between the body and the psyche" (Perron 25). In the 1920s, the psychoanalyst recognises the contradiction that comes from associating the notion of unconscious with that of drive, and offers to rename the unconscious the "Id", using the word "unconscious" only as an adjective relating to anything remaining outside of consciousness (Dortier 63). To Françoise Cribier, the "Id" is actually representing the body, as "a structure open to the somatic, in which one's urging needs or drives find their primary mode of psychic expression" (Cribier 46).[8] Referring to Freud's "Id" as "the representative entity of our organic past", Cribier grants a material dimension back to Freud's whole theory of the unconscious, which has long been commonly thought of as an abstract and somehow mysterious concept (Cribier 46). In *Women in Love*, Lawrence explores the embodied "Id" of his protagonists, focusing on this transitional process in which unconscious thoughts and desires are brought up to consciousness in an unintelligible form, as they are being translated into physical movements and actions. Indeed, the destructive passion Gerald has been feeling for Gudrun culminates in their ultimate and definitive fight, in which Gudrun confesses that their relationship was always doomed, since she could never properly love him. In reaction to such cruel assertion, a breach seems to open in Gerald's consciousness, and his unconscious and unavowed desires are

[8] « Le Ça en est le représentant [du corps], structure ouverte vers le somatique, en laquelle les besoins pulsionnels trouvent leur premier mode d'expression psychique ».

suddenly able to seep in, via the medium of his body: "A blinding flash went over his brain, his body jolted. His heart had burst into flame. His consciousness was gone into his wrists, into his hands. He was one blind, incontinent desire, to kill her. His wrists were bursting, there would be no satisfaction, till his hands had closed on her" (Lawrence, *WL* 462). As was the case in Hardy, it is through the character's physical movements and sensations that the reader gets to uncover his deepest secrets and shameful desires. In fact, the two concepts of consciousness and the unconscious are brought together by a common origin in the body, rather than in the mind, and it is the unconscious itself which proves to be "the first bubbling of life in us" (Lawrence, *PFU* 15). Indeed, to Lawrence, "the nuclear unconscious brought forth organs and consciousness alike" (Lawrence, *PFU* 33), which suggests that a proper exploration of human consciousness requires an incursion into the unconscious, and more specifically, into the embodied unconscious.

If stream-of-consciousness techniques allow an "exploration of the prespeech levels of consciousness" (Humphrey 2-3), it may be said of Hardy's and Lawrence's narrative strategies that they invite the reader to navigate along preconscious and therefore embodied levels of consciousness. To do so, the two authors set up in their novels whole scenes that are dedicated to revealing the deeper consciousness of the protagonists, through specific experiences which are characterised by the intensity of a psycho-physical experience. I suggest that two particular scenes, one from Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and one from Lawrence's *Women in Love*, may be studied concurrently, for their common materialisation of the unconscious. In Hardy's 1891 novel, the scene that explores most efficiently the human unconscious is also one of the pivotal scenes in which Tess's life journey takes a direction that might have been avoided, if only Clare had – quite literally – trusted his gut. Indeed, the night after Tess has revealed her past to her new husband and he has decided to leave in the morning, unable to forgive her, Clare finds himself in a "somnambulistic state" induced by "continued mental distress" (Hardy, *Tess* 246). Defined by the *OED* as "the fact or habit of walking about and performing other actions while asleep", somnambulism encapsulates the notions of movement and embodiment, while associating them with "the natural suspension of consciousness" which is sleep (*OED*). Paradoxically enough, it is by subjecting his protagonist to a state of suspended consciousness and by focusing on his body that Hardy is able to explore the depths of human consciousness. In fact, the representation of consciousness as a stream directed outward pervades the passage, while the reader is apparently denied access to the inner workings of Clare's consciousness. Despite his waking efforts to reject his wife, Clare's unconscious instincts seem to be defined

by their intentionality, as Tess is included in – and made leading actress of – his fit of somnambulism:

> After fixedly regarding her for some moments with the same gaze of unmeasurable woe, he bent lower, enclosed her in his arms, and rolled her in the sheet as in a shroud. Then lifting her from the bed with as much respect as one would show to a dead body, he carried her across the room, murmuring—
>
> "My poor, poor Tess—my dearest, darling Tess! So sweet, so good, so true!"
>
> The words of endearment, withheld so severely in his waking hours, were inexpressibly sweet to her forlorn and hungry heart. If it had been to save her weary life she would not, by moving or struggling, have put an end to the position she found herself in. Thus she lay in absolute stillness, scarcely venturing to breathe, and, wondering what he was going to do with her, suffered herself to be borne out upon the landing. (Hardy, *Tess* 247)

Here, a dichotomy is drawn between the words pronounced while conscious and those pronounced while unconscious, thus implicitly revealing to the reader Clare's true and repressed feelings. Then, another dichotomy can be found between Clare's moving body and Tess's motionless passivity, the latter symbolising her willingness to be carried away by her husband's stream of unconsciousness. This imagery is indeed all the more present as Clare, holding his wife in his arms, heads toward the river and intends to cross and reach the other side:

> Its waters, in creeping down these miles of meadowland, frequently divided, serpentining in purposeless curves, looping themselves around little islands that had no name, returning and re-embodying themselves as a broad main stream further on. Opposite the spot to which he had brought her was such a general confluence, and the river was proportionately voluminous and deep. Across it was a narrow foot-bridge; but now the autumn flood had washed the handrail away, leaving the bare plank only, which, lying a few inches above the speeding current, formed a giddy pathway for even steady heads; and Tess had noticed from the window of the house in the day-time young men walking across upon it as a feat in balancing. Her husband had possibly observed the same performance; anyhow, he now mounted the plank, and, sliding one foot forward, advanced along it.

> Was he going to drown her? Probably he was. The spot was lonely, the river deep and wide enough to make such a purpose easy of accomplishment. He might drown her if he would; it would be better than parting to-morrow to lead severed lives.
>
> The swift stream raced and gyrated under them, tossing, distorting, and splitting the moon's reflected face. Spots of froth travelled past, and intercepted weeds waved behind the piles. If they could both fall together into the current now, their arms would be so tightly clasped together that they could not be saved; they would go out of the world almost painlessly, and there would be no more reproach to her, or to him for marrying her. His last half-hour with her would have been a loving one, while if they lived till he awoke, his day-time aversion would return, and this hour would remain to be contemplated only as a transient dream. (Hardy, *Tess* 248-249)

While, in the day-time, Tess was rejected by Clare's consciousness and was indeed drown in his stream of consciousness, she seems now to be included back into the chaotic waters of his unconscious. Both symbol of death and of reunion, the current of the river stands for a sort of threshold to Clare's unconscious and repressed desires that are being translated both into life instincts (those urging him to save and cherish his wife) and death instincts (those urging him to kill his wife, along with his love for her). In that sense, this scene seems to foreshadow Freud's late theory of human consciousness, based on the duality between Eros and Thanatos, thus leaving no doubt as to the intellectual affinities between the Victorian author and the Austrian psychoanalyst.[9] Writing only a few decades after the Golden Age of magnetism, and during a time in which somnambulism was not yet liberated from its metaphysical dimension (Méheust, *Somnambulisme I* 29), Hardy writes a sleep-walking scene from an omniscient point of view which automatically extracts it from the field of mediumship. By giving us access to the workings of Clare's unconscious and associating them with a mere brain activity during a dream, the author demonstrates a growing tendency in the late Victorian era to try and "deny, or at least contain and absorb" the fields of magnetism and mediumship, so as to "reorganise the human mental space and make way for an unconscious dimension of the human spirit"

[9] In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (trans. James Strachey), Freud writes: "Our views have from the very first been dualistic, and today they are even more definitely dualistic than before – now that we describe the opposition as being, not between ego instincts and sexual instincts, but between life instincts and death instincts" (Freud 53).

(Méheust, *Somnambulisme II* 213).[10] In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Clare is only dreaming, and Tess, far from trying to mesmerise him, is only trying to get him back to bed safely:

> It suddenly occurred to her to try persuasion; and accordingly she whispered in his ear, with as much firmness and decision as she could summon— "Let us walk on, darling," at the same time taking him suggestively by the arm. To her relief, he unresistingly acquiesced; her words had apparently thrown him back into his dream, which thenceforward seemed to enter on a new phase, wherein he fancied she had risen as a spirit, and was leading him to Heaven. Thus she conducted him by the arm to the stone bridge in front of their residence, crossing which they stood at the manor-house door. Tess's feet were quite bare, and the stones hurt her, and chilled her to the bone; but Clare was in his woollen stockings and appeared to feel no discomfort. (Hardy, *Tess* 250)

Through a focus on Clare's physical reality and an incursion into the workings of his imagination, Hardy manages to offer a sleep-walking scene in which mystery and science co-exist, within the very complex notion of the unconscious. Similarly, in Lawrence's fiction, a mystical discourse meets scientific facts, as the author gives us access to the characters' embodied unconscious, without necessarily offering any explanations regarding its workings. In fact, to Lawrence, "it is necessary for us to know the unconscious, or we cannot live, just as it is necessary for us to know the sun. But we need not explain the unconscious, any more than we need to explain the sun" (Lawrence, *PFU* 17). In *Women in Love*, rather than being offered a precise definition of the human unconscious, the reader gets to experience what an unconscious state *feels* like. Most of the eighty occurrences of the word "unconscious" that can be picked up in the novel actually become synonymous with sensuality, rather than with any abstract activity of the mind. The Eros-Thanatos duality which, in Hardy, is represented only metaphorically, is actually embodied in Lawrence's novel, as he writes the pivotal wrestling scene in the "Gladiatorial" chapter. Through the representation of two male bodies engaged in physical fight, Lawrence is able to offer a very visual and material representation of "the primal unconscious pulsing in its circuits between two beings: love and wrath, cleaving and repulsion, inglutination and excrementation" (Lawrence, *PFU* 24). In the following extract, the sensual

[10] My translation. Méheust writes : "[C'est en partie parce qu'il s'est trouvé dans l'obligation de] réfuter le magnétisme, puis la médiumnité, ou du moins de les contenir et de les résorber, [que le scientisme en est venu à] réaménager l'espace mental, pour laisser place à une dimension inconsciente de l'esprit. »

intermingling and clashing of Birkin's and Gerald's bodies seem to lay bare the secrets of the human unconscious:

> So the two men entwined and wrestled with each other, working nearer and nearer. Both were white and clear, but Gerald flushed smart red where he was touched, and Birkin remained white and tense. He seemed to penetrate into Gerald's more solid, more diffuse bulk, to interfuse his body through the body of the other, as if to bring it subtly into subjection, always seizing with some rapid necromantic fore-knowledge every motion of the other flesh, converting and counteracting it, playing upon the limbs and trunk of Gerald like some hard wind. (…)
>
> So they wrestled swiftly, rapturously, intent and mindless at last, two essential white figures working into a tighter closer oneness of struggle, with a strange, octopus-like knotting and flashing of limbs in the subdued light of the room; a tense white knot of flesh gripped in silence between the walls of old brown books. Now and again came a sharp gasp of breath, or a sound like a sigh, then the rapid thudding of movement on the thickly-carpeted floor, then the strange sound of flesh escaping under flesh. Often, in the white interlaced knot of violent living being that swayed silently, there was no head to be seen, only the swift, tight limbs, the solid white backs, the physical junction of two bodies clinched into oneness. Then would appear the gleaming, ruffled head of Gerald, as the struggle changed, then for a moment the dun-coloured, shadow-like head of the other man would lift up from the conflict, the eyes wide and dreadful and sightless. (Lawrence 2007, 270)

In this passage, the two male bodies stand for two conflicting forces on the verge of finally fusing together – a process which, to Lawrence, represents the threshold towards the human unconscious that he defines as "the active spontaneity which rouses in each individual organism at the moment of fusion of the parent nuclei, and which, in polarized connection with the external universe, gradually evolves or elaborates its own individual psyche and corpus, bringing both mind and body forth from itself" (Lawrence, *PFU* 38). Indeed, it seems that the unconscious is being summoned throughout Lawrence's wrestling scene, as words like "unconscious, unconsciousness, half-conscious, mindless, sort of not-being" keep on being repeated (Lawrence, *WL* 271) – the more intense the wrestling is, the more accessible the deepest plane of the unconscious seems to be to the two characters. In fact, the intense physical sensations and great physical exhaustion caused by the wrestling have the effect of forcing the

two characters to get back to their bodies and, consequently, to dive deeper into themselves. As long as Birkin hears the "painful, (…) strained, [and] surcharged" beating of his heart, and feels "the violent striking of blood in his chest" (Lawrence, *WL* 271-272), he remains in a state of trance, far from what the narrator calls "the normal consciousness" (Lawrence, *WL* 272). In both Hardy's sleepwalking scene and Lawrence's wrestling scene, this "normal consciousness" is being overcome by a sort of physical trance which, alone, allows the readers to access the characters' unconscious truth. Narratively speaking, the unconscious therefore has a specific function in both Hardy's and Lawrence's novels, that of revealing the true nature of the characters' relationships and developing new narrative arcs. More often than not, the embodied experience of the unconscious serves not only to enable characters to access their most repressed desires, but also, and most importantly, to allow them to be fully *conscious* of the Other.

In *D. H. Lawrence and Tradition*, Meyers declares: "Hardy is the first English novelist to treat the unconscious analytically and to organize characterization and plot for the purpose of revealing the unconscious" (Meyers 82). If I would concur to say that the notion of unconscious does matter to Hardy, in every sense of the word, I would however argue that the author uses the unconscious in order to reveal the nature of his characters and organise the plot in a certain way, not the other way around. While, in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, the honest Tess fails to take advantage of her husband's unconscious state to try and convince him to stay, and chooses to omit she ever got access to his most secret thoughts, Arabella, in *Jude the Obscure*, purposefully leads Jude towards a semi-conscious state which is necessary for him to grant her anything. Indeed, the second marriage between Arabella and Jude is brought forth by a decision taken by Jude while in a state of unconscious drunkenness, as part of a scheme led by Arabella herself:

> "Now," said Arabella to her father downstairs, "we must keep plenty of good liquor going in the house these next few days. I know his nature, and if he once gets into that fearfully low state that he does get into sometimes, he'll never do the honourable thing by me in this world, and I shall be left in the lurch. He must be kept cheerful. He has a little money in the savings bank, and he has given me his purse to pay for anything necessary. Well, that will be the licence; for I must have that ready at hand, to catch him the moment he's in the humour. You must pay for the liquor. A few friends, and a quiet convivial party would be the thing, if we could get it up. It would advertise the shop, and help me too." (Hardy, *JO* 298)

In that instance, the type of unconscious state Jude is experiencing has nothing to do with the sleepwalking episode undergone by Clare in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*: while the latter is rooted in the body and contains the true nature of Clare's feelings for Tess, the former originates in a chemical substance and can therefore be considered as a lack of consciousness, rather than an experience of deeper consciousness. In both cases, however, the use of the unconscious serves to shine a light on the protagonists' personalities – Tess's honesty, as opposed to Arabella's manipulative character – and to precipitate the separation or union between two characters. In fact, Hardy's conception of embodied unconscious plays a key role in the unfolding of his novels' love stories. Still in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, the very process of falling in love is deemed separate from consciousness, as "Tess and Clare unconsciously stud[y] each other, ever balanced on the edge of a passion, yet keeping out of it" (Hardy, *Tess* 128). While Clare has not yet confessed his love for Tess, his body – that is, his embodied unconscious – first gives signs of his feelings for her: "'Well I have betrayed my feeling, Tess, at last', said he, with a curious sigh of desperation, signifying unconsciously that his heart had outrun his judgement" (Hardy, *Tess* 152). Here, Clare's life instinct seems to take over, and the liberation of his repressed desire for Tess marks the beginning of their love story.[11] Such a use of the unconscious to treat the experience of falling in love as an embodied process can be similarly found in Lawrence's *Women in Love*, in which Gudrun and Gerald seem to be falling in love as one falls unconscious:

> Gudrun reached out the sketch-book, Gerald stretched from the boat to take it. And as he did so, he remembered Gudrun's last words to him, and her face lifted up to him as he sat on the swerving horse. An intensification of pride went over his nerves, because he felt, in some way she was compelled by him. The exchange of feeling between them was strong and apart from their consciousness.
>
> And as if in a spell, Gudrun was aware of his body, stretching and surging like the marsh-fire, stretching towards her, his hand coming straight forward like a stem. Her voluptuous, acute apprehension of him made the blood faint in her veins, her mind went dim and unconscious. And he rocked on the water perfectly, like the rocking of phosphorescence. He looked round at the boat. It was drifting off a little. He lifted the oar to bring it back. And the exquisite pleasure of slowly arresting the boat, in the heavy-soft water, was complete as a swoon. (Lawrence, *WL* 120)

[11] The pivotal dimension of the passage previously quoted is reinforced by its constituting the ending lines of Phase the Third ("The Rally"), leading the readers into Phase the Fourth entitled "The Consequence."

In this passage, the growing feelings between the two characters are dealt with in terms of physical sensations and motion, rather than in terms of emotions. Indeed, Gerald's rocking movement in the water and his ultimate coming to a halt serve to offer the reader a visual (and material) representation of the process of falling in love, quite explicitly compared to a swooning movement. Throughout the scene, the narrator associates states of unconsciousness ("apart from their consciousness", "as if in a spell", "unconscious", "as a swoon") with acute physical sensations ("aware of his body", "made the blood faint in her veins", "exquisite pleasure"), in an attempt to define a nascent connection between two characters as the disappearance of the Ego in favour of the embodied Id. Here, the scene illustrates the coming together of two Ids rather than of two Egos, via the medium of the body. Just as Clare could not consciously declare his love to Tess, Gerald seems to be only physically conscious as he confesses his love to Gudrun:

> A flame flew over him, and he was unconscious. Yet he stammered:
> 'I'm not angry with you, I'm in love with you.' His mind was gone, he grasped for sufficient mechanical control, to save himself. (Lawrence, *WL* 171).

Paradoxically enough, a state of mental unconsciousness seems to foster a stronger awareness of the Other, as the intentionality of desire is felt in the body rather than in the mind. In "Fantasia of the Unconscious", Lawrence attempts to elucidate this issue by defining the embodied unconscious as a perfected form of consciousness revealing one's life instincts. He writes: "Sex is our deepest form of consciousness. It is utterly non-ideal, non-mental. It is pure blood-consciousness. It is the basic consciousness of the blood, the nearest thing in us to pure material consciousness. It is the consciousness of the night, when the soul is almost asleep" (Lawrence, *PFU* 185). This association between sexuality and consciousness reveals the primary function of erotic scenes found in Lawrence's novels, that is the exploration of the human embodied unconscious as the "deepest form of consciousness". In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the exploration of the female orgasm therefore becomes part of a greater reflection on human consciousness, and the climax itself becomes the most acute form of consciousness any individual can achieve:

> And this time his being within her was soft and iridescent, purely soft and iridescent, such as no consciousness could seize. Her whole self quivered unconscious and alive, like the plasm. She could not know what it was. She could not remember what

> it had been. Only that it had been more lovely than anything ever could be. Only that. And afterwards she was utterly still, utterly unknowing, she was not aware for how long. And he was still with her, in an unfathomable silence along with her. And of this, they would never speak. (Lawrence, *LCL* 175).

As is the case in *Women in Love*, the connection between the two protagonists in this scene is made all the stronger by the state of unconsciousness they find themselves in. The concise sentences, along with the narrator's failure to qualify Connie's experience in precise, intelligible terms, all participate in shifting the focus from Connie's mental consciousness to her "blood consciousness" which becomes synonymous with her unconscious self. In relocating the seat of consciousness in the body, and more particularly, in the most intense physical experiences, Lawrence is able to restore sexuality back to the natural sphere of human life. From that perspective, the author concurs with Freud who "[couldn't] see any merit in being ashamed of sex" (Freud, *Beyond* 91).[12] One of the biggest challenges taken up by the writing of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is indeed "to realise sex" (Lawrence, *LCL*, "A Propos" 308) and bring it back to consciousness. As if echoing Freud's words on his use of the term sex instead of words like "Eros" which are supposed to "soften the affront", and as if writing to prove Freud's point, according to which "he who knows how to wait need make no concession" (Freud, *Beyond* 91), Lawrence declares in "A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover":

> The words that shock so much at first don't shock at all after a while. Is this because the mind is depraved by habit? Not a bit. It is that the words merely shocked the eye, they never shocked the mind at all. People with no minds may go on being shocked, but they don't matter. People with minds realise that they aren't shocked, and never really were; and they experience a sense of relief. (Lawrence, *LCL*, "A Propos" 307)

[12] In "D. H. Lawrence's 'Biological Psyche' and the Neuroscience of the Divided Brain", Phelps explains how "Freud's theory" was, to Lawrence, "the product of the idealising 'mental consciousness' and [was] derived from the Cartesian dualistic separation of mind and body" (Phelps 9). Yet, it is quite evident that the two men agreed on some fundamental principles and that the "dualistic separation of mind and body" Phelps is referring to might not have been such a diverging point between them, especially by the end of Freud's career. In "Fantasia of the Unconscious", Lawrence tends to nuance his earlier condemnation of the psychoanalyst, owning that it "was really not fair (…) to jeer at Psychoanalysis as if Freud had invented and described nothing but an unconscious, in all his theory" (Lawrence, *PFU* 66). Based on the analysis of erotic scenes in relation to Lawrence's theory of consciousness, one may argue that the author might have had more affinities with Freud's thinking than he thought or liked to concede.

Through those words, Lawrence performs a reconciliation between body and mind, but also between the unconscious and consciousness, suggesting that for any individual to feel complete, natural instincts that have been relegated to the sphere of the unconscious need to be brought up to consciousness again. In Lawrence's novel, this very process is illustrated by the orgasm which stands as a climactic experience leading to the ultimate human epiphany: "It had a thrill of its own too: a queer vibrating thrill inside the body, a final spasm of self-assertion, like the last word, exciting and very like the row of asterisks that can be put to show the end of a paragraph, and a break in the theme" (Lawrence, *LCL* 8). Within Lawrence's greater notion of the unconscious are contained issues of sexuality, self-awareness, and indeed "self-assertion". If sexual liberation plays a key role in rehabilitating the unconscious and in revealing the workings of human consciousness as a whole, then the issues of otherness and – in Lawrence's heteronormative erotic scenes – of gender, automatically come into play. In Hardy and Lawrence, gender does in fact appear to participate in shaping one's consciousness.

3. Gender Consciousness and Gendered Consciousness: the Paradox of Objectification

In *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*, Judith Butler declares: "Conscience is the means by which a subject becomes an object for itself, reflecting on itself, establishing itself as reflective and reflexive" (Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power* 22). Within this assertion lies the paradox of subjection that Butler evokes in her work and which is founded on the two-folded definition of the word both as "the process of becoming subordinated by power" and "the process of becoming a subject" (Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power* 2). To Butler, self-realisation therefore requires a primary objectification, whether it be performed by the Other exerting a power on the self, or by the individual, as part of his or her reaching consciousness. However, in Hardy and Lawrence, this paradox becomes an aporia, as the two authors locate consciousness within the materiality of the body. Indeed, if objectification implies the robbing of one's human materiality, then how may it enable the subject to be conscious of itself? Part of an answer may lie in the subtle nuance between the status of object *for the self* and the status of object *for the other*. One may argue that being subjected to an external power does not necessarily equal being objectified, and that it is in the avoidance of such objectification by the other that lies the salvation of the individual as subject. Because

"having a body is what people do, or rather what people are" (Ricœur 46),[13] protecting oneself from objectification and a subsequent disembodiment is about preserving one's integrity as a conscious subject. In the case of female individuals, however, the balance between subjection and embodiment is all the more precarious, as the female body has been traditionally perceived negatively. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir explains how man "thinks of his body as a direct and normal connection with the world, which he believes he apprehends objectively, whereas he regards the body of a woman as a hindrance, a prison, weighed down by everything peculiar to it" (de Beauvoir 15). Here, the issue raised by de Beauvoir is not the female perception of her own body but rather the male perception of the female body, which aims at cancelling the characteristics that make it female. The concept of "male gaze", theorised in 1975 by British feminist film theorist and filmmaker Laura Mulvey in her article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", proves very useful to understand the power dynamics at work in the perception of the female body by man. In Mulvey's theory, the performative power of the male gaze condemns woman to a "place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning" (Mulvey 7), thus echoing Butler's conception of a power that "acts on the subject" and that, in acting, "is an enacting" (Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power* 15). Through the male gaze, male characters in Hardy and Lawrence are enacting the gender of female characters and, in doing so, are exerting a power on their materiality. Indeed, rather than revealing the female body and empowering it, the male gaze often serves, in cinema as in literature, to make it the repository of man's "phantasies and obsessions", thus "imposing them on the silent image of woman" (Mulvey 7). Brilmyer underlines this idea in *The Science of Character*, as she mentions "a misogynist trope one finds in [Hardy's novels], in which the particularities of women are eliminated in service of a disembodied ideal" (Brilmyer 111). This is exemplified in Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, in which Tess and Sue are perceived through the idealising lenses of their lovers, with the result of being completely robbed of their own bodies:

> Whilst all the landscape was in neutral shade his companion's face, which was the focus of his eyes, rising above the mist stratum, seemed to have a sort of phosphorescence upon it. She looked ghostly, as if she were merely a soul at large. (Hardy 2003, 130)

[13] My translation. Ricœur writes : « Posséder un corps, c'est ce que font ou plutôt ce que sont les personnes ».

> [Jude to Sue] 'So that I am near you, I am comparatively happy. It is more than this earthly wretch called Me deserves – you spirit, you disembodied creature, you dear, sweet, tantalizing phantom – hardly flesh at all; so that when I put my arms round you I almost expect them to pass through you as through air!' (Hardy, *JO* 194)

In both instances, the female protagonists are described from the point of view of their lovers, and their being compared to ghosts or phantoms underlines the disembodying process at work. In *Bodies that Matter: on the Discursive Limits of Sex*, Judith Butler contends that "'materiality' designates a certain effect of power, or, rather, is power in its formative or constituting effects (Butler 34). Robbing female characters of their materiality therefore amounts to depriving them of their ontological power, that is, of their ability for self-constitution. This argument actually goes hand in hand with the study on consciousness undertaken in this chapter, which has demonstrated how Hardy and Lawrence conceive human consciousness as embodied and, consequently, the failure of embodiment as the absence or lack of consciousness (to be understood separately from the unconscious). As Clare and Jude lay eyes on their lovers, not only do they proceed to cancelling their material existence (through the paradox of idealisation), but they actively prevent them from accessing consciousness. In Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, it seems that Miriam is not even given a chance to realise herself as an incarnate woman, as Paul directly condemns her to the status of "a nun", from his own perspective: "I have given you what I would give a holy nun – as a mystic monk to a mystic nun" (Lawrence, *SL* 292). The only type of consciousness that female characters are being granted, in Lawrence, seems to be a gendered consciousness, that is, the ability to realise themselves as socially-constructed female individuals. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the narrator puts forward the peculiar gaze with which Mellors perceives Connie, and which gives the young woman a semblance of identity: "She was only really a female to him. But perhaps that was better. And after all, he was kind to the female in her, which no man had ever been" (Lawrence, *LCL* 121). If, in Hardy, the trope of the idealised and disembodied woman appears as a criticism of a misogynistic society, Lawrence's perspective seems to suggest that the male gaze is necessary for a female character to fully realise herself as a gendered individual. It is precisely in place of the constructed notions of gender and sex,[14] that Butler advocates for "a return to the notion of matter, not as site or surface, but as a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of

[14] On the limits of the concept of sex, Butler writes: "If gender is the social construction of sex, and if there is no access to this "sex"' except by means of its construction, then it appears not only that sex is absorbed by gender, but that "sex" becomes something like a fiction, perhaps a fantasy, retroactively installed at a prelinguistic site to which there is no direct access" (Butler, *Bodies that Matter* 5.)

boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter" (Butler, *Bodies that Matter* 9). Possessing an embodied and material consciousness, rather than a gendered one, appears to be the only way for characters to protect themselves from the threat of dissociation which is represented in both Hardy and Lawrence.

In the context of the present study, I am using the word "dissociation" to refer to the psychological concept defined as "the disintegration of personality or consciousness; the state in which a person has dissociated personality" (*OED*). When understood in relation to the notion of embodied consciousness, dissociation naturally involves a physical state that is characterised by an altered relation to one's body. As they are being subjected to the male gaze, female characters, in Hardy and Lawrence, tend to consider their bodies only as external envelops that prove to be burdens rather than allies in the pursuit of their goals. More often than not, a female character's dissociation from her own body is described by narrators as a symptom of a broken consciousness, induced by the influence of a male character. One example that immediately comes to mind is that of Connie in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, who is introduced, in the first part of the novel, as a depressed character, in utter denial of her physical existence. Quite explicitly, the narrator ascribes Connie's poor physical health to the doings (or lack thereof) of her husband, Clifford, and his own ignorance of her bodily presence. In that particular instance, the male gaze is detrimental to Connie's health precisely because it remains merely a gaze, or transforms into a voice, without ever becoming a proper male *touch*:

> Her body was going meaningless, going dull and opaque, so much insignificant substance. (…)
>
> She slipped into her nightdress and went to bed, where she sobbed bitterly. And in her bitterness burned a cold indignation against Clifford and his writings and his talk: against all men of his sort who defrauded a woman even out of her own body. Unjust! Unjust! The sense of deep physical injustice burned through her very soul. (Lawrence, *LCL* 70-71)

This passage constitutes in itself yet another illustration of Lawrence's concept of embodied consciousness, for its relocation of feelings within the realm of the body. As "the sense of deep physical injustice burn[s] through [Connie's] very soul", the boundary between body and mind is ultimately transcended. Then, as long as Connie's whole being is not considered as a physical subject by Clifford, Connie herself is denied the possibility to look at her body as an object and, as argued by Butler, to access consciousness. When looking at her body in the mirror, Connie

is not becoming aware of herself but rather seems to be observing a foreign entity: "She did not know what she was looking for, or at, very definitely" (Lawrence, *LCL* 70). The young woman's denial of her own body, triggered by the male gaze (or absence of the male touch), therefore has a direct impact on her embodied consciousness which automatically breaks. In Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, the male gaze, far from being passive and distant, is actually performative and directly associated with the non-consensual male touch. Considered from the prism of the rape she has been the victim of, Tess's strong belief that "our souls can be made to go outside our bodies when we are alive" (Hardy, *Tess* 120) becomes the symptom of traumatic dissociation rather than a mere metaphysical conviction. To her curious friends at the Dairy, she explains: "A very easy way to feel 'em go (…) is to lie on the grass at night and look straight up at some big bright star; and, by fixing your mind upon it, you will soon find that you are hundreds and hundreds o' miles away from your body, which you don't seem to want at all" (Hardy, *Tess* 120). The fact that Tess was sexually attacked by Alec at night, in the open air, makes any twenty-first reader of Hardy infer that the mystical experience she describes is actually a coping mechanism the young woman had to had recourse to after her rape. Here, the predatory male gaze triggers a violent break in Tess's consciousness, who has no choice but to reject the material envelope in which the deeper part of her conscious being is rooted. Months after her assault, as she is subjected to Alec's malevolent gaze again, it is her own female gaze and her general feminine appearance that suddenly become a threat to her integrity:

> Thus speaking she turned from the stile over which she had been leaning, and faced him; whereupon his eyes, falling casually upon the familiar countenance and form, remained contemplating her. The inferior man was quiet in him now; but it was surely not extracted, nor even entirely subdued.
>
> 'Don't look at me like that!' he said abruptly.
>
> Tess, who had been quite unconscious of her action and mien, instantly withdrew the large dark gaze of her eyes, stammering with a flush, 'I beg your pardon!' And there was revived in her the wretched sentiment, which had often come to her before, that in inhabiting the fleshy tabernacle with which nature had endowed her she was somehow doing wrong. (Hardy, *Tess* 309-310)

This passage is most interesting for its confrontation of the male gaze and the female gaze and for its shedding light on the power dynamics at work in a process of victim blaming. Here, Tess is being deprived of her body twice: once through the negation of her materiality by Alec's

gaze, and once through her own rejection of a material envelope that makes her a prey. As an ultimate attempt to protect herself from the male gaze and to further reinforce the divide between her body and her mind, she decides to disguise herself and cover her face up, thus preventing anyone (including herself) from perceiving her as an object:

> She reached Chalk-Newton, and breakfasted at an inn, where several young men were troublesomely complimentary to her good looks. Somehow she felt hopeful, for was it not possible that her husband also might say these same things to her even yet? She was bound to take care of herself on the chance of it, and keep off these casual lovers. To this end Tess resolved to run no further risks from her appearance. As soon as she got out of the village she entered a thicket and took from her basket one of the oldest field-gowns, which she had never put on even at the dairy—never since she had worked among the stubble at Marlott. She also, by a felicitous thought, took a handkerchief from her bundle and tied it round her face under her bonnet, covering her chin and half her cheeks and temples, as if she were suffering from toothache. Then with her little scissors, by the aid of a pocket looking-glass, she mercilessly nipped her eyebrows off, and thus insured against aggressive admiration, she went on her uneven way. (Hardy, *Tess* 279-280)

Not only does the young woman proceed to hide her body, but she actively spoils her face, using violence against herself as a last resort to keep her whole being unspoiled. This strong aversion against one's body is shared by another of Hardy's female characters, which is Sue in *Jude the Obscure*.[15] By the end of the novel, she blames her looks for having attracted Jude and led to a wrongful union, which itself resulted in the death of the children born from that union. To Mrs Edlin who compliments her hands, she therefore immediately replies: 'Don't talk of my pretty hands, Mrs Edlin. This body of mine has been the ruin of me already!' (Hardy, *JO* 310). From Mrs Edlin's answer, arguing that Sue has "got no body to speak of" (Hardy, *JO* 310), the reader can easily infer that Sue's rejection of her own body also comes as a consequence of its cancellation by others, and especially by male others. In Hardy's last novel, Sue is simultaneously accused by society for being too physical, and by male others for being deprived of any material existence. In both cases, it results in the young woman's denial of her own body,

[15] In *The Life of Thomas Hardy*, Paul Turner gives details about the writing process of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* which further reinforce the affinities between the characters of Tess and Sue: "In July 1889 Hardy thought of calling the novel that became *Tess* 'The Body of Sue'. The name was finally kept for his next heroine, to whom the body-soul dichotomy was equally relevant" (Turner 142).

that goes hand in hand with her melancholy mental state. In *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*, Butler defines melancholia as "the limit to the subject's sense of pouvoir, its sense of what it can accomplish and, in that sense, its power". She then adds: Melancholia rifts the subject, marking a limit to what it can accommodate" (Butler 23). It is precisely this very crack in the female characters' selves that is at stake in the representation of dissociation in Hardy and Lawrence. If the effects of the male gaze on the female characters are dealt with in very different ways in the two authors' writings, the common resulting break in the mind-body continuity performs, I argue, a split in the female characters' consciousness. If a gendered consciousness necessarily means a broken consciousness, then Hardy and Lawrence's female characters need to find ways to retrieve their original organic consciousness and get back in control of their own destinies. To Butler, the very definition of the state of subjection allows such a turnaround: "As a subject of power (where 'of' connotes both 'belonging to' and 'wielding'), the subject eclipses the conditions of its own emergence; it eclipses power with power" (Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power* 14).

In chapter two of this work, I touched upon the gender fluidity that characterises Sue in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*. Then, I attempted to demonstrate how Sue's androgynous quality and her refusal to fit the criteria of her ascribed gender had a direct impact on the (de)construction of Jude's manhood and selfhood. In the present chapter, I would like to explore further the notion of gender consciousness, within a greater discussion on Hardy and Lawrence's conception of embodied consciousness. Indeed, in *Jude the Obscure*, the eponymous character is said to feel threatened by Sue's "strange ways and curious unconsciousness of gender" (Hardy, *JO* 119). Here, the use of the word "unconsciousness" is more meaningful than it might appear when reading Hardy's novel for the first time, since it does not merely refer to Sue's lack of awareness of her female gender, but it also directly alludes to Hardy's concept of embodied unconscious, thus transcending the representation of gender solely as a social construct. If Sue is unaware of her being a woman, as conceived by society, she is nevertheless "unconscious", that is, bodily and more deeply conscious, of her being a woman, according to her own conception of womanhood. In *Study of Thomas Hardy*, Lawrence condones such a hypothesis as he writes about Hardy's heroine: "She was not a woman. She was Sue Bridehead, something very particular. Why was there no place for her?" (Lawrence *Study* 122). It is precisely this subjective and very personal representation of gender that so disturbs Jude who finds "that epicene tenderness of hers (…) too harrowing" (Hardy, *JO* 122). The young man repeatedly applies his own norms and his own conception of womanhood to

Sue's behaviour, judging whether she is a "natural" woman or not: "Your natural instincts are perfectly healthy; not quite so impassioned, perhaps, as I could wish; but good, and dear, and pure" (Hardy, *JO* 271). In that sense, Sue's relation to the notion of gender echoes once again Butler's definition of subjection as consisting "precisely in this fundamental dependency on a discourse we never chose but that, paradoxically, initiates and sustains our agency" (Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power* 2). Sue never chose the norms and characteristics applied to the female gender, but she is in turn able to transform that discourse by taking back the control over her gendered body and bringing it "into complete subjection" (Hardy, *JO* 306). If, arguably, Hardy built the character of Sue as a representative of all women being victim of a misogynist society, I would like to suggest a more optimistic view of the female protagonist, based on Butler's theory of subjection. In the end, Sue does live her life and cope with the loss of her children on her own terms, healing her consciousness by ruling who does and does not get access to her body. Sue is indeed very well conscious of her gender, based on her own understanding of womanhood, and yet ultimately refuses to ever be ascribed a gendered consciousness. Then, to Lawrence's pessimistic comment contending that Sue "was unhappy every moment of her life (…), with the knowledge of her own non-existence within life", one might respond that the young woman's empowerment lies precisely in her subjected state, and that the "ghastly sickness of dissolution [that she feels] upon her" is nothing but a dissolution of her gender, rather than of her whole being (Lawrence, *Study* 114). In Lawrence, female empowerment does take a different shape in so far as it does not happen in contradiction with gender norms, but rather in close cooperation with them. Connie Chatterley, for instance, is the epitome of Lawrence's conception of feminine agency, for her ability to gradually return to her body – a body that had been damaged by the young woman's gendered and standardised consciousness. In fact, Butler underlines "the classical association of femininity with materiality", tracing it back to "a set of etymologies which link matter with mater and matrix (or the womb) and, hence, with a problematic of reproduction" (Butler, *Bodies that Matter* 31). In light of these etymologic precisions, the process of returning to one's body seems intrinsically linked, in the case of female characters, to a process of embracing one's femininity, regardless of gender norms. The original association of matter with "mater" and "matrix" then suggests that pregnancy, in its stemming from a "primary vulnerability to the Other", might actually be the physical experience through which female empowerment can take place (Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power* 21). In 1949, Simone de Beauvoir had already asserted the dialectics between motherhood and female emancipation, arguing that a mother "is no longer an object subservient

to a subject" and that she is able to "find in her infant – as does the lover in his beloved – a carnal plenitude, and this is not in surrender but in domination" (de Beauvoir 477; 491). It is this form of material empowerment that can be found in Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, in which pregnancy and motherhood are issues that become more and more present in the heroine's mind, as the story unfolds and she gradually emancipates from her husband's stifling control. Indeed, the notion of pregnancy appears to Connie, from the beginning of the novel, as quite unrelated to the male gender, and is rather considered by the protagonist as a liberating process in which man is merely a tool:

> But a child, a baby! That was still one of the sensations. She would venture very gingerly on that experiment. There was the man to consider, and it was curious, there wasn't a man in the world whose children you wanted. Mick's children! Repulsive thought! As lief have a child to a rabbit! Tommy Dukes? he was very nice, but somehow you couldn't associate him with a baby, another generation. He ended in himself. And out of all the rest of Clifford's pretty wide acquaintance, there was not a man who did not rouse her contempt, when she thought of having a child by him. There were several who would have been quite possible as lover, even Mick. But to let them breed a child on you! Ugh! Humiliation and abomination. (…)
>
> But wait! wait! Next winter she would get Clifford to London; the following winter she would get him abroad to the South of France, Italy. Wait! She was in no hurry about the child. That was her own private affair, and the one point on which, in her own queer, female way, she was serious to the bottom of her soul. She was not going to risk any chance comer, not she! One might take a lover almost at any moment, but a man who should beget a child on one...wait! wait! it's a very different matter.--'Go ye into the streets and byways of Jerusalem...' It was not a question of love; it was a question of a *man.* Why, one might even rather hate him, personally. Yet if he was the man, what would one's personal hate matter? This business concerned another part of oneself. (Lawrence, *LCL* 64-65)

This inner monologue rendered in free indirect speech is used by the narrator to demonstrate how self-centred and female-oriented the process of begetting a child is to Connie. If the help of a man is indeed necessary, the traditional power dynamics of heteronormative relationships is transcended as the young woman makes the whole process "her own private affair" and her choice of a man her own, very pragmatic, choice. In suggesting that pregnancy, in Connie's mind, has nothing to do with love, the narrator shifts the reader's attention towards what this plan is really about – that is, healing her broken consciousness by performing an ultimate act of reconciliation with her female materiality. Later in the novel, however, pregnancy is indeed related to love, since Connie gets pregnant by Mellors, a man she has deliberately chosen and

whose encounter has fostered the return to her body. Despite the importance of Mellors's role in this pregnancy and her strong feelings towards him, the eventual objective remains the access to a higher plane of consciousness, as a woman:

> And her limbs turned molten at the thought. And she realised the immense difference between having a child to oneself, and having a child to a man whom one's bowels yearned towards. The former seemed, in a sense, ordinary. But to have a child to a man whom one adored in one's bowels and one's womb! it made her feel she was very different from her older self, and as if she was sinking deep, deep to the centre of all womanhood, and the sleep of creation. (Lawrence, *LCL* 135).

As she dives deep into "the centre of all womanhood," Connie is not only able to reconnect to her femininity, but she is able to recover her embodied consciousness – her consciousness as a material woman. "In reproduction", Butler writes, "women are said to contribute the matter; men, the form" (Butler, *Bodies that Matter* 31). It is probably along the lines of this argument that Lawrence proceeds to empower his female heroine through pregnancy. To Candis Bond, who wrote the essay entitled "Embodied Love: D. H. Lawrence, Modernity and Pregnancy", "pregnancy", in Lawrence's fiction, "is capable of extending the female consciousness beyond cerebral thought" (Bond 6). In Connie Chatterley, consciousness is indeed both gendered and embodied, as a result of her becoming a mother, while in Hardy's Sue, consciousness is being embodied precisely through a process of reappropriation of one's ungendered body.[16]

In both cases, Hardy and Lawrence attach much importance to the exploration of female consciousness, as an ultimate attempt to access parts of their own consciousness that remain hidden. In the end, Lawrence notes, "the first great movement of Man" is "the movement into the conscious possession of a body. And this consciousness of the body came through woman" (Lawrence, *Study* 64).

[16] Lawrence's exploration of pregnancy as the extension of female consciousness does not necessarily imply that Connie's consciousness is only made by and through her female gender. Indeed, in *Study of Thomas Hardy*, Lawrence actually suggests the double-gendered dimension of human consciousness: "But except in infinity, everything of life is male or female, distinct. But the consciousness, that is of both: and the flower, that is of both" (Lawrence, *Study* 55). If human consciousness can contain both genders, then is it really gendered?

PART III

From Ontology to Ecology: Finding One's Ecological Self in Thomas Hardy's and D. H. Lawrence's Novels

"That's how I write all about these planes and plexuses, Lawrence says, between the toes of a tree, forgetting myself against the great ankle of the trunk. My tree-book really." (Lawrence, *PFU* 86). In inviting us behind the scenes of his writing process, Lawrence demonstrates how the expression of a theory of human consciousness is inherently/intrinsically linked to emplacement/inhabitation, and more importantly, fostered by the attention to the *things* that surround one. A return to "the things themselves" is precisely the guiding principle put forward by Edmund Husserl as he inaugurated the philosophical discipline of phenomenology at the beginning of the twentieth century (Abram, "The Spell of the Sensuous" 35). If Husserl's initial take concerned a return "toward the world as it is experienced in its felt immediacy" (Abram, "The Spell of the Sensuous" 35), this famous phenomenological tenet has gradually taken a broader meaning, to the extent that it proved essential/decisive in the development of ecocritical studies. In fact, William Barret contends that to go back to the things themselves "is very hard for philosophers: they come to experience with too many intellectual preconceptions. Artists are better at it" (Barret quoted in Alcorn 1). The third part of this work will therefore be dedicated to demonstrating how Hardy and Lawrence, as artists, take up the challenge of returning to the things themselves, as a starting point towards finding the last component of their unique theory of relational ontology. The original definition of the word "ecology" given in the introduction of this study suggests that the notion of relation is at the core of environmental studies and that ecocritical studies should not be limited to texts set in wild nature, conveying an explicit message in favour of protecting the environment, or to any pastoral narratives idealising the natural environment. On the contrary, Félix Guattari sets out to develop an "ethico-political" structure that he calls "ecosophy" and that is based on the putting together of what he considers to be the three ecological registers, those relating to "the environment, social relationships, and human subjectivity" (Guattari 12-13).[1] Those three ecological registers, I argue, are nothing but the three foundational principles at the origin of Hardy and Lawrence's relational ontology, thus making the two previous parts of this work naturally revolve towards its ecocritical conclusion. As I choose to approach ontological studies from the prism of ecology, I am attempting to reconcile humanities with environmental studies, looking for answers in Lawrence and Hardy's unique ability to write stories about humans in order to deal with more-than-human issues, and to invoke the ultimate ecological self in their fiction.

[1] My translation. Guattari writes : « Seule une articulation éthico-polituque – que je nomme écosophie – entre les trois registres écologiques, celui de l'environnement, celui des rapports sociaux, et celui de la subjectivité humaine, serait susceptible d'éclairer convenablement ces questions [de changements sociétaux] ».

CHAPTER SIX.
Keeping an Open Mind:
An Exploration of Hardy and Lawrence's Environmental Consciousness

"In the wind of March, endless phrases swept through her consciousness"
(Lawrence, LCL 85)

To be eco-conscious, or to have an environmental consciousness – those phrasings date back to the 1970s and commonly refer to a particular "sensitivity or knowledge about environmental issues" (*OED*). In the present chapter, I propose to broaden the scope of understanding of those words by returning to the notion of consciousness which has been extensively explored in the previous chapter. At the time when Hardy and Lawrence were writing their novels, in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the very concept of environmental consciousness as we use it today had yet to be coined and environmental issues *per se* did not appear as primary concerns for the people. What are we looking at then, as readers, when exploring environmental consciousness in Hardy's and Lawrence's novels? I suggest that consciousness and environment are co-arising in the two authors' fictions, in accordance with the phenomenological belief stating that it is "by being conscious of the world that one [is] conscious of oneself as the subject of one's world-directed experience" (Legrand 290). In that sense, environmental consciousness takes up an ontological dimension, as the phrase comes to suggest that no human consciousness can ever be non-environmental, that is, unrelated to and disconnected from the environment that nourishes it. As "self-perception is necessarily coupled with world-perception" (Legrand 296), being eco-conscious amounts to being *ego*-conscious, and the exploration of an environmental consciousness in a literary work is primarily about studying the different ways in which consciousness arises and the subsequent ecological discourse those forms of consciousness may lead to. In fact, consciousness is not limited to human characters, in Hardy and Lawrence, but extends to the environment itself, thus invoking the notion of Anima Mundi, defined by ecopsychologists as "the psyche of the Earth herself that has been nurturing life in the cosmos for billions of years" (Roszak 16). The annihilation of the boundary between human psyche and the psyche of the world might actually constitute the first step towards acquiring an environmental consciousness, as we understand it today. In *Ecopsychology, Phenomenology, and the Environment*, Vakoch and Castrillon contend that "it is only when intimacy to something is felt palpably as no separation that its essential connection with care becomes evident" (Puhakka 11). The objective of this chapter is therefore to demonstrate how Hardy's and Lawrence's respective works on consciousness in their novels are part of a greater scheme aimed at fostering a very modern, caring environmental consciousness in their readers.

1. Environmental Consciousness as Consciousness of One's Place in the Environment

Before delving into Hardy's and Lawrence's various representations of consciousness in their novels, I suggest that we focus on the elemental issue of the place of human beings within the broader ecology of living beings – a reflection which, I argue, must be at the origin of any emergent environmental consciousness. Among the four elements constituting Lawrence Buell's checklist for an "environmentally oriented work", three of them serve a common objective, that of participating in the decentring process of Man. Indeed, Buell asserts that, in any text that is to be considered as green writing, "the human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest; human accountability to the environment is part of the text's ethical orientation; some sense of the environment as a process rather than a constant or a given is at least implicit in the text" (Buell 7-8). It might be surprising to note that Buell makes the human and human behaviour in general the starting point of environmental writing, while, in the meantime, relocating human lives in the midst of every other non-human ones, and depriving them of their exceptionality. In dismissing the superiority of humans over nature, Buell implicitly makes an interdependent relationship between humanity and the world a prerequisite both of green writing and of the emergence of any human consciousness. To ecopsychologist Andy Fisher, "the self exists to the extent that we respond to and maintain our own process of felt interaction with the world" (Fisher 75) – in other words, no being can be conscious if he or she is not conscious *of* the world in which he or she is being emplaced. It is precisely this decentring process, coupled with a representation of human consciousness as stemming from nature, that lays the foundations of Hardy and Lawrence's multi-layered concept of environmental consciousness. In his *Study of Thomas Hardy*, Lawrence uses Darwin's own image of the tree of life,[2] as he declares that "all is one like a tree, though I am no more than the tiniest cell in the tree" (Lawrence, *Study* 35). Such a representation of Man as unimportant and infinitesimal is conveyed through imagery in the author's fiction, and in particular through the description of human characters located in sublime scenery. The most striking example of such scenic descriptions can be found in *Women in Love*, in the chapter "Snow" that focuses on the characters' experience of life in the mountains. As Lawrence's characters become conscious of their snowy surroundings, they are immediately compelled to reassess their place within these surroundings. So as to allow readers to visualise the scene, the narrator explains: "They were in the heart of the mountains. From high above, on either side, swept down the white fold of snow, so that one seemed small and tiny in a valley of pure

[2] In *On the Origins of Species*, Darwin writes: "The affinities of all the beings of the same class have sometimes been represented by a great tree. I believe this simile largely speaks the truth" (Darwin 147).

concrete heaven, all strangely radiant and changeless and silent" (Lawrence, *WL* 398). Beyond the use of reductive adjectives such as "small" and "tiny", the decentring process at work in this passage is further emphasised by the distant and hovering point of view of the narrator who seems to be observing the scene from above, high up in the air. The same point of view is adopted in *Sons and Lovers*, this time through a focalisation on Paul who is observing Clara from the sand-hills, as she is bathing in the sea:

> She was a rich, white body moving with heavy grace across the foreshore. He, on the sand-hills, watched the great, pale coast envelop her. She grew smaller, lost in proportion, seemed only like a large white bird toiling forward.
>
> "Not much more than a big white pebble on the beach – not much more than a clot of foam being blown and rolled over the sand," he said to himself. She seemed to move very slowly across the vast, sounding shore. As he watched, he lost her. She was dazzled out of sight by the sunshine. Again he saw her, the merest white speck moving against the white sea-edge. (Lawrence, *SL* 402)

This passage is pervaded with negative comparisons underlining the insignificance and un-exceptionality of Clara, while reminding the readers of her close affinities and similarities with her natural environment. As the scene gradually unfolds and Paul's perception of his lover is impeded by his own environment, Clara becomes smaller and smaller, from being similar to "a large white bird" to being nothing more than "the merest white speck". Here, Paul is observing the scene from a distant point of view, quite similar to that of the narrator in *Women in Love*. More than a mere device allowing readers to get an overall view of the scene and picture it as a painting in their minds, I argue that this choice of point of view serves an ecological function, in that it performs an immediate replacing of Man within the rest of nature. This argument is actually supported by studies in cognitive science that have explored the effects of different types of spatial descriptions on the readers. In their article entitled "Moving Through Imagined Space: Mentally Stimulating Locomotion during Spatial Description Reading" (2010), Tad T. Brunyé, Caroline R. Mahoney and Holly A. Taylor set out to explain the difference between two modes of spatial description: survey descriptions which "take an aerial overview perspective and describe an environment's overall layout," and route descriptions which "take a ground-level perspective, suitable for describing paths and turns towards a destination" (Brunyé et al., 110). In light of these definitions and of my own analysis of the two extracts quoted above, it becomes clear that Lawrence chooses to write survey descriptions rather than

route descriptions as part of his strategy aiming at fostering an environmental consciousness in his readers. Indeed, according to the cognitive scientists, those two types of description imply different ways of seeing the world and of situating oneself in one's environment. They explain such a dichotomy as follows:

> Route descriptions are a verbal analogue to navigation and adopt an *egocentric* perspective meaning that a reader is guided on an imaginary first-person tour through the environment and all spatial information is referenced to their dynamic position. (…)
>
> Survey descriptions are more like verbal analogues to maps, as they communicate spatial information from an (…) *allocentric* perspective. (Brunyé et al., 111, my emphasis)

It is precisely this allocentric perspective that is inherently ecological, in that it allows the reader to give free rein to his or her own intentional consciousness, through an outward rather than an inward movement. First and foremost, an environmental consciousness is indeed a consciousness open to its environment, which makes route descriptions and their egocentric perspective inappropriate for the emergence of any ecological discourse in a work of fiction. Decades before such a theory was put forward by cognitive scientists, Hardy seems to have been aware of the ecological implications of his choice of descriptive mode, and his own specific type of survey descriptions has most likely constituted an inspiration for Lawrence. Indeed, any reader of Hardy would be familiar with his very cinematic way of sketching a scene, relying on his choice of a narrator who embodies a distant observer in the act of spying on the characters from afar, or even from above. In *The Return of the Native*, a particular chapter illustrates such a narrative strategy, both in its title – "The Figure Against the Sky" – and in its enigmatic and gradual unveiling of the character of Eustacia. Through the eyes of the narrator, the reader is able to observe the young lady, from up a hill, as she is unheedingly wandering in the heath:

> Nobody was visible; but ever and anon a whitish something moved above the bank from behind, and vanished again. This was a small human hand, in the act of lifting pieces of fuel into the fire, but for all that could be seen the hand, like that which troubled Belshazzar, was there alone. Occasionally an ember rolled off the bank, and dropped with a hiss into the pool. (Hardy,*TRN* 59)

This extract is one example among many of Hardy's allocentric perspective in his descriptions, which allows his readers to get an overall view of the scene, but also participates in depriving

human characters of any exceptional status in the novel. "Nobody was visible" does not actually mean that there was no human presence on the scene, but rather that this presence might not have been big or significant enough for it to be noticed. As is the case in Lawrence, who himself most likely drew his inspiration from Hardy, the use of survey description in *The Return of the Native* serves to perform a decentring of Man, whether it be fostered by the distant perspective of an external and omniscient narrator, or by the equally remote point of view of a character in the story. For its focus on the distant observation of a female character and its subsequent comment on the insignificance of humanity, the following extract may very well be identified as the source for Lawrence's description of Clara in *Sons and Lovers*, quoted above:

> This was the end of their talk, and Eustacia left him. Clym watched her as she retired towards the sun. The luminous rays wrapped her up with her increasing distance, and the rustle of her dress over the sprouting sedge and grass died away. As he watched, the dead flat of the scenery overpowered him, though he was fully alive to the beauty of that untarnished early summer green which was worn for the nonce by the poorest blade. There was something in its oppressive horizontality which too much reminded him of the arena of life; it gave him a sense of bare equality with, and no superiority to, a single living thing under the sun. (Hardy, *TRN* 205-206)

As Clym is watching Eustacia's figure receding towards the sun, his consciousness is indeed wide open – turned both towards a woman whose charms leave him powerless, and towards a natural world which suddenly humbles him. The ternary rhythm used in the last sentence of the paragraph serves to emphasise the clause that is automatically placed in between commas and that conveys the idea of a dismissed human exception. I suggest that the general allocentric perspective of Hardy's narrator, whether conveyed through an omniscient or internal focalisation, is part of a broader ecological discourse that pervades his 1878 novel and that proposes to take up the challenge of telling tragic and important human stories while minimising the very importance of humanity itself.[3] The title of the novel's second chapter – "Humanity Appears upon the Scene, Hand in Hand with Trouble" – works as a reminder for the reader, from the very beginning of the narrative, that the non-human world, rather than humanity,

[3] This argument is further reinforced by James G. Gibson's study entitled *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* in which he defines his concept of ecological optics as follows: "The central concept of ecological optics is the ambient optic array at a point of observation. To be an array means to have an arrangement, and to be ambient at a point means to surround a position in the environment that could be occupied by an observer. (…) One sees the environment not with the eyes but with the eyes-in-the-head-on-the-body-resting-on-the-ground" (Gibson 58; 195).

constitutes the starting point of the novel, and that the tragic is indeed to be found in the human rather than in the non-human. Hardy's and Lawrence's constant reminders of the unimportance of humans within narratives dedicated to the exploration of what it means to be human may sound rather paradoxical. How are we, readers, to reconcile a search for ontological answers with the emergence of an environmental consciousness?

As a consequence of the decentring of Man in their novels, Hardy and Lawrence naturally grant much importance to the settings in which they wish their characters to evolve. The challenge they are faced with, however, lies in the very human point of view they, as authors, are inevitably writing from when they set up the backgrounds of their stories. How can writers themselves achieve an environmental consciousness that would enable them to write nature as it is?[4] Readers of Hardy may actually argue – and some, like John MacNeill Miller[5], have argued – that the human perspective is quite omnipresent in the descriptions of landscapes in his novels, and that the natural setting is in fact repeatedly portrayed in reference to human (physical and mental) traits. In *The Return of the Native* or in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the hills are nothing but friendly faces, from Tess's point of view, or from the point of view of an unknown voice Eustacia is overhearing:

> Once it [the voice] surprised her notions by remarking upon the friendliness and geniality written in the faces of the hills around (Hardy, *TRN* 116).
>
> Every contour of the surrounding hills was as personal to her as that of her relatives' faces. (Hardy, *Tess* 37)

The reference to a face, the qualification of the hills as friendly or even their being compared to actual human relatives – all those elements concur to make those two quotes striking examples of an anthropomorphic vision of nature.[6] Yet, the imagery of "visage and surface" is one that can be found in extensive use in Charles Darwin's work, of which Hardy was a faithful admirer. In *Darwin's Plot*, Gillian Beer explains how Darwin himself "expressed deep emotional and intellectual problems through the struggle to control anthropomorphism 'in the face of nature'", and that the reference to faces appeared to him to be one appropriate solution to the dangers of anthropomorphic description (Beer 232). According to Darwin, Beer writes,

[4] It is interesting to note that this approach is very similar to the phenomenological objective of going back to the things themselves.
[5] I will develop further John MacNeill Miller's point of view later on in this chapter.
[6] Hardy himself admitted that "in spite of [himself], [he] could not help noticing countenances and tempers in objects of scenery, eg. trees, hills, houses" (Extract from Hardy's journal dating from February 10th 1897, quoted in Florence Emily Hardy 293).

"visage and surface, 'physiognomy', elide the distinctions between man and the natural world" (Beer 232). Seen in such a light, Hardy's use of the face imagery to describe landscapes, and more specifically, to illustrate the view his characters have of those landscapes, might very well be considered as a use of anthropomorphism in service of a broader ecological discourse. As opposed to those accusing Hardy "of displaying excessive humanity toward inanimate objects" (Satoshi 897), I agree with Beer who contends that Hardy uses such form of anthropomorphism which "paradoxically denies human centrality and gives the human a fugitive and secondary role in the system of reference but not in his system of value" (Beer 235). Using human-related terms to describe non-human environments or beings is, I argue, nothing but the author's acknowledgement of the utter impossibility for him to grasp what those landscapes or non-human beings are *for themselves*, and yet the persistent desire to achieve an environmental consciousness in which human and non-human experiences could join together. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, it is precisely because "the nameless birds came quite near to Tess and Marian" and yet "brought no account" of what they have seen and experienced (Hardy, *Tess* 288), that the narrator can only imagine their subjective experiences of the world "in humanly understandable terms" (Bonica 849). Then, as Tess hears a bird sing in the early morning, an anthropomorphic description of the bird allows for their respective consciousness to meet, and for their two solitary experiences to join in one common frame of reference: "On the morning appointed for her departure Tess was awake before dawn – at the marginal minute of the dark when the grove is still mute, save for one prophetic bird who sings with a clear-voiced conviction that he at least knows the correct time of the day, the rest preserving silence as if equally convinced that he is mistaken" (Hardy, *Tess* 49). Here, the use of John Ruskin's concept of pathetic fallacy, defined as "the projection of human emotions onto phenomena in the natural world" (Lodge 85), performs an anthropomorphic representation of the bird which in turn opens up a dialogue between human and non-human characters. If, "for Hardy, characterization is completed personification" (Satoshi 901), then the specific use of what I will call phenomenological anthropomorphism becomes a device allowing the author to grant a character status to inanimate beings and natural surroundings,[7] thus proceeding to further decentre the place of Man within his narratives. While Hardy and Lawrence share the same ultimate goal of making humanity unexceptional in their fiction, Lawrence seems to go further than a mere decentring process as he tends to devalue the human presence altogether. Indeed, if both Hardy and Lawrence give Man "a secondary role in the system of reference", I find that

[7] More on that issue later in the second part of this chapter.

Lawrence differentiates himself from his senior by attributing a secondary role to humanity "in his system of value" too (Beer 235). In Lawrence, it is not only that "the human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest" (Buell 7), but the human interest is actually understood to be the least legitimate interest. The concluding remarks made by Birkin in *Women in Love* are striking examples of Lawrence's general loss of faith in humankind, as he wrote the novel two years after the end of WWI. To the author, it seems that the "cul de sac" humanity has run into with the Great War now calls for a whole different system of value: "If humanity ran into a cul de sac, and expended itself, the timeless creative mystery would bring forth some other being, finer, more wonderful, some new, more lovely race, to carry on the embodiment of creation. (…) To be man was as nothing compared to the possibilities of the creative mystery" (Lawrence, *WL* 479). Insofar as humanity has failed to demonstrate its worth, then any type of anthropomorphism first appears to Lawrence as unacceptable and, more importantly, quite insulting to the non-humans. Before Birkin gets to pronounce his condemnation of human nature at the end of the novel, his lover Ursula has already voiced the problematic dimension of any attribution of human features to non-human beings. As the young woman and her sister are observing a bird and listening to his chirping, Ursula catches herself in the instinctive process of anthropomorphising the bird and starts to reflect on the implications of such a perspective:

> One day as they were walking along the lane, they saw a robin sitting on the top twig of a bush, singing shrilly. The sisters stood to look at him. An ironical smile flickered on Gudrun's face.
>
> 'Doesn't he feel important?' smiled Gudrun.
>
> 'Doesn't he!' exclaimed Ursula, with a little ironical grimace. 'Isn't he a little Lloyd George of the air!'
>
> 'Isn't he! Little Gorge Lloyd of the air! That's just what they are,' cried Gudrun in delight. Then for days, Ursula saw the persistent, obtrusive birds as stout, short politicians lifting up their voices from the platform, little men who must make themselves heard at any cost.
>
> But even from this there came the revulsion. Some yellow-ammers suddenly shot along the road in front of her. And they looked to her so uncanny and inhuman, like flaring yellow barbs shooting through the air or some weird, living errand, that she said to herself: 'After all, it is impudence to call them Little Lloyd George. They are really unknown to us, they are the unknown forces. It is impudence to look at them as if they

> were the same as human beings. They are of another world. How stupid anthropomorphism is! Gudrun is really impudent, insolent, making herself the measure of everything, making everything come down to human standards. Rupert is quite right, human beings are boring, painting the universe with their own image. (Lawrence, *WL* 263-264)

Through the character of Ursula, Lawrence is drawing his readers' attention to the problematic dimension of anthropomorphic characterisation and is adding a metafictional layer to the passage in implying that his writing takes care of avoiding such pitfalls. Anthropomorphism, in Lawrence, comes across as a bad habit taken up by most humans and that one needs to be aware of, in order to abstain from indulging in. The narrator of *Sons and Lovers*, through a focalisation on Paul, is also commenting upon the anthropocentric perspective with which Miriam is looking at plants and which permeates the young man's own way of perceiving things: "'I like them', he said, 'when their petals go flat back with the sunshine. They seem to be pressing themselves at the sun.' And then the celandines ever after drew her with a little spell. Anthropomorphic as she was, she stimulated him into appreciating things thus, and then they lived for her" (Lawrence, *SL* 179). The very issue at the root of anthropomorphism is underlined by Paul's comment on the potential result of such a perspective, that is, having the non-human live *for* the human. Indeed, perceiving nature as living for oneself seems very much antithetical with the phenomenological urge of going back to the things themselves. Yet, in *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Phenomenology*, David R. Cerbone reminds us that "rather than introspection, understood as a special form of inner observation, for Husserl, phenomenology instead proceeds by means of reflection" (Cerbone 8). Reflection, by definition, implies oneself and the frame of reference in which one's self has been built. Contrary to what Lawrence seems to have believed, including the human self in the description of the non-human world is in fact in keeping with a vision of ecology which does not exclude the human, but which advocates for a balanced relationship between the human and the non-human worlds. Using phenomenology in the service of environmental studies, Jeff Beyer has demonstrated that an "ecocentric awareness" is not actually incompatible with the use of anthropomorphism in the description of one's perception process. He writes: "Ecocentric awareness is borne of experiences of intimate relating with the rest of nature. It is an experienced identification which necessarily involves deep compassion and care for all of nature (…), the same kinds of feelings and inclinations we hope to have for our loved ones" (Beyer 131). Here, the idea of "identification" is key to understanding how anthropomorphism may be used in an

environmentally-oriented text. In *Sons and Lovers*, Miriam and Paul's anthropomorphic perception of the celandines does allow them to be moved, and therefore to feel concerned about their fate. Thus, any form of environmental consciousness seems to arise in the very movement from the human to the non-human, rather than in the rejection of humanity for the benefits of non-humans. For such environmental consciousness to emerge, however, the process of identification and reflection should be two-fold, which would imply a perception of the human world from the perspective of the non-human in turn. If Hardy and Lawrence did not conceive and use anthropomorphism in the same way, they did agree on the importance of representing humans and nature on an equal footing, so that it makes identification possible.[8] Whether it be in their rendering of perception, or in their way of describing the setting of their novels, Hardy and Lawrence place the notion of reciprocity at the centre of their ecological thinking. In that sense, anthropomorphism cannot be the (only) answer and must be accompanied with its opposite that I propose to call "ecomorphism."[9]

In "Faciality and Sensation in Hardy's *The Return of the Native*", William A. Cohen notes that "whatever its sensory modality, landscape description in Hardy relies on a homology with the human body", while adding that "processes of human perception and intention, in turn, become organic features of the natural world" (Cohen 445). So as to perform the connection between human consciousness and the organic world, I argue that Hardy uses a type of reversed anthropomorphism which allows him to reconsider the traditional frame of reference entirely. From that perspective, not only is humanity equal to nature, but nature pervades humanity to the point that human characters can be better described in natural terms. Looking natural takes up a new meaning in Hardy's work as it is directly linked to a genuine desire to get closer to nature, not only by looking *at* it but by looking *like* it. In his study of the relationship between people and the places they inhabit, Casey explains that it is actually common for humans to "come to share features with the local landscape" (Casey *Getting Back into Place* 305), especially when that landscape is rural rather than urban. A shift in perspective consequently

[8] It is worth noting that despite his apparent condemnation of anthropomorphism in his fiction, Lawrence did use anthropomorphic devices in his own personal writing, as a way to value the non-human experience over the human, and to better connect with non-humans. An example of such device can be found in a letter the author wrote to Lady Ottoline Morrell, on May 14th 1915: "I watch, in the morning when I wake up, a thrush on the wall outside the window – not a thrush, a blackbird – and he sings, opening his beak. It is a strange thing to watch him singing, opening his beak and giving out his calls and warblings, then remaining silent. He looks so remote, so buried in primeval silence, standing there on the wall, and bethinking himself, then opening his beak to make the strange, strong sounds. He seems as if his singing were a sort of talking to himself, or of thinking aloud his strongest thoughts. I wish I was a blackbird, like him, I hate men" (Lawrence, *Letters* 100).

[9] If the word ecomorphism has not been officially coined and defined as yet, it has been recently used in evolution studies, as a reference to a species' adaptation to its environment. Here, I propose to explore the concept of ecomorphism within the scope of ecocritical studies.

happens when we go from anthropomorphism to "ecomorphism" as the tenor of the simile is not the environment anymore but the human character, compared in turn to his natural environment. This use of ecomorphism is probably best exemplified in *The Return of the Native*, in which all characters are indiscriminately portrayed, at one point or another, through the prism of the non-human, so as to better convey their physical and moral qualities as human beings. As soon as "Humanity appears upon the scene" in chapter II, the narrator takes care to indicate to the reader that those characters are to be understood in relation with their natural surroundings, just as those natural surroundings should be understood in relation with their human dwellers, thus creating a reciprocal dynamic that prevents the emergence of any anthropocentric discourse in the novel. The first human character to be introduced is an old man walking along the road who will not be a significant character in the story but who is nevertheless said to be "white-headed as a mountain, bowed in the shoulders, and faded in general aspect" (Hardy, *TRN* 13). As he moves forward, the old man then meets the second character to be introduced into the story, who happens to be the character most connected to his environment – Diggory Venn, the reddleman.[10] In accordance with the ecomorphist approach, Venn is described in such a way that he seems to belong to the animal realm rather than to the human species:

> The old man knew the meaning of this. The traveller with the cart was a reddleman—a person whose vocation it was to supply farmers with redding for their sheep. He was one of a class rapidly becoming extinct in Wessex, filling at present in the rural world the place which, during the last century, the dodo occupied in the world of animals. He is a curious, interesting, and nearly perished link between obsolete forms of life and those which generally prevail. (…)
>
> He was young, and his face, if not exactly handsome, approached so near to handsome that nobody would have contradicted an assertion that it really was so in its natural colour. His eye, which glared so strangely through his stain, was in itself attractive—keen as that of a bird of prey, and blue as autumn mist. (Hardy, *TRN* 13-14)

In this passage, Venn is being described as a unique endangered species, halfway between the human and the non-human, and whose attractiveness lies in his resemblance to the natural world. Indeed, the association of his eyes to "a bird of prey" and to "autumn mist" performs a

[10] The intricate relationship between the reddleman and his natural surroundings will be dealt with in chapter seven of the present work.

reversal of the anthropomorphist perspective Hardy was so often condemned for, and indicates to the reader, from the onset of the novel, that both character and landscape descriptions will work beyond the dichotomy of the human and the non-human. Regardless of their own relationships to their surroundings, Hardy's characters are systematically brought back to their original conditions as living beings in the midst of nature. Eustacia herself, despite her aversion towards the heath and her longing to move to the city, is still described from an environmental point of view by the narrator:

> To see her hair was to fancy that a whole winter did not contain darkness enough to form its shadow. It closed over her forehead like nightfall extinguishing the western glow. (Hardy, *TRN* 68)
>
> Eustacia once more lifted her deep stormy eyes to the moonlight, and, sighing that tragic sigh of hers which was so much like a shudder, entered the shadow of the roof. (Hardy, *TRN* 146)

Whether it be through direct comparisons to nature, through imageries, or through the figurative use of adjectives such as "stormy", the non-human pervades the descriptions of human characters, so as to make anthropomorphism and ecomorphism interchangeable manners of seeing the world, rather than opposite perspectives. As much as Eustacia would want to keep her environment at a distance, as an inhabitant of the heath, her character — from her physical appearance to her mental features — cannot be fathomed outside of the natural scope of Egdon Heath. Still in the chapter entitled "The Maiden", Hardy uses a floral extended metaphor in order to further stress this inextricable link between humans and their non-human counterparts: "Her presence brought memories of Bourbon roses […]; her moods recalled lotus-eaters (…); her motions, the ebb and flow of the sea; her voice, the viola (…)" (Hardy, *TRN* 69). Looking in the natural mirror, each of Hardy's characters seems to be able to find his or her alter-*eco,* which ultimately has the effect of putting the environment itself in the foreground. If Lawrence argues against the use of anthropomorphism in his fiction, he nevertheless seems to concur with Hardy in valuing the importance of ecomorphic description, without questioning the ethical implications of attributing non-human features to human characters. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Lawrence uses ecomorphism in a crucial scene portraying Connie Chatterley observing herself in the mirror for the first time after months of neglecting her body. In this scene, the choice of words is so uncommon for the designation of a human character that the reader might very well wonder whether a human or a non-human entity is actually being described:

> Still she thought the most beautiful part of her was the long-sloping fall of the haunches, from the socket of the back, and the slumberous round stillness of the buttocks. Like hillocks of sand, the Arabs say, soft and downward-slipping with a long slope. Here the life still lingered, hoping. – But here too she was thinner, and going unripe, astringent.
>
> But the front of her body made her miserable. It was already beginning to slacken with a slack sort of thinness, almost withered, going old before it had ever really lived. (Lawrence, *LCL* 71)

Here, the comparison of Connie's body to an actual landscape is further reinforced by the peculiar use of adjectives associated with fruits or vegetables ("unripe; withered"), thus relocating the young woman's experience into the universal life experience of plant life. Despite their obvious metaphorical meanings, those words are crucial for Lawrence to keep the environment in his readers' consciousnesses at all times and to let his protagonist's existence mingle with the rest of nature. In *Green Modernism*, Jeffrey Mathes McCarthy underlines how "Connie's personal journey is a journey toward a new ontological consciousness, and that revolutionary consciousness develops apace with her deepening relation to the natural world" (McCarthy 133). Through this argument, McCarthy shows how ontological consciousness is closely related to environmental consciousness, and how the emergence of a healthy human consciousness ultimately relies upon a healthy mode of relating to the natural world. "*Lady Chatterley's Lover* is about being, not about the view", McCarthy asserts (McCarthy 134), making ontological studies central to Lawrence's environmental commitment. In Lawrence and Hardy, "the view" – that is, the natural setting – is indeed integrated into the characters' very beings through ecomorphism: the moon can be visible in one's eyes and sand hills can be perceived in the curves of one's buttocks. Whether the authors use anthropomorphism, ecomorphism, or both perspectives, the mirroring effect that results from those descriptive strategies automatically serve an ecological argument according to which the fates of humans and non-humans are interconnected. In his collection of essays entitled *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (1972), anthropologist Gregory Bateson remarks how "we are learning by bitter experience that the organism which destroys its environment destroys itself" (Bateson 503). Hardy and Lawrence, through their works of fiction, participate in raising awareness of the interdependence between humans and environment and encourage readers to include the environment within "the Darwinian unit of survival" (Bateson 503). To Bateson, the exploration of consciousness is at the core of this ecological revolution, since "*the unit of evolutionary*

survival turns out to be identical with the unit of mind" (Bateson 503, italics in the original). Bateson's analogy of the human mind to define the dynamics of the living world seems to have stemmed from the same belief that had led Hardy and Lawrence to use anthropomorphism and/or ecomorphism in their novels:

> Formerly we thought of a hierarchy of taxa—individual, family line, subspecies, species, etc.—as units of survival. We now see a different hierarchy of units—gene-in-organism, organism-in-environment, ecosystem, etc. Ecology, in the widest sense, turns out to be the study of the interaction and survival of ideas and programs (i.e., differences, complexes of differences, etc.) in circuits. (Bateson 5003)

Interconnections rather than partitions are what both mind and life are made of, thus leading Hardy and Lawrence to explore the "interaction and survival of ideas and programs" that are present in the environment and in the human mind alike.

2. Environmental Consciousness as Environment endowed with Consciousness

> If you put God outside and set him vis-à-vis his creation and if you have the idea that you are created in his image, you will logically and naturally see yourself as outside and against the things around you. *And as you arrogate all mind to yourself, you will see the world around you as mindless and therefore not entitled to moral or ethical consideration*. The environment will seem to be yours to exploit. Your survival unit will be you and your folks or conspecifics against the environment of other social units, other races and the brutes and vegetables. (Bateson 468, my emphasis)

In this passage, Bateson places the issue of consciousness at the centre of the ecological thought as he underlines the ethical implications of attributing (or not) a consciousness to the natural world. Developing an environmental consciousness, he suggests, requires from us a willingness to endow our environment with a consciousness – that is, to consider that nature can, just like humans, think, feel, or act. Years later, ecopsychologists have taken up this argument and supported it with studies on empathy, contending that "it is difficult, if not impossible, to empathize with an inert object" (Abram, *Becoming Animal* 44). Applied to literature and works of fiction, such an argument suggests that the creation of active, rather than passive, settings is a prerequisite for any novel to be categorised as green writing. In his essay on "Art and

Morality", Lawrence expresses his concerns about Man's blatant inability to see the big picture, that is, to take a step back and see the natural world for what it is, rather than for what it is from the points of view of the humans inhabiting it:

> This is the habit we have formed: of visualising everything. Each man to himself is a picture. That is, he is a complete little objective reality, complete in himself, existing in himself, existing by himself, absolutely, in the middle of the picture. All the rest is just setting, background. To every man, to every woman, the universe is just a setting to the absolute little picture of himself, herself. (Lawrence, *Study* 165)

If any novel indeed needs a background, a setting, I suggest that Hardy and Lawrence take care of creating natural backdrops to their stories which are not mere backdrops, but which fulfil a function that goes beyond providing a context and a stage for the unfolding of the characters' lives. Landscape description, in Lawrence, testifies to the author's urge to fight the human habit he advocates against in his essay and to make backgrounds actually meaningful. First, in *Women in Love*, landscapes do not only serve the function of backdrops but often take up symbolical dimensions, appearing as "a series of signposts or points of reference, in a shifting, mobile world of physical and psychological change" (Alcorn 95-96). Thus, not only does Lawrence work on making his settings meaningful, but he also works on creating dynamic atmospheres that favour the emergence of an environmental psyche. To Alcorn, it is this turn "from pictures to music" that leads Lawrence, by the end of his career, to replace landscapes with "placescapes" in his novels, that is with a type of setting in which "body and landscape collude" and which often appears "whenever [human characters] venture out beyond the narrow confines of their familiar domiciles and neighborhoods" (Casey *Getting Back into Place* 25). This is precisely what happens in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, when Connie is travelling from England to Italy and gets a chance to admire views of the Dolomites. Rather than being in awe of the beautiful scenery passing before her eyes, Connie finds herself unable to look at the landscape as one would look at a painting, admiring its beautiful fixity. Instead, she rejects the very notion of landscape and the anthropocentric perspective that seems to be associated with it:

> And the trip was really quite nice. Only Connie kept saying to herself: Why don't I really care? Why am I never thrilled? How awful, that I don't really care about landscape anymore! But I don't. It's rather awful. I'm like Saint Bernard, who could sail down the Lake of Lucerne without ever noticing that there were even mountains and

green water. I just don't care for landscape any more. Why should one stare at it? Why should one? I refuse to.

Poor mountains! Poor landscape! it all had to be squeezed and squeezed and squeezed again, to provide a thrill, to provide enjoyment. (Lawrence, *LCL* 255)

It is no coincidence that this passage can be found in the last part of the novel, after Connie was able to reconnect to her material surroundings, along with her material self. Now that she considers herself as part of nature, it becomes impossible for her to look at it from an external point of view and to be amazed at what she is in fact part of. Interestingly enough, not caring about landscape anymore turns out to be a very ecological change of perspective that ultimately leads one to care *more* about the Earth. In shifting her point of view, "Connie shows that Wragby Wood does not need her to interpret its being", or that the Dolomite Mountains do not need her admiring eyes to be majestic (McCarthy 136). From a phenomenological standpoint, Connie's approach to scenery amounts to going back to the things themselves, that is, to acknowledging that humans are indeed dispensable. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty writes: "Indeed the natural world presents itself as existing in itself over and above its existence for me; the act of transcendence whereby the subject is thrown open to the world runs away with itself and we find ourselves in the presence of a nature which has no need to be perceived in order to exist" (Merleau-Ponty 178). In Lawrence and Hardy, the natural world represented in the settings of their stories seems indeed to exist in and of itself, as a dynamic force that has its own tale to tell. In *Study of Thomas Hardy*, Lawrence implicitly recognises that he is indebted to his senior for reinventing ways to build backdrops of fictional narratives, as he declares: "This is a constant revelation in Hardy's novels: that there exists a great background, vital and vivid, which matters more than the people who move upon it" (Lawrence, *Study* 28). If many critics have supported Lawrence's vision of Hardy's landscapes, other critics, like John McNeill Miller, have asserted quite the opposite, condemning Hardy for portraying "the nonhuman environment in terms of a single monolithic nature – a monstrous, unfeeling aggregate that overwhelms and ultimately extinguishes the human spirit" (Miller 150). In fact, Hardy's contemporary Joseph Conrad himself declared in 1922 to the Japanese Professor Tadaichi Hidaka that the difference between his work and Hardy's lied mainly in their representation of nature: "In facing nature, Mr Hardy faces static nature, whereas I face dynamic, active nature, so we are naturally different" (Epstein 1).[11] In that sense, critic John

[11] The conversation between Hidaka and Conrad was quoted by Epstein, from Yoko Okuda's translation which can be found in her article "East Meets West", *The Conradian* 23:2 (Autumn 1998, 73-87).

McNeill Miller evidently concurs with Conrad in arguing that Hardy's landscapes are inert, rather than vivid, as Lawrence contends. In reading the first words of Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, however, Conrad and McNeill's argument seems immediately to shatter, as the novel opens on a vision of Egdon Heath which resembles much more a living painting than a still life: "The face of the earth by its mere complexion added half-an-hour to eve; it could in like manner retard the dawn, sadden noon, anticipate the frowning of storms scarcely generated, and intensify the opacity of a moonless midnight to a cause of shaking and dread" (Hardy, *TRN* 9). Here, the accumulation of dynamic verbs such as "to add, to retard, to anticipate", or "to intensify" leaves no doubt as to the liveliness of the heath, while suggesting that nature itself may have an agency of its own. In *The Return of the Native*, the heath is indeed an active presence, which only becomes threatening to human lives when those lives are lived in opposition or separation from it. The heath's "watchful intentness" in the night as it "appeared to awake and listen" may indeed sound quite menacing, as McNeill has suggested, but I argue that the agency of nature is not feared by those who can interpret its meaning properly. Eustacia is among those characters, in *The Return of the Native*, who feel threatened by the heath. In the chapter entitled "Queen of Night" (Book First), the narrator explains such a phenomenon by underlining the communicative abilities of the natural world: "To dwell on a heath without studying its meanings was like wedding a foreigner without learning its tongue. The subtle beauties of the heath were lost to Eustacia; she only caught its vapours" (Hardy, *TRN* 73). In this passage, the vision of Hardy's backgrounds as both inert and malevolent is debunked by the narrator's explanation of Eustacia's fears of the heath, which results in a shift of perspective: the heath is indeed active and ready to interact, as long as characters (and readers) are willing to actually see it, and listen to it. In that sense, Hardy does create a new type of setting that, to Jessica Martell, constitutes the emergence of a mature and "complex pastoralism", "a world of 'multiple life forms in interactions and interrelations' that revises the critical assumption that the pastoral must understand nature as entirely separate from human infrastructure in order to function" (Martell 71-72). Far from being separate from the lives and fates of the characters, Hardy's vivid settings, just as Lawrence's ones, are indeed promoted to the ranks of characters in the story, thus having an equally important role in the unfolding of the plot.

As mentioned in chapter one of the present study, Hardy entitled his new 1912 edition of the Wessex Novels, "Novels of Character and Environment" (Plotz 123). Through this title, chosen years after the writing of the novels, Hardy wishes to indicate to his readers, prior to their reading of his work, that the plots of his stories revolve as much on human characters than

on the environment they are inhabiting. In *The Nature Novel from Hardy to Lawrence*, Alcorn actually suggests that Hardy's influence (and that of Darwin before him) is at the origin of the "new importance" given to landscape in the English fiction of the early twentieth-century, and more specifically, of the "new manner in which landscape enters the art of story-telling" (Alcorn 8-9). "No longer a backdrop", Alcorn argues that landscape in Hardy becomes, "to use Aldous Huxley's phrase about Lawrence, a 'principal personage' whose presence is felt in terms of a new sensuous grasp of space" (Alcorn 9). Because Hardy's landscapes are based on actual places he is familiar with but are still introduced as fictional, one can infer that they have been created by the author through the same process used to create human characters: drawing from features of people one knows but making sure that the characters created remain unique and unidentifiable. In the preface of the 1895 edition of *The Return of the Native*, Hardy gives some details about the heteroclite dimension of the partly-fictional Egdon Heath:[12]

> Under the general name of 'Egdon Heath', which has been given to the sombre scene of the story, are united or typified heaths of various real names, to the number of at least a dozen; these being virtually one in character and aspect, though their original unity, or partial unity, is now somewhat disguised by intrusive strips and slices brought under the plough with varying degrees of success, or planted to woodland. (Hardy, *TRN* 429)

As described by Hardy in this preface, the heath becomes a very complex character with different facets that the reader is invited to discover, as he or she would discover the different aspects of a human character's personality. Then, in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, in place of a composite but unified character, the reader is introduced to very different settings which can be considered as different characters in the story, each constituting an alter-*eco* for the different versions of Tess throughout her life journey. In his study entitled *Thomas Hardy: Landscapes of the Mind* (1979), Andrew Enstice analyses the landscapes of Hardy's 1891 novel and concludes that "each setting becomes an arena, its peculiar character contrasted with the others, in which Tess acts out a part of her life" (Enstice 116).[13] As sorts of mirrors for Tess's own fluctuating identity, Hardy's landscapes are indeed granted a character status that leads the

[12] Here, Hardy's preface again serves to debunk McNeill's argument previously quoted, which condemnedthe author for his representation of a "single monolithic nature" (McNeill 150).
[13] In an Appendix, Tim Dolin (ed.) maps out the setting of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, mentioning seven different places corresponding to seven different stages in Tess's life: Blackmore Vale, Tantridge Cross, Talbothays, Chalk Newton, Emminster, Sandbourne, Melchester/Stonehenge (Hardy, *Tess* 468).

narrator to refer to them as he would refer to human characters. In chapter II of Phase the First, for instance, the narrator uses strategic terms to introduce the Vale of Blackmore, that are traditionally used to refer to human characters or that are purposely double-entendres. He writes: "It is a vale whose acquaintance is best made by viewing it from the summits of the hills that surround it – except perhaps during the droughts of the summer. An unguided ramble into its recesses in bad weather is apt to engender dissatisfaction with its narrow, tortuous, and miry ways" (Hardy, *Tess* 12). In Hardy, readers do not picture backdrops to the stories they read but they make the acquaintance of natural places as one would get acquainted with a human character and they learn how to navigate this space so as to have a peaceful interaction with it – literally learning its ways. Just as any proper character in any narrative, Hardy's settings are an integral part of the plot and have an active role to play in the unfolding of events. As touched upon in chapter one, natural phenomena have a direct impact on the human characters' mental or physical experiences of the world, and consequently influence their decision-making power. Still in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, as Angel goes for a walk, "the outdoor air apparently [takes] away from him all tendency to act on impulse", and Tess's physical appearance is complimented by Marian who suggests that the winter weather "rather does it good" (Hardy, *Tess* 231; 289). In *The Return of the Native*, this aspect of Hardy's writing is probably most salient and was naturally condemned by John McNeill as Hardy's "mischaracterization of heathland", going hand in hand with a "misattribution of character status to a landscape" (McNeill 151). From the prism of environmental studies, however, it seems that there is no reason for considering this attribution of character status to a natural space as a "misattribution". Indeed, the last element mentioned by Buell in his checklist for an "environmentally oriented work" is precisely related to Hardy's characterisation strategy. He explains that, in green writing, "the non-human environment [must be] present not merely as a framing device but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history" (Buell 8). In granting a character status to his settings, Hardy is precisely allowing for nature to be actively present in his stories and is opening new possibilities in terms of plot writing, regarding the interactions between human and non-human characters. In *The Return of the Native*, the natural environment seems indeed to be involved in every human action and to have the right to scrutinize, judge, and even condemn, those actions. The relationship between Eustacia and Wildeve, for instance, is evidently disapproved by the heath itself:

> As Eustacia uttered the latter words she retired from the base of the barrow, and Wildeve followed her, so that the reddleman could hear no more.

> He lifted the turves and arose. Their black figures sank and disappeared from against the sky. They were as two horns which the sluggish heath had put forth from its crown, like a mollusc, and had now again drawn in.
>
> The reddleman's walk across the vale, and over into the next where his cart lay, was not sprightly for a slim young fellow of twenty-four. His spirit was perturbed to aching. The breezes that blew around his mouth in that walk carried off upon them the accents of a commination. (Hardy, *TRN* 87)

As Eustacia and Wildeve are disappearing into the night, they appear to be absorbed by an animal-like heath, the outcome of their fates being at the mercy of the heath's judgement. The narrator's use of the word "commination" then reinforces the idea of an all-powerful natural environment which can punish those that it deems sinful or unworthy. This scene in fact foreshadows the two lovers' tragic ending which will again be precipitated by natural forces, namely those of the stream down Shadwater Weir. This passage thus supports Martell's argument according to which Hardy's pastoral demonstrates "how effectively nature can work its way into human histories and narratives" (Martell 72). So as to prove that Hardy's settings are indeed characters in the story, Eithne Enson asserts, in an essay on landscape and gender in the works of various Victorian authors, that "the heath has a body and a personality" which makes it "inescapably gendered" (Henson 146;127). Indeed, to Henson, "the masculinity of the heath is affirmed as it is compared to a listening Titan" (Henson 146)[14]. When considered outside of the prism of gender studies, this argument supports a vision of Hardy's landscapes as characters in his narratives, insofar as the author chooses not only to give them an agenda and a power to act on that agenda, but also to attribute them a gender, the same way he would choose to create a human character as male or female. Hardy's comparison of the heath to a Titan is likely to remind Lawrence's readers of the way the pit is represented in *Sons and Lovers*. In Lawrence's first novel, the pit is indeed omnipresent throughout the novel, while no actual scene takes place in the pit itself (except for the one scene in which Mr Morel gets hurt). The pit becomes a constant presence in the story that may be felt in the air, or visible through the dirt that Paul's father leaves on the kitchen table as he takes his meal after his day of labour. The novel being set in the midst of a mining community, the lives of the characters are inescapably linked with the activity of the pit which can either be cruel to them (by hurting them) or responsible for their wellbeing and their ability to live comfortably. While Paul and

[14] The passage Henson is referring to is the following: "Every night its Titanic form seemed to await something; but it had waited thus, unmoved, during so many centuries, through the crises of so many things, that it could only be imagined to await one last crisis—the final overthrow" (Hardy, *TRN* 10).

his mother are walking in the direction of Miriam's farmhouse, they stop a moment to admire a view of Minton pit, from up the hill. As they do so, the young boy comments on the creature-like quality of the mine:

> "The world is a wonderful place," she said, "and wonderfully beautiful."
>
> "And so's the pit," he said. "Look how it heaps together, like something alive almost—a big creature that you don't know."
>
> "Yes," she said. "Perhaps!"
>
> "And all the trucks standing waiting, like a string of beasts to be fed," he said.
>
> "And very thankful I am they *are* standing," she said, "for that means they'll turn middling time this week." (Lawrence, *WL* 152, emphasis in the original)

In this passage, the interdependence between human lives and the activity of the pit is put forward and supported by a personification of the pit itself, which appears to be a very dynamic and fascinating whole, not unlike a human character who would be created as mysterious, vaguely defined, and yet omnipresent.[15] In the first chapter of this work, an exploration of the dialectic between setting and soul has already allowed to demonstrate how changes in scenery, in Lawrence's fiction, have a direct impact on the characters' moods. Here, I would like to suggest that such a phenomenon may also be explained by the character status that Lawrence wishes to give to his landscapes. Indeed, in *Women in Love*, if the four protagonists seem so much affected by the snowy mountains around them, it might very well be because these mountains are meant to be represented as active participants in the scene and because they can *consciously* make the characters feel in a specific way. Just like the heath in Hardy's Wessex, the snowy landscape in *Women in Love* seems to have the power to absorb the characters into its midst and to make their fates entirely dependent on the whims of nature: "Luckily, there came a day of snow, when they must all stay indoors: otherwise, Birkin said, they would all lose their faculties, and begin to utter themselves in cries and shrieks, like some strange, unknown species of snow-creatures" (Lawrence, *WL* 421). Going out in the snow, to Birkin, is taking the risk to lose one's humanity by letting oneself be drawn into the cold ground, as Wildeve and Eustacia let themselves be swallowed by the heath. A parallel can be easily drawn between Hardy's Eustacia in *The Return of the Native* and Lawrence's Gerald in *Women in Love,* since a doubt remains as to the actual cause of the death of these two characters and as to the natural environment's share of responsibility in those deaths. In both scenes, the two

[15] Such a characterisation of the heath actually reminds one of Hardy's reddleman in *The Return of the Native*, for his mystic quality and its embeddedness in his natural environment (more on that issue in chapter seven).

characters are killed by a fall, but in both scenes, the intentional quality of the fall remains unclear and the narrator seems to suggest that nature might have had a hand in those falls:

> Somebody was going to murder him. He had a great dread of being murdered. But it was a dread which stood outside him, like his own ghost.
>
> Yet why be afraid? It was bound to happen. To be murdered! He looked round in terror at the snow, the rocking, pale, shadowy slopes of the upper world. He was bound to be murdered, he could see it. This was the moment when the death was uplifted, and there was no escape.
>
> Lord Jesus, was it then bound to be—Lord Jesus! He could feel the blow descending, he knew he was murdered. Vaguely wandering forward, his hands lifted as if to feel what would happen, he was waiting for the moment when he would stop, when it would cease. It was not over yet.
>
> He had come to the hollow basin of snow, surrounded by sheer slopes and precipices, out of which rose a track that brought one to the top of the mountain. But he wandered unconsciously, till he slipped and fell down, and as he fell something broke in his soul, and immediately he went to sleep. (Lawrence, *WL* 473-474)
>
> While they both hung thus in hesitation a dull sound became audible above the storm and wind. Its origin was unmistakable – it was the fall of a body into the stream adjoining, apparently at a point near the weir. (Hardy, *TRN* 360)

Both Hardy's and Lawrence's use of the verb "to fall" is no coincidence here. In a footnote on the 1999 Penguin Classics edition of *The Return of the Native*, Tony Slade underlines how Hardy crossed out the word "plunge" in the initial manuscript of the novel to replace it with "fall", which would be "retained in all later editions" (Hardy, *TRN* 425). Such a deliberate choice on Hardy's part indicates that the author had later wanted his readers to imagine the possibility for Eustacia to have been the victim, rather than the initiator, of this fall. The sublimely terrifying description of the weir that frames her death in the text, along with the reference to stormy weather, does indeed suggest that Eustacia might have been killed by a greater natural force. In Gerald's case, the situation is quite similar, since the young man's paranoiac thoughts lead the reader to wonder whether he actually fell, jumped or was pushed into the void by nature's invisible hand. In *The Return of the Native* as in *Women in Love*, landscape appears to some characters to be "conscious, malevolent, purposive in its intense, murderous coldness" (Lawrence, *WL* 407) and can therefore be read as the villain of the stories. Rather than a threat to humanity, however, this all-powerful nature should be interpreted as

Lawrence and Hardy's acknowledgement of their inability, as humans, to fathom the natural world and its unreachable wisdom (Alcorn 4). To David Sweeney, "the intrinsic meanings of Egdon are incomprehensible to Eustacia because she perceives the heath as echoing her own feelings, a voice through which she speaks to herself" (Sweeney 101), while the heath, like any other character in the story, has its own feelings that one should learn to listen to. In several passages of the novel, the narrator takes care to stress how the natural setting is far from being insensible, thus suggesting that any human action performed on those natural grounds may very well result in breaking the heath's consciousness. Like any other human character after a traumatic experience, the heath is resilient, "the ferns and furze-tufts stubbornly reasserting themselves" over ploughed land, and the heath is struggling to live on. In the first chapter of Hardy's novel, entitled "A Face on which Time makes but Little Impression", the narrator introduces a setting that seems to be dealing with very similar issues to those the protagonists of the story are about to face:

> Intensity was more usually reached by way of the solemn than by way of the brilliant, and such a sort of intensity was often arrived at during winter darkness, tempests, and mists. Then Egdon was aroused to reciprocity. The storm was its lover; and the wind was its friend. (…)
>
> It was at present a place perfectly accordant with man's nature – neither ghastly, hateful, nor ugly: neither commonplace, unmeaning, nor tame; but, like man, slighted and enduring; and withal singularly colossal or mysterious in its swarthy monotony. As with some persons who have long lived apart, solitude seemed to look out of its countenance. It had a lonely face, suggesting tragical possibilities. (Hardy, *TRN* 11)

To a keen observer of the heath, willing to recognise its sensibility, the natural world looks immediately less threatening and becomes instead very much vulnerable. More than being endowed with a mere ability to perceive and be aware of the characters walking its grounds, the heath is characterised by its willingness, or more specifically, its *need* to interact with those characters. Insofar as "ecology is the study of connectedness" (Roszack 8), then the representation of a setting that not only offers a ground for human actions to happen but actually calls for interactions and welcomes the characters into its midst is a very ecological way to envision landscapes in fiction. In the end, granting a consciousness to nature is yet another way to engage in the ecological thought which "has to do with warmth and tenderness; hospitality, wonder and love; vulnerability and responsibility (…)" (Morton 77). "The ecological thought is about people", Morton writes. The present study demonstrates the veracity of this beautiful

assertion, only to substantiate it with the following variation: the ecological thought is about people *who keep an open mind*.

3. Environmental Consciousness as Human Consciousness embedded in its Environment

In accordance with the reciprocal dynamic that must be at the core of any ecological approach, the notion of environmental consciousness, in Hardy and Lawrence, is not limited to the idea of a natural environment endowed with a consciousness and therefore with the ability to perceive humans, but actually serves to put forward the co-dependency between human consciousness itself and the natural environment. In her contribution to *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*, Anita Barrows uses a quote by the French Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain to explain the ontological dimension of ecology, arguing that "we awaken to ourselves at the same moment as we awaken to things" (Maritain quoted in Barrows 110). This quote supports the idea of a co-emergence of human consciousness and environmental consciousness, as we understand it today. In other words, so as to become aware of themselves and build their identities, human beings first need to recognise the existence of what is not themselves, thus starting to pay attention to, and ultimately care for, those things. In Hardy's and Lawrence's fiction, the reader tends to become aware of the human characters, that is, to get to know them and their personalities, through the medium of nature and nature descriptions. In a journal entry, Hardy himself underlines how the particular atmosphere of a scene may best reveal the inner lives of the characters present in the scene. According to the author, "cold weather brings out upon the faces of people the written marks of their habits, vices, passions, and memories, as warmth brings out on paper a writing in sympathetic ink" (Hardy *The Life* 182). Here, Hardy explores the dialectic between self and setting which I have evoked in chapter one of the present study, but which I have not yet analysed from an ecocritical perspective. In the following example, quoted in chapter one and taken from *The Return of the Native*, Eustacia's melancholy character is indeed revealed by the heath, and to the reader, as part of Hardy's characterisation strategy. Indeed, the narrator describes an "environment which would have made a contended woman a poet, a suffering woman a devotee, a pious woman a psalmist, even a giddy woman thoughtful" but which, in Eustacia's case, "made a rebellious woman saturnine" (Hardy, *TRN* 73). In this passage, Hardy deals with "the psychoterractic", which is defined by Albrecht as "the health relationship between the psyche and the biophysical environment" (Albrecht 64), by underlining how Eustacia's mental health is directly impacted

by the heath. In fact, from an ecopsychological point of view, the heath is not the cause of Eustacia's mood but the lack of interaction between her psyche and the heath actually is. To Merleau-Ponty, "to be a consciousness or rather *to be an experience* is to hold inner communication with the world, the body and other people, to be with them instead of being beside them" (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 111, emphasis in the original). To have an environmental consciousness, in Hardy and Lawrence, therefore amounts to holding "inner communication" with the natural environment, that is, to welcome nature into one's consciousness. In *The Return of the Native*, Thomasin is one of those characters who have learned to keep their minds open to their environment, so as to build a healthy relationship with it, while, in the meantime, making sure to preserve their mental health. Because she has internalised the heath, "to her there were not, as to Eustacia, demons in the air, and malice in every bush and bough. The drops which lashed her face were not scorpions, but prosy rain; Egdon in the mass was no monster whatever, but impersonal open ground" (Hardy, *TRN* 355). According to ecopsychologists, "an individual's harmony with his or her 'own deep self' requires not merely a journey to the interior but a harmonizing with the environmental world" (Hillman XIX). Within such healthy "psychoterractic" relationships, the natural environment becomes a source of comfort rather than a source of distress or fear for the characters, thus having the effect of anchoring them back into the material world they are stemming from. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the setting is not used to reflect the protagonist's agony after her rape and the conflicting feelings triggered by the birth of her child. On the contrary, the environment is perceived by Tess as a reassuring and steady presence that she can turn to in order to feel hopeful again: "Meanwhile the trees were just as green as before; the birds sang and the sun shone as clearly now as ever. The familiar surroundings had not darkened because of her grief; nor sickened because of her pain" (Hardy,, *Tess* 91). In this particular instance, the fact that the natural world does not mirror Tess's emotion paradoxically allows her to feel more grounded, that is, to simultaneously refocus on herself, her worth, and her place in the world. Rather than feeding her anxiety, the green trees, the singing birds and the bright sun are able to ease her conscience and (en)lighten her mood. In Lawrence's fiction, one can find a similar representation of nature as a sanctuary and a place to find one's humanness back, away from humanity. In *Women in Love*, for instance, the character of Ursula echoes that of Thomasin in *The Return of the Native*, in that she too feels safe and at home in nature: "The night had fallen, it was dark. But she forgot to be afraid, she who had such great sources of fear. Among the trees, far from any human beings, there was a sort of magic peace" (Lawrence, *WL* 245). This

"magic peace", I argue, is nothing but the result of the "psychoterractic" relationship Albrecht is mentioning in his book, between Ursula's psyche and the natural world. Drawing from those examples, readers naturally come to the conclusion that environmental consciousness, to Hardy and Lawrence, is first and foremost a healthy consciousness – a consciousness originating in the natural world and returning to it for comfort. In the end, Timothy Morton declares, "ecology isn't just about global warming, recycling, and solar power. (…) It has to do with love, loss, and compassion. It has to do with depression and psychosis" (Morton 2). Hardy's and Lawrence's characters indeed prove that ecology has to do with anything *human* and with the urge to improve humanity. Still in *Women in Love*, Gudrun notes how her consciousness is directly impacted by the view of the snowy Alps. She ponders out loud: "Isn't the snow wonderful? Do you notice how it exalts everything? It is simply marvellous. One really does feel *übermenschlich* – more than human" (Lawrence, *WL* 245). Here, I argue that being "more than human" is to be equated with the ability to transcend our narrow human conceptions of the world and to be *better* humans, part of a greater whole that makes us bigger, and smaller, at the same time. To have one's head in the clouds, or, more literally, in the snowy mountains of the Alps, is to have an environmental consciousness allowing one to see beyond one's human experience, thus helping one to accept one's condition as yet another insignificant human life on Earth. Being properly conscious of their natural surrounding enables characters to find answers to their ontological issues and to find solace. Mrs Morel, in *Sons and Lovers*, seems to have "the peace and the strength to see herself" only when she is out of her home, watching her children and admiring "the hills of Derbyshire" as they are "blazed over with red sunset" (Lawrence, *SL* 50). To better understand what is at stake in this scene, I suggest that Warwick Fox's coinage of the phrase "transpersonal ecology" might be useful. In *Ecopsychology: Psychology at the Service of Life*, Andy Fisher explains that transpersonal ecology is "the idea that as one develops a sense of self that is both transpersonal and ecological, one will care for the earth without being morally persuaded to do so because one will identify with it as Self" (Fisher 18). The co-emergence of self and environment, along with a conception of consciousness as turned outward, reaching beyond the confines of humanity, are two elements present in Hardy's and Lawrence's novels which therefore make their fiction ecological. Self and environment are indeed co-arising but are not merging, thus fostering the development of an environmental consciousness as stemming from an altruistic rather than egocentric point of view. In that sense, the setting can no longer be considered as a mere reflection of the characters' minds, but becomes a medium through which the subject can access the ultimate form of

consciousness, that is environmental consciousness. In *Vivre de paysage : entre les montagnes et les eaux* (2014), French philosopher and Hellenist François Jullien contends that "a landscape 'touches' us not accidentally or anecdotally but essentially, because in its pure exteriority it causes us to feel an inner kernel of self (more inner than "self"). It reveals the intimate within me (Jullien trans. Rodriguez 43).[16] From this point of view, the mirror effect evoked earlier in this chapter is not to be understood as a reflecting process, but rather as a revealing one, prompting characters to look around them so as to better see within themselves.

In *Exhausted Ecologies: Modernism and Environmental Recovery*, Andrew Kalaidjian explores the way the natural setting is treated in modernist fiction and notes that, "although modernists avoided an idealized nature, they were deeply invested in analysing life in terms of environment, milieu, ambience, and atmosphere" (Kalaidjian 2). I would like to follow up on Kalaidjian's analysis in focusing on the notion of atmosphere and on the way Lawrence, but also Hardy, might have used such a notion to add an ecological dimension to their works. The *OED* defines "atmosphere" in different ways, two of which are particularly relevant to this study. In its most literal understanding, atmosphere may refer to "a supposed envelope of effective influence surrounding bodies" (3), and in a more figurative sense, atmosphere can be a "surrounding mental or moral element, environment; a prevailing psychological climate; a pervading tone or mood; a characteristic mental or moral environment" (4). When put together, those two definitions underline the intrinsic relation between mind and environment, which seem to fuse into the notion of atmosphere. In Hardy and Lawrence, I suggest that atmosphere is palpable and visible, through a specific work on a natural setting meant to disclose the moods or psychological states of the characters. In order to achieve such effect, the first tool used by the two authors is naturally the metaphor which enables them to create a new framework of character description that includes the external world. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, instead of mentioning how Connie has been suffering and neglecting her mental health for too long, the narrator declares: "To Connie, everything in her world and life seemed worn out, and her dissatisfaction was older than the hills" (Lawrence, *LCL* 48). Using natural terms to convey Connie's sense of despair is in keeping with "seminal ecologist and writer Aldo Leopold"'s view, and his coinage of "the phrase 'thinking like a mountain' to encourage an ecological and non-anthropocentric way of relating to the world" (Hébert 31). Beyond ecomorphism, the device used by Lawrence to re-build a connection between Connie and the natural world is

[16] Pedro Rodriguez' translation of the original : « Un paysage nous « touche », non pas accidentellement ou anecdotiquement, mais essentiellement, parce qu'il fait éprouver, de sa pure extériorité, un plus intérieur de soi (que « soi »), révélant mon intime » (Jullien 92-93).

based on the creation of a new frame of reference in which humans and non-humans can be perceived literally on the same terms. Lawrence is likely to have drawn such an inspiration from Hardy's work, and namely from *The Return of the Native* where Eustacia's "colourless inner world" is said to become, at the thought of Clym's arrival, "as animated as water under a microscope" (Hardy, *TRN* 110). Here, the description of Eustacia's state of mind is conveyed in a very similar way to that of Connie and suggests that, in accord with the belief of indigenous cultures, "the natural *is* the spiritual" (Metzner 67, emphasis in the original). For the reader to get a better sense of the characters' personalities, Hardy encourages him or her to look into his or her own knowledge of the natural world and its specificities. Indeed, in order to have a precise understanding of Thomasin's temperament, the reader of *The Return of the Native* needs to be familiar with different species of birds and their characteristics, since a whole passage is dedicated to the description of her appearance, personality and mood swings through direct comparisons to birds:

> The oblique band of sunlight which followed her through the door became the young wife well. It illuminated her as her presence illuminated the heath. In her movements, in her gaze, she reminded the beholder of the feathered creatures who lived around her home. All similes and allegories concerning her began and ended with birds. There was as much variety in her motions as in their flight. When she was musing she was a kestrel, which hangs in the air by an invisible motion of its wings. When she was in a high wind her light body was blown against trees and banks like a heron's. When she was frightened she darted noiselessly like a kingfisher. When she was serene she skimmed like a swallow, and that is how she was moving now. (Hardy, *TRN* 209)

Here, the mental movements of the young woman are reflected in her physical movements, which are themselves directly related to birds' movements, her body acting as an intermediary between the human mind and the non-human world. The passage is structured around parallelisms which only reinforce the co-existence of human and non-human minds within the Anima Mundi. As the image of Eustacia's moving figure emerges in the reader's mind, different mental representations of birds simultaneously come up, thus naturally inviting the reader to be conscious of humans and non-humans in an equal and indiscriminative way. More than setting up decors for their plots, Hardy and Lawrence are indeed creating atmospheres, that is, "envelopes surrounding [their characters'] bodies (*OED*) and containing the essence of their psyches as much as the essence of the material world. The quality of such atmospheres may

vary depending on the willingness of the characters present in the scene to keep their minds open, and to live in harmony with their natural surroundings. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the creation of psycho-organic atmospheres is facilitated by the heroine's special connection with her environment to which she often turns to find comfort. As she goes out into the woods at sunset, Tess is able to find the "mental liberty" she is lacking in the daytime around people, and "the plight of being alive becomes attenuated to its least possible dimensions" (Hardy, *Tess* 85). Under such circumstances, the psyche of the young woman and the psyche of the natural world are actively interacting, to the point where a more-than-human atmosphere is being created: "At times her whimsical fancy would intensify natural processes around her till they seemed part of her own story. Rather they became part of it; for the world is only a psychological phenomenon, and what they seemed they were" (Hardy, *Tess* 85). This definition of the world as a "psychological phenomenon" reminds one of Michel Collot's conception of landscape as a phenomenon that he theorises in his work entitled *La Pensée Paysage* (2011). To envision the natural world as a phenomenon, rather than as a noumenon, is to reject the notion of nature as "pure representation" or as "a mere presence", and to favour a conception of the environment as "the product of the encounter between the world and a point of view" (Collot 18).[17] Hardy's addition of a psychological element to that phenomenon only reinforces Collot's argument, in that the settings the author is creating are nothing but spaces in which the world encounters not only a point of view, but more precisely a human mind. Recognising that "the world is only a psychological phenomenon" is also a way to acknowledge the limitations of the human mind to fathom a natural world which, as Merleau-Ponty argues, does not need humans to exist, and still can only be perceived through our human lens. To both Hardy and Lawrence, the work on atmosphere serves to make this psychological phenomenon palpable to the reader, creating a sort of envelope surrounding the text. As observed in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the atmospheres that are created are permeating the minds of the characters and the "surrounding mental element" (*OED*) ultimately comes to define their own mental states. In Lawrence's *Women in Love*, the ambience of scenes taking place in the open air is often characterised by the harmonious dynamic between the psyche of the world and the psyches of the characters present in the scene. In the following scene, the reader is invited to see, hear and feel the atmosphere

[17] My translation ; Collot writes : « [Pour échapper à l'alternative entre le construit et le donné,] je considérerai donc le paysage comme un phénomène qui n'est ni une pure représentation ni une simple présence, mais le produit de la rencontre entre le monde et un point de vue ».

of the scene, which is not limited to the air surrounding the characters but which is to be found in their minds just as much:

> The week passed away. On the Saturday it rained, a soft drizzling rain that held off at times. In one of the intervals Gudrun and Ursula set out for a walk, going towards Willey Water. The atmosphere was grey and translucent, the birds sang sharply on the young twigs, the earth would be quickening and hastening in growth. The two girls walked swiftly, gladly, because of the soft, subtle rush of morning that filled the wet haze. By the road the black-thorn was in blossom, white and wet, its tiny amber grains burning faintly in the white smoke of blossom. Purple twigs were darkly luminous in the grey air, high hedges glowed like living shadows, hovering nearer, coming into creation. The morning was full of a new creation. (Lawrence, *WL* 46)

Here, both the movements and the moods of the two young women are said to be dictated by the quality of the air, and the harmony between the psyche of the world and their own psyches is only reinforced by an alliteration in /s/, conveying a sense of peacefulness and allowing the reader to actually hear the scene. More generally, Lawrence uses synaesthesia as a tool to demonstrate how multisensory experience is common to the development of human consciousness and to the creation of an atmosphere for a scene. The "new creation" Lawrence is referring to constitutes, I argue, yet another designation for the author's concept of environmental consciousness, that is, a psychological phenomenon that encompasses human and non-human psyches. The emergence of this "new creation" lies in "the [human] psyche [being] rooted inside a greater intelligence known as the anima mundi" (Roszak 16), in an attempt to achieve an ultimate form of ecological consciousness.

We have seen how Hardy's and Lawrence's treatment of settings in their novels aims at creating external surroundings that reveal the inner truth of the characters. Insofar as this process requires for human consciousness to be entirely embedded in its environment, the two authors have to find ways to make the boundaries of their characters' minds porous and to reinforce the intentional dimension of human consciousness. As a result, in Hardy's and Lawrence's novels, as in ecopsychologist thinking, "the greater part of the soul lies outside the body" (Sendivogus quoted in Fisher 10) and the open-mindedness of the characters takes up a very literal dimension. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, "endless phrases swe[ep] through [Connie's] consciousness" as she walks "in the wind of March" (Lawrence, *LCL* 85), while in *Jude the Obscure*, the young protagonist "part[s] his lips as he face[s] the north-east, and

dr[aws] in the wind as if it were a sweet liquor", in the hope of internalising into his own mind the spirit of Christminster (Hardy, *JO* 20). In both instances, the metaphor of the air, performed through the reference to the blowing wind and to the act of breathing, serves to illustrate an unbounded human consciousness that cannot be localised in a precise place but that is more likely to be found in the ether. In another scene of Hardy's last novel, Jude's sadness is even materialising and adding substance to the natural world, as a teardrop blends with the water of the well and his breath mixes up with the fog: "A tear rolled from his eye to the depth of the well. The morning was a little foggy, and the boy's breathing unfurled itself as a thicker fog upon the still heavy air" (Hardy, *JO* 11). In fact, environmental consciousness (as consciousness embedded in its environment) becomes quite visual and literal in Hardy's fiction, and most conspicuously in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, where metaphors seem to gradually lose their figurative dimensions to convey a very palpable representation of humans' intentional consciousness. The two following passages exemplify this evolution, while putting forward a similar representation of "the psyche as an integral part of the web of nature" (Hillman XVI):

> And as each and all of them [country girls] were warm without by the sun, so each had a private little sun for her soul to bask in; some dream, some affection, some hobby, at least some remote and distant hope which, though perhaps starving to nothing, still lived on, as hopes will. (Hardy, *Tess* 14)
>
> The stage of mental comfort to which they [pub-goers] had arrived at this hour was one wherein their souls expanded beyond their skins, spreading their personalities warmly through the room. (Hardy, *Tess* 25)

If both passages are characterised by the use of metaphorical devices, the "private little sun" towards which the characters' minds extend in the first passage is mainly illustrating the state of day-dreaming in which the young girls are finding themselves, while the second passage is inviting the reader to properly visualise souls extending out of bodies, not merely as a metaphor but as a material representation of humans' intentional consciousness.[18] The association of the feeling of hopefulness with the natural phenomenon that is the sun is actually a trope in Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles,* which participates in developing the notion of environmental

[18] Hardy's metaphorical representation of human mind extending beyond the boundaries of the body actually brings to mind the Material Engagement Theory which has been recently put forward by Antonis Iliopoulos: "MET goes a step further than embodiment and embeddedness. Influenced by the extended mind theory first advanced by Clark and Chalmers (1998), it maintains that cognition can actually be extended into the outer realm" (Iliopoulos 40).

consciousness throughout the novel. In another instance, Tess's hopes are said to "mingl[e] with the sunshine in an ideal photosphere which surround[s] her as she bound[s] along against the soft south wind" (Hardy, *Tess* 103). Here, the fusion between the content of Tess's mind and the rays of the sun results in the emergence of the young woman's environmental consciousness, which is again illustrated quite visually through the imagery of the photosphere. Indeed, in Hardy's fictional world, environmental consciousness is far from being an abstract and ill-defined notion. On the contrary, Hardy's environmental consciousness is made visible to his readers who have no choice but to recognise its validity and to start looking for it in their daily lives. Through these metaphors, Hardy is actually attempting to bring the environment back into his readers' consciousness, thus simultaneously raising awareness about environmental issues. In response to D. I. Janik's assertion that "D. H. Lawrence stood at the beginning of the development of a new environmental consciousness in literature" (Janik 371), I would therefore like to suggest that such a new conception of environmental consciousness had already begun to be developed in the nineteenth century, namely through the writings of Thomas Hardy. In my view, both authors were deeply aware that the natural world and the related environmental issues remained too much ingrained in the realm of the unconscious, thus condemning humanity to passivity in the face of the destruction of the Earth. In *The Voice of the Earth: an Exploration of Ecopsychology*, Roszak puts forward the notion of the ecological unconscious as the process through which humans are rejecting "any sense of environmental reciprocity" (Roszak 304) and remain blind to the fact that "we too are nature" (Fisher 7). So as to counter such harmful mode of thinking, I find that Hardy and Lawrence take care to reinvent the notion of the environmental unconscious and to transform it into the ultimate form of environmental consciousness any human can achieve. Operating in the same way as the material unconscious evoked in chapter five, Hardy and Lawrence's environmental unconscious refers to an acute state of consciousness that may be achieved when human characters paradoxically forget to see the world around them and start to feel themselves embedded in that world instead. In Lawrence's *Women in Love*, it is precisely this environmental unconscious that seems to urge Birkin to get out in the open air after he got hit by Hermione and is still in shock. The narrator describes him as being "barely conscious, and yet perfectly direct in his motion" as he goes "out of the house and straight across the park, to the open country, to the hills" (Lawrence, *WL* 106). A sort of natural instinct, in both senses of the word, is indeed fostering in Birkin a need to be in the midst of nature, rather than a desire to sit and observe it from a distance. Even when characters are shown, in appearance, to be

admiring the natural world, the narrator takes care to underline how this observation is, interestingly enough, done blindly, and leads to the characters achieving a state of perfect harmony with their surroundings. This is what happens to Ursula and Gudrun during a sketching session by Willey Water lake:

> Ursula was watching the butterflies, of which there were dozens near the water, little blue ones suddenly snapping out of nothingness into a jewel-life, a large black-and-red one standing upon a flower and breathing with his soft wings, intoxicatingly, breathing pure, ethereal sunshine; two white ones wrestling in the low air; there was a halo round them; ah, when they came tumbling nearer they were orangetips, and it was the orange that had made the halo. Ursula rose and drifted away, unconscious like the butterflies.
>
> Gudrun, absorbed in a stupor of apprehension of surging water-plants, sat crouched on the shoal, drawing, not looking up for a long time, and then staring unconsciously, absorbedly at the rigid, naked, succulent stems. (Lawrence, *WL* 119)

In this passage, the notion of the unconscious is omnipresent and is referring to a specific state in which the young women are deeply aware of the vegetation that surrounds them, without however internalising those plants into their consciousness. If Ursula is said to be "unconscious like the butterflies", I argue that it does not imply that she, and the butterflies, have no consciousness, but that they are conscious in a different, more significant way, that does not involve the distant observation of an object. In fact, it is because Ursula's and Gudrun's consciousnesses are more than ever embedded in their natural surroundings that the traditional observation of nature as an object, by a human subject, is rendered impossible and irrelevant. Other senses are often involved in such a state of environmental unconsciousness, such as the sense of hearing, which is put forward by Hardy in a scene featuring Tess as she stands in a garden so as to be able to listen to her lover's Angel playing the harp:

> Tess was conscious of neither time nor space. The exaltation which she had described as being producible at will by gazing at a star came now without any determination of hers; she undulated upon the thin notes of the second-hand harp, and their harmonies passed like breezes through her, bringing tears into her eyes. The floating pollen seemed to be his notes made visible, and the dampness of the garden the weeping of the garden's sensibility. Though near nightfall, the rank-smelling weed-flowers glowed as if they would not close for intentness, and the waves of colour mixed with the waves of sound. (Hardy, *Tess* 123)

In this passage, the sense of hearing is actually not the only sense that is explored by the narrator who creates a very synaesthetic atmosphere through the simultaneous appeal to the sense of hearing (the actual notes from the harp), the sense of smell (the smell coming from the weed-flowers), the sense of touch (sensations left by breezes, dampness), and the sense of vision (the pollen as notes made visible or the glowing light of the weed-flowers). Throughout this scene, Tess is not making any deliberate effort to be aware of her environment and is said to have no consciousness of space, which implies that the spatial demarcation between self and world is annihilated. As is the case in Lawrence's *Women in Love*, this state of unconsciousness, characterised by an awakening of the five senses, is only reinforcing the character's connection to her surroundings and her sense of belonging to the natural world as a whole. For them to have a proper environmental consciousness as we understand it today, Hardy and Lawrence are inviting their readers to let themselves fall into a state of material unconsciousness which, in turn, will allow them to be more keenly aware of the necessity to protect the places they are inhabiting. If "the most profoundly collective and unconscious self is the natural material world" (Lester R. Brown XIX), then the notion of environmental consciousness fails to appeal to the readers' sense of responsibility and only the development of an environmental unconscious can foster a collective commitment for the preservation of the natural world.

In the end, Hardy and Lawrence teach their readers that to be eco-conscious is to stop being conscious about ecology, and to start experiencing it. To care for the Earth, is to stop thinking about it, talking about it or looking at it, and start properly living among the non-human inhabitants of our planet. Just like breathing, the protection of the natural world is best done via an unconscious and mutually beneficial mechanism that implies a strong faith in one's embeddedness in a greater whole. Just like breathing, caring for the Earth keeps us alive, and any "behaviour leading to destruction of this world will be experienced as self-destruction" (Roszak 12).[19]

[19] Roszak quotes from the concluding remarks of the 1990 Conference "Psychology as if the Whole World Mattered".

CHAPTER SEVEN.
Meeting Nature in the Flesh:
Thomas Hardy and D. H. Lawrence's Proposal for an Embodied Ecology

"People don't really matter, they jingle and giggle. It would be much better if they were just wiped out. Essentially, they don't exist, they aren't there"
(Lawrence, WL 24)

The two preceding chapters have been dedicated to demonstrating how consciousness, in both Hardy and Lawrence, is an embodied entity that is most likely to be found in the materiality of the novels' natural settings. The analyses that have been put forward have suggested that the material body might constitute the binding force between human consciousness and the natural world, that is, the medium through which humans may properly connect to their surroundings. From a phenomenological point of view, Christine Leroy explains that this material body is referred to as "Deir Leib" and represents the "body experienced by the subject and through which the subject defines itself". In English, "Deir Leib" should be translated as "the flesh" and not merely as "the body", since it refers to "the embodiment of consciousness, not as an enveloping substance, but as the entity through which consciousness is made actual to the world" (Leroy, *La Phénoménologie* 87).[1] In the present chapter, I will be exploring the notion of flesh, which has been extensively theorised by phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty and which, I argue, is central to Hardy and Lawrence's proposal for an embodied ecology – in other words, for the development of an ecological consciousness stemming *from* and experienced *in* the body. In *The Visible and the Invisible,* Merleau-Ponty explains:

> The flesh is not matter, is not mind, is not substance. To designate it, we should need the old term "element," in the sense it was used to speak of water, air, earth, and fire, that is, in the sense of a general thing, midway between the spatio-temporal individual and the idea, a sort of incarnate principle that brings a style of being wherever there is a fragment of being. The flesh is in this sense an "element" of Being. (Merleau-Ponty, *VI* 139)

So as to access this ultimate "element of Being", one is to reconnect to the flesh of one's own body, insofar as Merleau-Ponty's flesh lies precisely in "the way that I experience my body, that I experience *myself as* a body, that I am embodied, and in the way that the world reciprocally offers itself to me through the corporeal experience" (Leroy, La *Phénoménologie* 158-159).[2] I suggest that Hardy and Lawrence let their readers embark on a journey back to the body that allows them not only to find themselves as individuals, but to find their ecological selves on the way. In "A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover", Lawrence dramatically declares:

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[1] My translation; Leroy writes: « Leib désigne le corps vécu par le sujet et par quoi le sujet se définit. Deir Leib est communément traduit, en français, par le mot « chair » : il faut entendre par là ce qui incarne la conscience, non comme simple enveloppe, mais comme ce par quoi la conscience existe au monde. »

[2] My translation; Leroy writes: « [La chair de Merleau-Ponty désigne] la façon dont je vis mon corps, dont je me vis comme corps, dont je m'incarne et dont réciproquement le monde se donne à moi par l'expérience corporelle. »

"The last three thousand years of mankind have been an excursion into ideals, bodilessness, and tragedy, and now the excursion is over" (Lawrence, *LCL* 330). If "ideals" and "bodilessness" have led to the tragic destruction of the Earth and to the auto-destruction of humans themselves, a return to the body constitutes a return to what matters, both literally and figuratively. Paradoxically enough, Hardy and Lawrence demonstrate how to refocus on oneself and on one's body goes hand in hand with an enhanced openness to the world and what is *not* oneself. From such a perspective, an environmental consciousness does not sound so incompatible with a geological era marked by human lives, and the Anthropocene itself may not appear as a fatality, as soon as humanity and the Earth cease to be considered as mutual enemies and become engaged in a dialectical relationship. In writing their novels, Hardy and Lawrence probably had in mind the etymology of the words "human", "from the Latin 'humus', meaning 'soil' or 'earth'" (Fisher 92), as they both attempted to create fictional ecologies that would cancel and replace the problematic notion of environment.

1. Getting in Touch with the Natural World: the Ecological Dimension of Embodiment and Intentionality

"Contact is the opposite of indifference", Andy Fisher writes in *Ecopsychology: Psychology in the Service of Life* (Fisher 65). According to him for anyone to actually care for the Earth and be moved by its slow decay, a proper contact with the natural world must happen beforehand. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "contact" as "the mutual relation of two bodies whose external surfaces touch each other" (1.a), thus underlining both the material and the reciprocal dimensions of such a process. Coming in contact with the material world therefore requires for one to actually experience oneself as a body first, so as to be able to touch and be touched. On the other hand, if a body fails to be in contact with another human body, then it automatically loses its actuality and becomes an obstacle to the development of any sense of self. Indeed, to Merleau-Ponty, "to touch is to touch oneself" (Merleau-Ponty, *VI* 255), which suggests that, first and foremost, physical touch has an ontological function, that of revealing one's true personality to oneself. As we follow Hardy's and Lawrence's characters along their ontological journeys, it becomes obvious that the existential crises experienced by the protagonists are more often than not triggered by a lack of physical contact that may even result in a state of desensitization. From his ecopsychologist point of view, Andy Fisher defines desensitization as "the manipulating of ourselves (…) in such a way that we lose bodily feeling and blot out our perception of a hurtful world", adding that "such desensitization reaches the

point of 'depersonalization' when it penetrates to our sense of self, and 'dissociation' when our felt disconnection from the world or divorce from inner reality becomes severe" (Fisher 73). In Hardy's and Lawrence's fictional worlds, two particular heroines may be said to suffer from desensitization and to experience a subsequent loss of individuality and of connection to the natural world. Even though they are very different and evolve in very different ways throughout the novels, Eustacia in *The Return of the Native* and Connie Chatterley in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* are indeed both characterised by their initial disconnection from their bodies, which is associated with a common longing for human touch. Confined in her open-air prison that is the heath, Eustacia is indeed suffering from physical loneliness, just as Connie is physically wasting away because her body is left untouched by her husband Clifford. The concurrent reading of the two following passages underlines the similarity of the two characters' lonely conditions at the onsets of the novels:

> Like the summer condition of the place around her, she was an embodiment of the phrase "a populous solitude"—apparently so listless, void, and quiet, she was really busy and full.
>
> To be loved to madness—such was her great desire. Love was to her the one cordial which could drive away the eating loneliness of her days. And she seemed to long for the abstraction called passionate love more than for any particular lover. (…)
>
> Through want of it she had sung without being merry, possessed without enjoying, outshone without triumphing. Her loneliness deepened her desire. On Egdon, coldest and meanest kisses were at famine prices, and where was a mouth matching hers to be found? (Hardy, *TRN* 71)

> He was at once too intimate with her, and not intimate enough. He was so very much at one with her, in his mind and hers. But bodily they were non-existent to one another, and neither could bear to drag in the *corpus delicti*. They were so intimate, and utterly out of touch. (Lawrence, *LCL* 18)

The feeling of loneliness that stands out in the two passages is, in both cases, very much embodied and expressed through a longing for physical passion in Hardy, and through the representation of a defective intimacy in Lawrence. Both authors take up the challenge of making what is lacking actually appear blatant in the text, through the use of different literary devices. In the last paragraph, Hardy uses a series of parallelisms so as to perform the negation of one element by the other: the act of singing is deprived of its inherent joy, any possessions

are rendered meaningless and the power of beauty is associated with failure rather than with victory. Such a play on dichotomies, associated with the repetition of the preposition "without", serves to allow the physical touch that is so lacking to pervade the text and appear as the one element that makes everything else worth experiencing. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Lawrence plays with the notion of intimacy, which appears both omnipresent and lacking in the text. At the beginning of the passage, the narrator uses the determiner "hers" and the pronoun "his" instead of the plural "their", so as to further emphasise their isolation from one another, despite an apparent mental proximity. By the end of the passage, an alliteration in /t/, directly associated to the sound of two entities coming in contact, allows for the lack of physical intimacy to become audible to the readers. What is so lacking in Eustacia's and Connie's lives is therefore put forward by both narrators as essential and, more importantly, inevitable, for anyone to exist as an individual. Indeed, both Eustacia's and Connie's senses of self are impacted by their isolation from human contact. If it is probably more salient in Lawrence's novel, for its particular focus on Connie's indifference towards her decaying body in the first chapters, the growing divide between Eustacia and her own body is illustrated by her reliance on her body as a means to an end, rather than as her own embodied self. In her chase for a better life abroad, her body becomes a tool that she can use to seduce Clym, this mysterious man coming back from Paris, whom she chooses for his ability to take her away from Egdon heath, rather than for his ability to make her feel seen, and touched. After her first attempt at getting acquainted with him by joining the mummers playing at his mother's Christmas party, Eustacia inwardly laments:

> What a sheer waste of herself to be dressed thus while another was shining to advantage! Had he known the full effect of the encounter she would have moved heaven and earth to get here in a natural manner. The power of her face all lost, the charm of her motions all disguised, the fascinations of her coquetry denied existence, nothing but a voice left to her: she had a sense of the doom of Echo. (Hardy, *TRN* 143)

To Eustacia, disembodiment – or rather, here, the disappearance of her body behind a disguise – is only problematic to the extent that it deprives her of her seductive powers. At no point during this inner rambling does the young woman suggest that the invisibility of her body might prevent Clym to get to know her true self. In fact, Eustacia makes no direct association between her body and her individuality. Quite similarly, in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Connie looks at her body as she would look at a foreign entity, observing it in the mirror "not know[ing] what she

was looking for, or at, very definitely" (Lawrence, *LCL* 70). As a result of such dissociation, her body is described as "frayed" (Lawrence, *LCL* 62), "old through neglect and denial", "going meaningless, going dull and opaque, so much insignificant substance" (Lawrence, *LCL* 70). Eustacia's utilitarian conception of her body and Connie's utter abandonment of her flesh and bones, to the point of them becoming "unsubstantial and transparent" (Lawrence, *LCL* 57), stem from the same source (lack of contact and desensitization) and lead to the same consequence – that is, the loss of connection with the material world. Again, the parallel that can be made between Eustacia's and Connie's relations to the natural world at the onsets of the novels is quite striking. In both cases, their disconnection from their bodies seems to impact their perceptual abilities and the two women are often said to be seeing their environment without, quite literally, taking it in:

> The subtle beauties of the heath were lost to Eustacia; she only caught its vapours. (Hardy, *TRN* 73)

> On one of her bad days she went out alone to walk in the wood, ponderously, heeding nothing, not even noticing where she was. (Lawrence, *LCL* 58)

In those instances, the cancellation of the body leads to the cancellation of the natural world since no contact may happen if one of the two "external surfaces" (*OED*) is denied existence. Within the world of Clifford's stories, the ground on which Connie stands inevitably becomes "an artificial earth" (Lawrence, *LCL* 16), while Connie's body is rotting away like a neglected plant: "Instead of ripening its firm, down-running curves, her body was flattening and going a little harsh. It was as if it had not had enough sun and warmth. It was a little greyish and sapless" (Lawrence, *LCL* 70). Here, the narrator's use of the lexical field of crop growing and of an organic metaphor for describing Connie's body ultimately makes clear the direct causal link between the neglect of one's body and one's inability to care for the material world as a whole. In fact, according to Andy Fisher, "to get close to the things that matter we have no recourse but to our bodily experience" (Fisher 53). Eustacia, in Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, will never properly come to this realisation and will suffer a tragic fate, partly as a result of her estrangement from the heath she inhabits. Connie, on the other hand, will embark on both an ontological and environmental journey that will serve to demonstrate that an ecological self is first and foremost an embodied self.

"People don't really matter", says Birkin to Gerald's mother in the first pages of *Women in Love*, "they jingle and giggle. It would be much better if they were just wiped out. Essentially,

they don't exist, they aren't there" (Lawrence, *WL* 24). In Birkin's enigmatic assertion lies a paradox Lawrence will be exploring throughout his 1920 novel: in "a geological epoch shaped (deliberately and otherwise) by human activity" (Kalaidjian 26) that is the Anthropocene, how could people possibly not matter? I suggest that Birkin's polysemous phrasing may be interpreted in two ways and serve two different ecologically-related arguments. Firstly, Birkin seems to be reminding the reader that people are, indeed, not what matters most in the world, thus decentring our species amongst the beings on Earth. And then, secondly, and probably most importantly, the character condemns the way his fellow humans choose to experience life only mentally and fail to actually materialise as embodied beings. As provocative as ever, Lawrence seems to be suggesting that environmental preservation could best be achieved if people mattered more, that is, better. Indeed, Lawrence is not encouraging his readers to feel that their existence matters more than other non-human lives; on the contrary, the author is urging them to reassess their place in the world by returning to matter, that is, first and foremost to their material bodies. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Connie is actually experiencing a physical urge to go back to the Wood, a sort of life-saving instinct that is felt within her own body:

> Connie was aware, however, of a growing restlessness. Out of her disconnection, a restlessness was taking possession of her like a madness. It twitched her limbs when she didn't want to twitch them, it jerked her spine when she didn't want to jerk upright, but preferred to rest comfortably. It thrilled inside her body, in her womb, somewhere, till she felt she must jump into water and swim, to get away from it: a mad restlessness. It made her heart beat violently, for no reason. (Lawrence, *LCL* 20)

Here, the narrator uses parallel structures to stress how Connie's will is entirely subdued to this higher power that one might call, quite literally, the natural instinct. Rather than putting it into words, the narrator focuses on Connie's sensations to better demonstrate that any attention to the natural world, any ecological thinking, starts in the body. A movement from the interiority of Connie's body to the external space of the wood is clearly drawn in this passage, and illustrated by the transition from the preposition "inside (her body)" to the preposition "into (water)." What happens within her body appears as an irresistible force leading her to connect to the natural world in a significant way. In that sense, this passage could be considered as a fictional rendering of Merleau-Ponty's theory of embodied perception, which posits the body as the only tool for the self to perceive, and consequently to connect to, the world. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, he writes: "To be a body, is to be tied to a certain world, as we

have seen; our body is not primarily in space: it is of it. (…) But precisely because my body can shut itself off from the world, it is also what opens me out upon the world and places me in a situation there" (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 171; 191). From that point of view, a return to one's material body constitutes the first step towards a return to the Earth and to a caring relationship with the natural world one is inhabiting. If she had "lost touch with the substantial and vital world" in the first pages of the novel (Lawrence, *LCL* 20), Connie will eventually receive "the shock of vision in her womb" (Lawrence, *LCL* 66) through her sensual relationship with Mellors. In other words, Connie's perception of the Other and of the world becomes entirely embodied as she favours "live, warm beauty of contact" for being "so much deeper than the beauty of vision" (Lawrence, *LCL* 125). To David Abram, "the living body is thus the very possibility of contact, not just with others but with oneself – the very possibility of reflection, of thought, of knowledge" (Abram, "The Spell of the Sensuous" 45), which explains how Connie's "shock of vision" allows her to simultaneously see herself and see the world that she is inhabiting. Such epiphanies are less common in Hardy's work, since most of his characters are experiencing embodied lives, sometimes in spite of themselves, and are more often than not reminded of the frailty of their material bodies. "In Hardy's novels", Alcorn writes, "man's body seems to grow, like a tree, from the soil" (Alcorn 2). This is particularly true of Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and of its female protagonist who is referred to as a "genuine daughter of nature" by Angel or as "a child of the soil" by his mother (Hardy, *Tess* 120; 369). Most likely meant as a reference to Tess's agricultural background, this last periphrasis may also be understood as a reference to Tess's materiality and embeddedness within the natural surroundings she was not simply born *from*, but made *of*. Again and again, Tess's consciousness and body are described as being rooted in Wessex's soils, sometimes figuratively, and sometimes quite literally, as she is compared to a replanted tree: "She was, for one thing, physically and mentally suited among these new surroundings. The sapling which had rooted down to a poisonous stratum on the spot of its sowing had been transplanted to a deeper soil" (Hardy, *Tess* 129). Hardy's sapling metaphor is particularly apt since the word may refer to a young tree or to a young and inexperienced person (*OED*), thus blurring the boundary between the human and the non-human within Tess's own identity and materiality. To her lover, "there was nothing ethereal about [her face]; all was real vitality, real warmth, real incarnation" (Hardy, *Tess* 150) and in Angel's mind, such an embodied existence seems to be directly associated with her position as a milkmaid, working in the open air, with non-human creatures. In fact, Angel's own relation to his body is said to have evolved through his stay at Talbothays

and his own family notes how their son and brother has become more physical (as opposed to intellectual):

> On their part they saw a great difference in him, a growing divergence from the Angel Clare of former times. It was chiefly a difference in his manner that they noticed just now, particularly his brothers. He was getting to behave like a farmer; he flung his legs about; the muscles of his face had grown more expressive; his eyes looked as much information as his tongue spoke, and more. The manner of the scholar had nearly disappeared; still more the manner of the drawing-room young man. A prig would have said that he had lost culture, and a prude that he had become coarse. Such was the contagion of domiciliary fellowship with the Talbothays nymphs and swains. (Hardy, *Tess* 158)

In this passage, the work on the land is said to have an impact on Angel's body and, more importantly, to have the effect of making his body stronger, its material presence more noticeable. If Angel used to be perceived primarily as an intellect, he has become unapologetically embodied, encouraging his relatives to get in proper touch with him. As opposed to Tess, however, Angel will take too long to let go of the belief that the spiritual must overcome the material, which will lead him to leave Tess for moral (and mainly religious) reasons, instead of embracing the imperfect materiality of his wife. Tess, on the other hand, will remain true to her material self and it seems only natural to the reader that her life journey should end on the grounds of Stonehenge – the young woman stemming from the soil and going back to the stone. The harmony and peacefulness which characterise this scene are, I argue, signs that Hardy had not imagined it as the representation of Tess's downfall, but rather as the symbol of Tess's ultimate return to matter, to the Earth which, as opposed to society, has nurtured her and is finally welcoming her back:[3]

> In a minute or two her breathing became more regular, her clasp of his hand relaxed, and she fell asleep. The band of silver paleness along the east horizon made even the distant parts of the Great Plain appear dark and near; and the whole enormous

[3] In her article "Tess à Stonehenge : Transfert d'une scène clé du roman à l'écran", Isabelle Gadoin associates this scene with the scene in which Tess puts the pheasants out of their misery, thus supporting the idea that the Stonehenge scene is symbolically conveying a return to the non-human – the return to matter and the fertilisation of the soil being an experience common to any living, or more precisely *dying* being on Earth too. For more on the interpretation of this scene, see Gadoin, Isabelle. "Tess à Stonehenge : Transfert d'une scène clé du roman à l'écran. ", *Cahiers Charles V* 48 (2010) : 107–29.

> landscape bore that impress of reserve, taciturnity, and hesitation which is usual just before day. The eastward pillars and their architraves stood up blackly against the light, and the great flame-shaped Sun-stone beyond them; and the Stone of Sacrifice midway. Presently the night wind died out, and the quivering little pools in the cup-like hollows of the stones lay still. (Hardy, *Tess* 395)

Here, the focus on the light, the wind, and the position of the stones serves to allow the reader to visualise Tess's body within the greater natural space of Stonehenge and to envision her being asleep on the ground as the peaceful and rightful ending to the young woman's story – an ending which, in the minds of most readers, will stick and surpass the actual ending of her life on the pillory. Such a return of the material body to the material world brings to mind Walt Whitman's poetry, which Hardy used to read and actually features in chapter XXV of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.[4] I suggest that Whitman's poem entitled "This Compost" (1856) might have been a source of inspiration for Hardy and might have fed his ontological reflections involving materiality. In this poem, the speaker suggests that the soil is nourished by the materiality of past human lives, but he remains amazed at the quality of that soil which has to welcome sick and decayed bodies in its midst.[5] I would argue that the "compost" Whitman is referring to is nothing but an earlier poetic version of Merleau Ponty's concept of flesh, in that both notions suggest an entanglement of human and non-human matters within the substance of the Earth. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty writes what could be the philosophical interpretation of Whitman's poem: "Our own body is in the world as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms a system" (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 235). In Hardy's fiction too, the body is encompassed within a greater ecology, to the point that the boundaries between body and world become porous. This is even true of the characters who, like Eustacia in *The Return of the Native*, are striving to preserve those boundaries and keep their distance from their surroundings. Hateful as she might be of the heath, Eustacia becomes included in it despite herself, as soon as she sets foot outside:

[4] Two lines of the poem "Crossing Brooklyn Ferries" (1881-2) are quoted in this chapter: "Crowds of men and women attired in the usual costumes, / How curious you are to me!" (Hardy, *Tess* 153).

[5] The four following lines taken from the poem illustrate that idea: "Behold this compost! behold it well! / Perhaps every mite has once form'd part of a sick person – yet behold! / The grass of spring covers the prairies / (…) The summer growth is innocent and disdainful above all those strata of sour dead. (…)" (Whitman 310).

> The rebellious sadness that was rather too apparent when she sat indoors without a bonnet was cloaked and softened by her outdoor attire, which always had a sort of nebulousness about it, devoid of harsh edges anywhere; so that her face looked from its environment as from a cloud, with no noticeable lines of demarcation between flesh and clothes. (Hardy, *TRN* 253)

In this passage, Eustacia's attire, which is supposed to protect her from the heath, is turned into the one element that permits a further involvement into the natural world. Her flesh becomes her clothes, and her clothes are characterised by "a sort of nebulousness" which performs the integration of the young woman into the heath, despite herself. In *The Visible and the Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty asks: "Where are we to put the limit between the body and the world, since the world is flesh?" (Merleau-Ponty, *VI* 138). Where are we, indeed, to put the limit between Eustacia's body and the heath? Hardy's reader may wonder. In Hardy and Lawrence (as in Whitman), the notion of embodiment is not actually limited to the edges of one's body but is best assessed by the degree of intentionality attached to that body.

In "Between Brains, Bodies and Things: Tectonoetic Awareness and the Extended Self", Lambros Malafouris clarifies the link between embodiment and intentionality as follows:

> More simply, if there is such a thing as the embodied self, then it is a self that constantly projects and extends itself beyond the skin actively engaging and incorporating its material surroundings via the interface of the body. Embodiment is not a delimiting property—far from it. It is instead the main perturbatory channel through which the world touches us, is attached to us and even becomes part of us. (Malafouris 1997)

In accordance with Malafouris's definition of embodiment, I argue that Hardy's and Lawrence's explorations of embodiment in their novels are part of a greater scheme to create characters whose life experiences are not actually limited to and by the boundaries of their bodies. Ultimately, in Hardy and Lawrence, to be embodied is to be anchored so deep in one's materiality that it becomes possible for one to extend beyond the limits of the skinwithout risking to lose one's individuality in the process. In the works of both authors, the concept of intentional embodiment is indeed central to their ecological discourse since it includes the notions of reciprocity and openness back into material studies. In chapter six, I argued that the emergence of an environmental consciousness required (literally) an open mind – I would like to substantiate this assertion by adding that an open mind must come with an open body. In

Merleau-Ponty's words, "my body is a movement towards the world, and the world my body's point of support" (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 408). That very outward movement is indeed what performs embodiment and what allows the self to perceive the world. In Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, Clym's perception of the moon is described as both a material and a fluid process, happening in his body and yet allowing him to travel beyond the limits imposed by this human body:

> His eye travelled over the length and breadth of that distant country—over the Bay of Rainbows, the sombre Sea of Crises, the Ocean of Storms, the Lake of Dreams, the vast Walled Plains, and the wondrous Ring Mountains—till he almost felt himself to be voyaging bodily through its wild scenes, standing on its hollow hills, traversing its deserts, descending its vales and old sea bottoms, or mounting to the edges of its craters. (Hardy, *TRN* 193)

Here, the narrator illustrates Abram's definition of perception as "nothing other than an open-ended relationship" (Abram, *Becoming Animal* 45), since the process at work involves not only a body, but a body capable of extending itself towards the world. Ecopsychologist Andy Fisher uses linguistic arguments to demonstrate how intentionality is inherent to human perception and how "the primary orientation of our lives is outward, toward the world." He argues: "The 'ex' of the words we use to describe our living marks this point: ex-perience, ex-istence, ex-pression, e-motion (ex-movere). (…) We *body-forth* our existence" (Fisher 68-69, emphasis in the original). Fisher's phrasing "body-forth" encapsulates the notion of intentional embodiment which must be at the origin of the development of any relationship with the Earth. "That care for the body cares for the earth", Matthew Cochran writes (Cochran 188), and I would add that whoever throws his or her body forward cares for the Earth too. When embodied perception is made intentional, meaningful contact with the non-human other is simultaneously made possible, as exemplified in a particularly phenomenological scene from Lawrence's *Women in Love*. In the chapter "Water-Party", Ursula and Gudrun are having a picnic by the river and are dancing and singing when they realise that they are surrounded by highland cows that seem to be observing them. While Ursula is initially frightened by their presence, Gudrun urges her to keep singing, so that she may dance for them, or more precisely, towards them:

> [Ursula] sounded pretty anxious. Nevertheless Gudrun, with her arms outspread and her face uplifted, went in a strange, palpitating dance towards the cattle, lifting her body towards them as if in a spell, her feet pulsing as if in some little frenzy of

> unconscious sensation, her arms, her wrists, her hands stretching and heaving and falling and reaching and reaching and falling, her breasts lifted and shaken towards the cattle, her throat exposed as in some voluptuous ecstasy towards them, whilst she drifted imperceptibly nearer, an uncanny white figure carried away in its own rapt dance, ebbing in strange fluctuations upon the cattle, that waited, and ducked their heads a little in sudden contraction from her, watching all the time as if hypnotised, their bare horns branching in the clear light, as the white figure of the woman ebbed upon them, in the slow, hypnotising convulsion of the dance. She could feel them just in front of her, it was as if she had the electric pulse from their breasts running into her hands. Soon she would touch them, actually touch them. (Lawrence, *WL* 167-168)

The lengthy and convoluted syntax of this passage, along with the use of parallel structures, mirror the ebb and flow movement of Gudrun's body which seems to be constantly reaching towards the non-human creatures in front of her. Through the action of dancing, her perception becomes entirely embodied, relying on "unconscious sensation[s]" rather than on visual images, and, as a result, the flesh of the body naturally extends towards the flesh of the cattle, in an open-ended process meant to lead to meaningful contact. As Gudrun inwardly anticipates the moment when "she [will] touch them", I argue that this moment of touching bears more than the mere skin-to-skin contact that is induced by their growing physical proximity. In "*actually* touch[ing] them" (my emphasis), Gudrun will instantly connect to and engage in a relationship with them, which remains impossible for Ursula, her voice being the only element extending towards the cattle. A nascent relationship between Gudrun and the cattle is indeed described in the passage, as the cows are said to be reacting to the young woman's dance: what has started as perception (of the cattle by Gudrun) becomes interaction, through the power of intentional embodiment. Because "my body is a movement towards the world, and the world my body's point of support" (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 408), Gudrun's very existence is reliant on the development of an embodied reciprocity between herself and the cattle – which stand for the world here, and without which Gudrun's life would be uprooted. Beyond its embodied dimension, "perception, in Merleau-Ponty's work", as in Hardy's and Lawrence's works, "is precisely this reciprocity, the ongoing interchange between my body and the entities that surround it" (Abram, "The Spell of the Sensuous" 52). For it to be included in a larger ecological thinking, Hardy and Lawrence's conception of perception must indeed transcend the single movement from the self to the Other, so as to return to a natural give-and-take relationship in which the Other is equally active and essential.

2. Ecology as Reciprocity: the Return to a Natural Give-and-Take Relationship

"Used by the ecologist Eugene Stoermer in the 1980s" and "popularized by the atmospheric chemist Paul Crutzen at the beginning of the twenty-first century" (Shackleton 1), the term "Anthropocene" refers to "a new geological epoch marked by humanity's indelible alteration of the Earth" (Parham 1). The message behind this geological proposition is intrinsically an environmental one, suggesting that the very presence of humans is deleterious to the Earth and that the time we are living in is characterised by the non-reciprocal nature of our relationship with our planet. If the concept had yet to be put forward at the time when Hardy and Lawrence were writing, issues regarding the Anthropocene and the overly omnipresent human species are still being dealt with, in Lawrence's writing in particular. Hardy is writing stories which rarely grant happy endings to his human characters, but which often convey an optimistic view of humanity, in all its frailties and imperfections.[6] Lawrence's novels, on the other hand, often constitute a medium for the author to voice his hatred of a human race whichhas become its own ruin by destroying its home. Soha el-Samad contends that "what Lawrence essentially draws attention to is a crisis of sensibility whose repercussions include man's detachment from the planet and the subsequent loss of aesthetic pleasure" (el-Samad 3). Indeed, writing about the Anthropocene is first and foremost writing about the process which has led the human species to "become 'autistic' in relationship to the natural world" (Metzner 59), thus making the "indelible alteration of the Earth" possible.[7] In his pessimistic view of humanity, Lawrence differs from his Victorian predecessor, who wrote his last novel before the First World War had broken and the cruelties of the human species were openly brought to light. Lawrence's *Women in Love* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, on the other hand, can be both considered as interwar novels, in that they have both been published in the wake of World War One, and during a political period sowing the seeds for World War Two. In "D. H. Lawrence and Environmental Consciousness", Del Ivan Janik evokes the notion of "inhumanism" put forward in the poetry of Robinson Jeffers and defined by its vision of mankind as "a disastrous

[6] In *The Return of the Native*, Clym finally finds his calling as an itinerant preacher, while his cousin Thomasin finds her way back to a healthy relationship with Venn. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the tragic dimension of Tess's downfall is alleviated by Angel's fulfilled promise of taking care of Tess's sister. Hardy's last novel, *Jude the Obscure*, is probably the work that contains Hardy's most pessimistic message about humankind. Yet, I would argue that Hardy's attack is directed towards society and religion rather than towards humanity as a species (see chapter one, "True Self and Social Self: the Social Background").

[7] For a full analysis of the way Lawrence offers an alternative to the Anthropocene in *Women in Love*, see Bertrand, Marie, "'People don't really matter': Lawrence's Embodied Guide to Navigating the Anthropocene in *Women in Love*", in Gifford, Terry, *Reading D. H. Lawrence in the Anthropocene*, Edinburgh University Press (2025).

evolutionary mistake", only to argue that the term "post-humanism" would be more suitable to describe Lawrence's philosophy, for its acknowledgement of the "human potential for creative rather than destructive participation in [life]" (Janik 359). Even though I concur with Janik in finding a "new environmental consciousness" meant to "celebrate the whole of life" (Janik 359) in Lawrence, I would like to qualify his reluctance to apply the concept of "inhumanism" to Lawrence's novels. Indeed, in *Women in Love*, I suggest that the author uses the character of Birkin as a spokesperson for a very "inhumanistic" discourse considering mankind as "a dead tree, covered with fine brilliant galls of people" (Lawrence, *WL* 126). Within this botanic simile lies the complexity of Lawrence's vision of humanity, towards which he seems to nourish as much hatred as fascination. In comparing mankind to a "dead tree", Lawrence is simultaneously recognising the rootedness of humanity within the ground of the earth and suggesting that those roots have been poisoned. The source of the disease is immediately traced back to humanity itself, but the use of the oxymoron "fine brilliant galls of people" leaves the reader perplexed as to the deadliness of a disease that seems to give all its beauty to the tree. The main argument that stands out in this simile is therefore the self-destructive power of humanity as a race, while a remnant of hope is carried out by the human as an individual. To Janik, who argued that "Lawrence's post-humanism looks at the human species as part of a larger living whole, valuing that whole in its complexity and integrity" (Janik 359), I would therefore respond that it is the individual human who is valued in Lawrence's work, rather than the human species as a whole. "Man is one of the mistakes of creation", Birkin says, while "pure creation takes place" through the growth of "elderflowers and bluebells (…) – even the butterflies" (Lawrence, *WL* 128). In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Connie echoes Birkin's discourse as she complains that "people are killing the very air" and that "man poisons the universe" (Lawrence, *LCL* 92; 93). Man (or woman) is never condemned individually, in Lawrence, just as the Anthropocene is only problematic because of the multiplication of "indelible alterations on the Earth" by a multiplicity of people. A general loss of faith in humanity as a race pervades Lawrence's last novel, which is set in a dismal world, characterised by "the utter negation of natural beauty, the utter negation of the gladness of life, the utter absence of the instinct for shapely beauty which every bird and breast has, the utter death of the human intuitive faculty (…)" (Lawrence, *LCL* 152). What is striking in this quote and recurrent in most passages dealing with the downfall of humanity is the isolation of man from nature, thus suggesting that the severed relationship between man and the natural world is the main symptom of humanity's self-destructive disease. Despite his having gone to war and nearly lost his life, it is only when he comes home to an

altered natural landscape that Clifford finally takes the full measure of the atrocities of war: "This was one of the places that Sir Geoffrey had cut during the war, for trench timber. (…) This denuded place always made Clifford curiously angry. He had been through the war, had seen what it meant. But he didn't get really angry till he saw this bare hill. He was having it replanted" (Lawrence, *LCL* 42). Here, Clifford's wish to have the wood replanted takes up a metaphorical dimension as humankind itself is "a great uprooted tree, with its roots in the air" (Lawrence, *LCL*, "A Propos" 330). In having the wood replanted, Clifford is also trying to encourage humans to "plant [themselves] again in the universe" (Lawrence, *LCL*, "A Propos" 330), instead of making alterations on the Earth, standing at an unnatural distance. Inhumanism, in Lawrence, consists in demonstrating how humans have, in the course of evolution, lost their humanity, that is, their vital bound with the natural world. The clearing in Wragby Wood becomes a visual representation of the consequences of the severed relationship between man and nature, but also a metaphorical representation of the decaying state in which humanity has fallen:

> In the wood, everything was *motionless*, the old leaves on the ground keeping the frost on their under-side. (…) The chair chuffed slowly up the incline, rocking and jolting on the frozen clods. And suddenly on the left came a clearing, where was *nothing but* a ravel of dead bracken, a *thin and spindly* sapling *leaning ricketty* here and there, big sawn stumps showing their tops and their grasping roots, *lifeless*: and *patches of blackness* where the woodmen had *burned* the brushwood and rubbish. (Lawrence, *LCL* 41-42, my emphasis)

This passage is pervaded with the lexical field of death and decay, illustrating a state of motionlessness that is symptomatic of a lack of reciprocity between man and nature. This representation of nature as still-life and the association of immobility with death is actually antithetical with Lawrence's own concept of positive inertia, which was introduced in chapter four of the present study and which suggests the inherent dynamism of immobility. The Anthropocene, Lawrence seems to argue, has put forward a type of stillness which is synonymous with destruction. As a way to counter the effects of the Anthropocene, both Hardy and Lawrence make sure to introduce in their novels an alternative kind of stillness which is associated with peacefulness and regeneration – the notion of rest.

In *Exhausted Ecologies: Modernism and Environmental Recovery*, Andrew Kalaidjian explores the notion of rest in modernist texts, and namely in Lawrence's work, from an

ecocritical perspective that considers rest as "an organic need", "that which sustains and replenishes life" (Kalaidjian 33). In that sense, rest appears to be in contradiction with the sort of stillness which was described in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and was the illustration of "the human world (…) getting worn out" (Lawrence, *LCL* 255), rather than getting some rest. The idea of reciprocity is thus included back into the realm of inertia, insofar as rest must be understood as "a state of being that occurs in relation to a surrounding environment" and that becomes "a measure of one's level of comfort with the immediate surroundings" (Kalaidjian 15-16). As a counterpoint to what Hardy calls "the modern vice of unrest" (Hardy, *JO* 69),[8] Kalaidjian contends that the (non) action of resting "allows one to become suspended and immersed in material surroundings", and therefore to actively engage in a relationship with the natural world (Kalaidjian 31). In both Hardy's and Lawrence's novels, the characters who are resting in the open air indeed have their attention drawn back to their surroundings and the moment of rest often becomes a moment of interaction with the world. In Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, for instance, rest constitutes a physiological need for Mrs Yeobright, as much as a chance for her to come back down to earth, quite literally, by sitting and resting on the ground. As she is walking in the summer heat towards her son's home to make peace, Mrs Yeobright takes some breaks during which she also takes time to *notice*:

> Occasionally she came to a spot where independent worlds of ephemerons were passing their time in mad carousal, some in the air, some on the hot ground and vegetation, some in the tepid and stringy water of a nearly dried pool. All the shallower ponds had decreased to a vaporous mud amid which the maggoty shapes of innumerable obscure creatures could be indistinctly seen, heaving and wallowing with enjoyment. Being a woman not disinclined to philosophise, she sometimes sat down under her umbrella to rest and to watch their happiness, for a certain hopefulness as to the result of her visit gave ease to her mind, and, between her important thoughts, left it free to dwell on any infinitesimal matter which caught her eyes. (Hardy, *TRN* 270)

In this passage, the emergence of an environmental consciousness in Mrs Yeobright – that is, of an awareness of her environment but also of a sense of care for that environment – is fostered by the coming to a halt of her moving body. The state of rest, in that instance, contains in its midst all the movement and energy that the mother has been using to move forward and that now need to be regenerated. As her legs stops walking, her mind is still very much active and,

[8] This reference was brought up to my attention by Kalaidjian (21).

one can imagine, her heart is still beating very fast, which makes the activity of resting very dynamic. In fact, the physiological state Mrs Yeobright is experiencing calls to mind Einstein's theory about the "inertia of energy" which, according to Kalaidjian, defines inertia not as "a lack of energy" but rather as "the visible façade of matter's deep, indwelling potentials, waiting to be released" (Kalaidjian 51). Behind the façade of her resting body, Mrs Yeobright is actually mustering her strength to keep walking by focusing back on what matters: her material body and the material world against which it is resting. Under those circumstances, to rest amounts to engage in a give-and-take relationship with the world, "through the recognition that the regeneration of bodily energy requires the consumption of environmental resources and, conversely, that the exploitation of environment requires the expenditure of bodily energy" (Kalaidjian 46-47). As she is sitting beneath "battered" trees, Mrs Yeobright is suddenly able to "dismiss[s] thoughts of her own storm-broken and exhausted state to contemplate theirs" (Hardy, *TRN* 271), thus becoming aware of her own responsibility in allowing the natural world to rest and regenerate. Lying or sitting down on the ground is therefore a very ecological (in)action, in Hardy's and Lawrence's novels, insofar as it puts forward "a generative form of rest arising from the individual's connection to material surroundings", which Lawrence calls "positive inertia" (Kalaidjian 34). Through positive inertia, Lawrence's pessimistic inhumanist discourse takes up a hopeful dimension that relies on the human individual's ability to "sin[k] deep, deep to (…) the sleep of creation" (Lawrence, *LCL* 135). In *Women in Love*, Birkin is experiencing such an exchange of energy between his material body and the material world as he lies down on the ground among the flowers to recover from his fight with Hermione:

> He went through the long grass to a clump of young fir-trees, that were no higher than a man. The soft sharp boughs beat upon him, as he moved in keen pangs against them, threw little cold showers of drops on his belly, and beat his loins with their clusters of soft-sharp needles. There was a thistle which pricked him vividly, but not too much, because all his movements were too discriminate and soft. To lie down and roll in the sticky, cool young hyacinths, to lie on one's belly and cover one's back with handfuls of fine wet grass, soft as a breath, soft and more delicate and more beautiful than the touch of any woman; and then to sting one's thigh against the living dark bristles of the fir-boughs; and then to feel the light whip of the hazel on one's shoulders, stinging, and then to clasp the silvery birch-trunk against one's breast, its smoothness, its hardness, its vital knots and ridges—this was good, this was all very good, very satisfying. (Lawrence, *WL* 107)

In this passage, rest comes out as a very dynamic physiological phenomenon which includes a multi-sensorial connection to the natural world, fostered by the physical contact of the earth against one's body. If, when standing up, only one's feet are in contact with the material ground, the action of lying down allows to enlarge the bodily surface which will come in contact with the world. In that sense, embodied perception is only being reinforced by the process of resting which becomes, in this extract, the opportunity for "body and environment [to] participate in a shared field of forces" (Kalaidjian 51). While the flowers are compelled to bow down under the weight of Birkin's body and the birch-trunk is held tight within his embrace, Birkin is in turn pricked by the thistle and strung by the fir-boughs, as part of a reciprocal process which aims at transcending the unilateral operating mode of the Anthropocene. Lawrence's concept of positive inertia, which is illustrated in this passage, therefore contains a very ecological message which is incompatible with a type of negative inertia the author is warning his readers against in *Women in Love*. Resting scenes, in Lawrence's novels, are indeed about regeneration through an exchange of energy flow. When Connie, in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, decides to get some rest during one of her walks in the wood, she chooses to sit in a such way as to be in direct contact with trees, as if the touch of the bark was in itself invigorating: "Constance sat down with her back to a young pine-tree, that swayed against her with curious life, elastic and powerful rising up" (Lawrence, *LCL* 86). Here, the movement of the tree towards Connie, performed through utter stillness, illustrates Lawrence's concept of positive inertia and demonstrates how the human body nourishes itself from the sturdy energy of the trees. As opposed to Connie or Birkin, who seek to be regenerated in sitting or lying still among the rest of nature, Gerald, in *Women in Love*, is prone to stand "motionless as a man is, who is completely and emptily restless, utterly hollow" (Lawrence, *WL* 266). Here, stillness is not associated with rest and Gerald's choice to remain standing indoor ultimately prevents him from getting into regenerative touch with the world. Instead, he remains "suspended motionless, in an agony of inertia, like a machine that is without power" (Lawrence, *WL* 266). The narrator's reference to a machine is not insignificant since, as Kalaidjian reminds us, Lawrence's concept of positive inertia is meant to serve as a "counterpoint to modernism's obsession with autonomy, excess, and limitless production" (Kalaidjian 45). In Lawrence's 1920 novel, Gerald precisely embodies the "negative" inertia of modernity, while his perspective on the material world is symptomatic of an Anthropocenic era turning nature into an object that humans can mould in one way or another. Insofar as Gerald is unable to perceive the vital energy contained

in the coal he is exploiting, his own body is condemned to a type of inertia that brings him closer to death everyday:

> There was plenty of coal. The old workings could not get at it, that was all. Then break the neck of the old workings. The coal lay there in its seams, even though the seams were thin. There it lay, inert matter, as it had always lain, since the beginning of time, subject to the will of man. The will of man was the determining factor. Man was the archgod of earth. His mind was obedient to serve his will. Man's will was the absolute, the only absolute. (Lawrence, *WL* 223)

Here, an inner focalisation on Gerald makes it clear to the reader that inertia is only perceived in a negative way by the young man, who associates it with a submissive state and, consequently, with an invitation for humans to freely exert their power. Ironically enough, this passage seems to actually foreshadow Gerald's own downfall and his being reduced to a state of negative inertia through death. As he comes to see his friend's body one last time, Birkin feels "disgust at the inert body lying there", the narrator noting that "it was so inert, so coldly dead, a carcase, [that] Birkin's bowels seemed to turn to ice" (Lawrence, *WL* 477). The type of inertia Gerald has always been associated with up until his death, is not transmitting energy here, but appears as a form of stillness that shuts one's body up to the world instead of opening it out. At the end of the novel, the "inert matter" Gerald has been referring to is not the coal anymore but his own body, which has failed to sustain itself from its environment and to give back to that environment. In condemning Gerald to deadly inertness, Lawrence is warning his readers against a conception of nature as still life. It is precisely because our body is made of the same matter as the world that considering the material world as an inanimate picture amounts to depriving our own body of its vital energy. Resting, by letting our body come to a halt, sitting or lying on the ground, is not about reducing our body to a lower state but rather about elevating ourselves to a state of meaningful interconnection with the natural world. The ultimate reciprocal relationship between man and nature may indeed be achieved through the (in)action of resting since, as Lawrence writes in his essay "Of Being and Not-Being", rest happens when "all things move together in one infinite motion" (Lawrence, *Study* 60). As is customary in Lawrence's, rest and motion, rather than being antithetical, "are only two degrees of motion, or two degrees of rest" (Lawrence, *Study* 60). In that sense, the body may very well rest and regenerate while in motion, as long as the type of motion involves a give-and-take relationship between self and world.

In *Wanderlust: a History of Walking* (2000), Rebecca Solnit writes: "Walking itself is the intentional act closest to the unwilled rhythms of the body, to breathing and the beating of the heart" (Solnit 5). In Solnit's assertion lies the connection between the act of walking and the concept of ecological rest, which has just been explored: as "an intentional act", walking opens one's body up to the world, while allowing it to move at a familiar and comfortable pace which permits rest. In other words, walking is active rest, or positive inertia. Like rest, the action of walking has an ecological dimension in that it relies on a similarly reciprocal process between self and world. Lawrence underlines this idea in "Fantasia of the Unconscious", as he compares the act of walking to the act of breathing, which is indeed characterised by one's "consumption of environmental resources" (Kalaidjian 47) – oxygen – followed by one's contribution to those resources in return, through CO2 emission. In an attempt to define the action of walking as a give-and-take process, Lawrence writes: "The motion of walking, like the motion of breathing, is two-fold. First, a sympathetic cleaving to the earth with the foot: then the voluntary rejection, the spurning, the kicking away, the exultance in power and freedom" (Lawrence, *PFU* 89). From that perspective, walking becomes the most suitable type of motion for any individual to engage in an interaction with the world and to reject the vision of the Earth merely as matter to be exploited. It is probably no coincidence, then, that Hardy gives so much importance to walking in his novels. Indeed, reading Hardy often amounts to letting oneself be embarked on long strolls among heaths and vales, alongside the main protagonists of the stories. Descriptions of walks often give the narrator the opportunity to unveil further the interiorities of characters, since "the rhythm of walking generates a kind of rhythm of thinking, and the passage through a landscape echoes or stimulates the passage through a series of thoughts" (Solnit 5). Most passages featuring a character who has decided to get out for a walk are indeed followed by an internal focalisation on the character and the transcription of his most intimate thoughts and feelings. In *Jude the Obscure*, walking is often the only mode of transportation the young protagonist can afford, which explains why scenes of walking are numerous in Hardy's last novel. Yet, for Jude, walking does not merely serve the purpose of transportation and the young man often voluntary goes on walks as a way to think better during crucial times of his life. After hearing from his lover Arabella that she was pregnant, just as he had intended to leave her, Jude needs to solve a moral dilemma that seems to be best thought over while walking:

> That night he went out alone, and walked in the dark, self-communing. He knew well, too well, in the secret centre of his brain, that Arabella was not worth a great deal as a specimen of woman kind. Yet, such being the custom of the rural districts among

> honourable young men who had drifted so far into intimacy with a woman as he unfortunately had done, he was ready to abide by what he had said, and take the consequences. (Hardy, *JO* 48).

This introspective passage is built around the motion of walking, which allows Jude to focus back on himself and avoid any state of denial. Because walking, according to Solnit, "allows us to be in our bodies and in the world without being made busy by them" (Solnit 5), Jude can achieve an environmental consciousness by setting his body in motion in the open air, and turning to the material world to find answers. Through such a process, walking does not only serve to enhance cognitive functions in order to think better, but it also participates in allowing the self to matter better. "Walking", Solnit contends, "is a state in which the mind, the body, and the world are aligned, as though they were three characters finally in conversation together, three notes suddenly making a chord" (Solnit 5). This phenomenological conception of walking is precisely illustrated in Hardy's work, in which wandering, for characters, often leads to an increased sense of belonging to the natural world. Despite her being reluctant to connect to her surroundings, Eustacia, in *The Return of the Native*, is repeatedly drawn outdoors by what seems to be an instinctive force. In chapter seven of book the fifth, Eustacia has apparently made her mind on fleeing the heath with the help of Wildeve and finds herself quite agitated and restless at home. In an attempt to calm down she turns towards the heath that she is so longing to leave and goes for a walk:

> Eustacia could not rest indoors, having nothing more to do, and she wandered to and fro on the hill, not far from the house she was soon to leave. In these desultory ramblings she passed the cottage of Susan Nunsuch, a little lower down than her grandfather's. The door was ajar, and a riband of bright firelight fell over the ground without. As Eustacia crossed the firebeams she appeared for an instant as distinct as a figure in a phantasmagoria—a creature of light surrounded by an area of darkness; the moment passed, and she was absorbed in night again. (Hardy, *TRN* 342)

In this passage, Eustacia is not merely walking through the heath, but she gradually becomes part of it, as her constant motion, associated with the setting sun, creates an impression of fusion with her surroundings. As yet another display of intentional embodiment, walking scenes, in Hardy's novels, encourage readers to get back down to Earth, one step at a time, through an unconscious process which ultimately leads to the emergence of an environmental (un)consciousness, previously explored in chapter six. The heroine of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*,

who is often defined by and through her material body, is also one of Hardy's characters who is most keen on walking. Travelling on foot, for Tess, is indeed synonymous with peacefulness and safety, while other modes of transportations like the cart have proved to be life-threatening or traumatic.[9] The openness of Tess's consciousness to the world is in fact reinforced by the process of walking, which seems to give her mind an ultimate impetus for it to merge with the consciousness of the world. In Phase the Second, the narrator describes one of her walks as follows: "On these lonely hills and dales her quiescent glide was of a piece with the element she moved in. Her flexuous and stealthy figure became an integral part of the scene. At times, her whimsical fancy would intensify natural processes around her till they seemed a part of her own story" (Hardy, *Tess* 85). Here, Tess's body moving at a slow and steady pace serves to bridge the gap between her mind and the world, so that the demarcation between self and nature becomes more and more porous. In that sense, Tess's experience is in keeping with Solnit's analysis of the eco-psychological dimension of walking, as she notes how, when taking a stroll, "a new thought often seems like a feature of the landscape that was there all along, as though thinking were travelling rather than making" (Solnit 6). Hardy is indeed taking us on a journey with his characters, towards their interiorities, which are paradoxically best revealed in outdoor scenes. More than a form of rest, walking is, to Hardy, an active mode of peaceful connection to the world which has both an ecological and an ontological function, in unveiling the deepest parts of the self. If, in Lawrence, rest remains the favoured physiological phenomenon allowing for a perfected relationship with the natural world, the numerous walking scenes that can be found in his novels are not deprived of any ecological content. In Hardy, walking appears as the ultimate form of intentional embodiment, while in Lawrence, walking seems to be the first step – quite literally – towards a further reconnection to one's body and one's environment. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Connie does go on strolls through Wragby Wood in the first pages of the novel, but she does so "ploddingly, picking a few primroses and the first violets, that smelled sweet and cold, sweet and cold. (…) drif[ting] on without knowing where she was" (Lawrence, *LCL* 86). In this passage, the act of walking does not foster an increased awareness of her surroundings in the young woman. Despite her body gradually opening itself up to the world through slow and steady motion, the reader gets the impression that the gap between Connie's mind and nature has not yet been bridged. The urge to go out and walk in the open remains an

[9] One immediately thinks about the nightly cart journey, at the beginning of the novel, which leads to the death of Prince; or one might think about several carriage journeys with Alec, during which Tess repeatedly pleads to be let out and walk the rest of the way, regardless of the distance. For a deeper analysis of Tess's relation to motion and speed, see chapter four.

instinctive process that Connie has not yet internalised and which, consequently, has not yet led to the emergence of an environmental consciousness in the young woman:

> Connie went for walks in the park, and in the woods that joined the park, and enjoyed the solitude and the mystery, kicking the brown leaves of autumn, and picking the primroses of spring. But it was all a dream; or rather it was like the simulacrum of reality. The oak-leaves were to her like oak-leaves seen ruffling in a mirror, she herself was a figure somebody had read about, picking primroses that were only shadows or memories, or words. (Lawrence, *LCL* 18)

While Hardy's walking scenes are characterised by the enhanced embodiment of characters, this walking scene is built around the notions of spectrality and illusion, which only underline Connie's lack of connection to her own body and to the world. Using a metafictional comment, the narrator reduces the heroine to a disembodied image that only exists in the readers' minds. In fact, Connie is so far gone that it will take many walks for her to finally be aware of the fleshy envelope that enables her to move forward. The eco-psychological power of walking, put forward by Solnit, is not so immediate and performative in Lawrence. If the author recognises both the essential and reciprocal dimensions of walking, by comparing it to the act of breathing in "Fantasia of the Unconscious", the motion of walking remains an intermediary process that is meant to spend the vital energy of the body and forces it to stop and rest, in a regenerative process that will perform the ultimate connection between self and world. Whether it stems from an urge to keep the body in slow and steady motion or from a pretext to be able to get some rest, the act of walking, in Hardy and Lawrence, does participate in rebuilding a natural give-and-take relationship between characters and their environments. "When you give yourself to places," Solnit writes, "they give you yourself back" (Solnit 13). This type of reciprocity, performed through the body, leaves no room for Anthropocenic behaviours and suggests that the ground one gets to walk or rest upon must necessarily be part of oneself.

3. From the Anthropocene to the Symbiocene: the Necessary Destruction of "the Environment"[10]

[10] Part of this section is quoted from Bertrand, Marie. "'People don't really matter': Lawrence's Embodied Guide to Navigating the Anthropocene in *Women in Love*. *Reading D. H. Lawrence in the Anthropocene*, ed. Terry Gifford. Edinburgh University Press. 2025.

If the Anthropocene as a geological era had not been given a name when Lawrence and Hardy were writing their novels, one can sense that the growing physical and emotional detachment of man from the Earth was a phenomenon that the two authors had trouble fathoming and coming to terms with. In "Fantasia of the Unconscious", Lawrence writes:

> We are so silly, trying to invent devices and machines for flying off from the surface of the earth. Instead of realising that for us the deep satisfaction lies not in escaping, but in getting into the perfect circuit of the earth's terrestrial magnetism. Not in breaking away. What is the good of trying to break away from one's own? What is the good of a tree's desiring to fly like a bird in the sky, when a bird is rooted in the earth as surely as a tree is? (Lawrence, *PFU* 166-167)

In enjoining us to get back down to earth, Lawrence is underlining our dependence on the material world and the unnaturalness of getting away from nature. Through the use of rhetorical questions, Lawrence suggests that what is true for a tree must be equally true for man and that we should not be blind to the mutual interests we share with the rest of nature. The necessity of living together for "mutual benefit" is at the core of the notion of symbiosis that is put forward by G. A. Albrecht in his seminal book entitled *Earth Emotions: New Words for a New World* (2019), which proposes an innovative lexicon for readers to better navigate the Anthropocene and reverse its effects. Albrecht explains how "symbiosis affirms the interconnectedness of life within the variety of all living things" in implying "an overall homeostasis, or balance, of interests, since domination of one part over the rest would lead to functional failure" (Albrecht 97). Symbiosis is about living together in harmony, and about developing a sense of belonging and kinship with the rest of nature. In *Hardy's The Return of the Native*, Wildeve is aware of the causal link between his inability to interact with the heath and his failure to live a fulfilled life. In an attempt to convince Eustacia to move away to America with him, the young man declares: "It seems impossible to do well here, unless one were a bird or a landscape painter" (Hardy, *TRN* 87). The difference between Wildeve and a landscape painter is that the latter pays attention to their surroundings and strives to make sense of them in their art, while the former refuses to give back anything to the earth that supports him. A healthy mode of relating to the world is one in which "the world and I reciprocate one another", to borrow Abram's words (Abram, "The Spell of the Sensuous" 33). In that sense, any behaviour that would deny or prevent such a reciprocity is shown as an anomaly in Hardy's and Lawrence's novels. Like Wildeve, Gerald, in *Women in Love,* is unable to connect to his environment and to see any

mutual interests he may share with it. As he is standing among the Austrian Alps with his lover Gudrun, he gets impatient at her being absorbed in the admiration of the setting sun over the mountain peaks:

> 'What does the twilight matter?' he said. 'Why do you grovel before it? Is it so important to you?'
>
> She winced in violation and in fury.
>
> 'Go away,' she cried, 'and leave me to it. It is beautiful, beautiful,' she sang, in strange rhapsodic tones. 'It is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen in my life. Don't try and come between it and me. Take yourself away, you are out of place—' (Lawrence, *WL* 447)

In this passage, Gerald intrudes on Gudrun's symbiotic experience of the world, as he becomes a physical obstacle between the young woman and her surroundings. The twilight does matter, Lawrence suggests, in the same way as we matter as humans. In their novels, Both Hardy and Lawrence advocate for the preservation of a state of symbiosis that aims at easing away the sense of loneliness which inevitably comes hand in hand with living in the Anthropocene. In *The Logos of the Living World: Merleau-Ponty, Animals and Language*, Louis Wrestling argues that "if we can understand our intertwining with all the others – and the synergies among us which parallel the synergies among all the cells and symbiotic bacteria within our bodies – we can escape the sense of lonely isolation that Ionesco described as the quality of modern life" (Wrestling 135). In the works of the two authors, the synergies Wrestling is referring to can be illustrated through a sensation felt in a character's body, leading to a peaceful feeling, or through a visual effect produced by the description of a character's physical appearance. In Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, once Connie has reconnected with her material self, she gets to feel the "ancient melancholy" coming from Wragby Wood, "somehow soothing to her, better than the harsh insentience of the world" (Lawrence, *LCL* 65). Later, she experiences a physical joy at "putting the soft roots of young plants into a soft black puddle" and feels "a quiver in her womb, (…) as if the sunshine had touched it and made it happy" (Lawrence, *LCL* 162). As she is giving some energy back to the earth by replanting the carnations, Connie is instantly rewarded with a feeling of serenity and her material self is being replenished in turn. For both authors, the challenge lies in making symbiosis palpable and visible to the reader, so that he or she may notice all the reciprocal processes at work in our daily lives. In Hardy, symbiosis is visible upon the characters' physical appearances, during the most commonplace or trivial

moments of their lives. Walking in through a door becomes a symbiotic action in Hardy's fictional world, as exemplified in the following extract from *The Return of the Native*: "The oblique band of sunlight which followed [Thomasin] through the door became the young wife well. It illuminated her as her presence illuminated the heath" (Hardy, *TRN* 209). Here, the use of a chiasmic structure allows the author to invoke a visual representation of the reciprocal dynamic governing the relationship between Thomasin and the heath in the reader's mind. Rather than being an entity *environing* her, the heath appears as a partner whose cooperation ensures Thomasin's well-being and prosperity. Yet, an ecological issue necessarily arises from Lawrence's and Hardy's representations of the reciprocal relations between self and world: how is one to reconcile the notion of symbiosis with that of the environment?

In his innovative lexicon, Albrecht includes the phrase "the environment" (the definite article and the noun forming an entity) only to challenge it and ultimately debunk the concept entirely. According to the Australian philosopher, "the term 'the environment' makes no sense: it is a category mistake, a product of erroneous thinking typical of Anthropocene separation" (Albrecht 101). Paradoxically enough, an ecological novel should then be a work of fiction in which the notion of the environment has been annihilated, rather than a work in which the setting serves to locate and contextualise the story. As much as I agree, to some extent, with Elizabeth Carolyn Miller's assertion according to which "the environment", in Hardy, "is determined by the human just as the human is determined by the environment" (Miller 701), I have yet to object that there is no such thing as an environment in Hardy's fiction. Indeed, the natural world does not *environ* Hardy's characters but encompasses them, just as the natural world seems to be encompassed by the characters in turn. In *The Return of the Native*, a figure walking on the barrow is "so much like an organic part of the entire motionless structure that to see it move would have impressed the mind as a strange phenomenon" (Hardy, *TRN* 17-18), and every furze-cutter is "so involved in furze by his methods of carrying the faggots that he appear[s] like a bush on legs till he ha[s] thrown them down" (Hardy, *TRN* 19). What is common to these two quotes is the representation of a humanity interwoven with the natural world, to such an extent that the demarcation between them vanishes and the notion of the environment loses its relevance. In that sense, those passages accord with Merleau-Ponty's theory of embodiment, which posits that "to be a body, is to be tied to a certain world" and that "our body is not primarily in space: it is of it" (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 171). Merleau-Ponty's assertion underlines the problematic dimension of "the environment" which, by definition, fails to include humanity in its midst. Characters and settings are created by Hardy in a concomitant

way, since one is inextricably bound up to the other. In order to further introduce Clym's personality to the reader, the narrator explains how he "had been so inwoven with the heath in his boyhood that hardly anybody could look upon it without thinking of him" (Hardy, *TRN* 168). As a reader of Hardy, Lawrence has pinpointed such interminglement of characters and settings as a defining characteristic of Hardy's fiction. In his *Study of Thomas Hardy*, he concludes his analysis of Hardy's characters in *The Return of the Native* as follows: "Out of the body of this crude earth are born Eustacia, Wildeve, Mistress Yeobright, Clym, and all the others. They are one year's accidental crop" (Lawrence, *Study* 25). Through an organic metaphor, Lawrence illustrates how humans and nature form a material whole, in Hardy's novel, and how this automatically leads to the annihilation of the hierarchical superiority of man. What Lawrence notes about Hardy's 1878 novel is also true, I argue, of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and in particular of Tess herself, this "child of the soil" (Hardy, *Tess* 369) who is often described walking "amid the north-eastern undulations of the Vale in which she had been born and in which her life had unfolded" (Hardy,*Tess* 36). In fact, the emphasis on Tess's materiality does not make her an exception in Hardy's fiction, since any other character, however secondary he or she might be, is endowed with the same natural ability to make an integral part of the natural world. In chapter ten of phase the first, for instance, as the young villagers are setting off to go home in the middle of the night from the Chaseborough market fair, the description of such a trivial scene gives Hardy yet another opportunity to underscore how inseparable every human life is from the natural world. In the following scene, Hardy explores the experience of intoxication shared by the villagers and the state of material unconsciousness that emerges as a result, in order to produce a very visual representation of the annihilation of "the environment":

> And these children of the open air, whom even excess of alcohol could scarce injure permanently, betook themselves to the field path; and as they went there moved onward with them, around the shadow of each one's head, an opalized circle of glory, formed by the moon's rays upon the glistening sheet of dew. Each pedestrian could see no halo but his or her own, which never deserted the head-shadow, whatever its unsteadiness might be; but adhered to it, and persistently beautified it; till the erratic motions seemed an inherent part of the irradiation, and the fumes of their breathing a component of the night's mist; and the spirit of the scene, and of the moonlight, and of Nature, seemed harmoniously to mingle with the spirit of wine. (Hardy, *Tess* 68-69)

Here, the dissolution of the environment in favour of a material whole encompassing humans and non-humans alike is primarily conveyed through the use of verbs such as "to mingle", "to adhere" or to "be part of", associated with the recurrence of inclusive prepositions such as "of", "to", or "with". Then, a particular focus on their breathing illustrates the ultimate reciprocity that defines the relationship between man and world, since breathing, according to David Abram, "involves a continual oscillation between exhaling and inhaling, offering ourselves to the world at one moment and drawing the world into ourselves at the next" (Abram, *Becoming Animal* 61). The characters actually seem to be intoxicated as much from the wine as from their achieving a state of complete harmony and co-existence with the world, which Albrecht refers to as symbiosis. As the "fumes of their breathing" become "a component of the night's mist", the villagers are indeed engaging in a give-and-take relationship with the material world, since "earth is not merely that dense presence underfoot – it is also the transparent air that enfolds us" (Abram, *Becoming Animal* 60). In that sense, this scene, along with the different passages from *The Return of the Native* quoted above, can all be considered as literary renderings of Albrecht's pioneering concept of symbioment, which he coined in replacement of the unsatisfactory notion of the environment. In his lexicon, Albrecht contends that the symbioment "is a recognition that, at its foundation, life is all about the *sumbios*, or the 'living together', with each other and other types of beings" (Albrecht 101, emphasis in the original). Hardy and Lawrence's ecological approach is not about displaying how human beings may protect their environment; on the contrary, I suggest that the two authors' green writing rests upon the creation of human characters who are living in the symbioment and experiencing co-existence in their daily lives. Albrecht's symbioment might take different forms and be conveyed through various imageries, such as that of a circuit, in Lawrence's "Fantasia of the Unconscious": "Between an individual and any external object with which he has an affective connection, there exists a vital flow, as definite and concrete as the electric current whose polarised circuit sets our tram-cars running and our lamps shining, or our Marconi wires vibrating" (Lawrence, *PFU* 153). This "vital flow" Lawrence is referring to is nothing but the symbiotic relation between character and world which can be found in Hardy's fiction and which is often conveyed by an imagery of weaving. In his novels, Lawrence makes a difference between the modern world in which one can get tangled and lost, and the natural world, with which one should willingly intermingle in order to experience life to the fullest. In *Women in Love*, when Gudrun finds herself in the streets of Beldover on a Friday night (pay day for the colliers), she feels stuck in a human web she does not feel she belongs to and instinctively seeks refuge in nature: "She felt

she was sinking into one mass with the rest – all so close and intermingled and breathless. It was horrible. She stifled. She prepared for flight, feverishly she flew to her work. But soon she let go. She started off into the country – the darkish, glamourous country. The spell was beginning to work again" (Lawrence, *WL* 118). Being part of the symbioment, Lawrence suggests, is not about "sinking into one mass with the rest", but is about actively participating in co-constituting what Merleau-Ponty calls the Flesh. In *The Visible and the Invisible*, the French philosopher argues that "my body is made of the same flesh as the world (it is a perceived), and moreover that this flesh of my body is shared by the world, the world reflects it, encroaches upon it and it encroaches upon the world" (Merleau-Ponty, *VI* 248). Merleau-Ponty's concept of flesh goes beyond the experience of interminglement that Gudrun is trying to escape in the extract previously quoted. In fact, the young woman turns to nature in order to engage in a weaving process, rather than a braiding one. The distinction between those two imageries is introduced and developed by Ariane Mildenberg, who writes, in *Modernism and Phenomenology: Literature, Philosophy, Art*:

> There is a difference between weaving and braiding. Weaving uses two distinct sets of elements: warp threads and weft threads. Weft threads can be on a shuttle to weave in and out of the warp threads. While the warp and the weft remain separate in weaving, in a braid the thread works as both the weft and the warp. Braiding structures are produced by crossing three or more strands in various zigzagging ways so that the warp becomes the weft and vice versa: there are no distinct sets of elements. (Mildenberg 1)

According to Mildenberg's explanation, the braiding process further bridges the gap between self and world, so that symbiosis becomes an intermediary process meant to ultimately lead to the abolition of distinctions. Quite similarly to Merleau-Ponty, who "braids rather than weaves selves, others and world into one thick, intersubjective texture" (Mildenberg 2), Lawrence creates characters who strive to have their bodies "caught up in the tissue of the things, draw[ing] [the world] entirely to itself, incorporat[ing] it, and, with the same movement, communicat[ing] to the things upon which it closes over that identity without superposition, that difference without contradiction, that divergence between the within and the without that constitutes its natal secret" (Merleau-Ponty, *VI* 135). As Gudrun discovers the majestic Austrian Alps, an internal focalisation allows the reader to fathom how much the young woman is longing to abolish the demarcation between herself and the world: "If she could but come there,

alone, and pass into the infolded navel of eternal snow and of uprising, immortal peaks of snow and rock, she would be a oneness with all, she would be herself the eternal, infinite silence, the sleeping, timeless, frozen centre of the All" (Lawrence, *WL* 410). As exemplified in this passage, a sense of fulfilment and liberation is often associated with the braiding process experienced by Lawrence's protagonists. Paradoxically enough, the collapsing of boundaries between self and world does not lead to the dissolution of one's individuality, which is in keeping with Merleau-Ponty's notion of "difference without contradiction" evoked above. Indeed, Christine Leroy notes how Merleau-Ponty's thinking evolves through time, as the flesh is being distinguished from the Flesh of the world (with a capital letter), thus suggesting two apparently conflicting ideas: "The world and I are made of the same tissue" and "this tissue is not the same for the world and for me" (Leroy, *La Phénoménologie* 168).[11] Rather than preventing self-development and being a threat to the integrity of the self, the braiding process seems to be concomitant with self-empowerment. This is particularly true in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, where the imagery of interlacing – which may be used in reference to braiding – pervades the scenes in which Connie is trying to reconnect to her body and to the world. As she is sitting down against a tree, watching "the daffodils go sunny in a burst of sun" and catching "the faint tarry scent of the flowers", the young woman is feeling liberated while being taken up into the vital flow of the Flesh: "And then, being so still and alone, she seemed to get into the current of her proper destiny. She had been fastened by a rope, and jagging and snarring like a boat at its moorings. Now she was loose and adrift" (Lawrence, *LCL* 86). The narrator's use of a nautical metaphor serves to illustrate how Connie's new-found anchorage in her body actually allows her to float away further and further into herself and into the Flesh of the world. As the story unfolds, Connie's own interiority is directly characterised by the imagery of braiding, her material body working "as both the weft and the warp" in such a process (Mildenberg 1). During one of those tedious evenings with her husband, which are so dreaded by the young woman, she suddenly does not need to be out in the wood to be able to be part of the symbioment, as the braiding seems to be happening within her own body, without any conscious effort on her part. While she pretends to be listening to Clifford reading Racine to her, Connie is described by the narrator as follows: "She was like a forest, like the dark interlacing of the oakwood, humming inaudibly with myriad unfolding buds. Meanwhile the birds of desire were asleep in

[11] My translation. Leroy writes: "[Mais Merleau-Ponty introduit une marque distinctive, qui pourrait passer inaperçue : la « Chair du monde » va prendre, au fil de sa réflexion, (…) une majuscule, afin qu'on la distingue de la « chair » vécue subjectivement. Il y a donc coïncidence :] le monde et moi sommes faits du même tissu, [mais également une dissidence] : ce tissu n'est pas le même pour le monde et pour moi. »

the vast interlaced intricacy of her body" (Lawrence, *LCL* 138). Here, Connie's body serves as another illustration of Lawrence's positive inertia evoked earlier in this chapter. What is striking, however, is the use of the interlacing imagery to represent the vital energy contained both in the flesh of one's body and in the Flesh of the world. The braiding process, Lawrence seems to suggest, actually starts within one's body, just as "attention to life is the awareness we experience of 'nascent movements' in our bodies" (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 90-91). Whether one chooses to call it the symbioment, the Flesh of the world, or even "the mesh,"[12] the development of the material whole that self and world shape together is contingent on embodiment, that is, on one's lived experience of one's body. Because "*different* does not mean *separate*" (Adams, "The Interpermeation of Self and World" 60), in Hardy and Lawrence's world, experiencing one's body as one distinct entity and thriving in that recovered material individuality (as Connie does) is not antithetical with an ecological approach to the world. In fact, Edward S. Casey argues that one might still consider the body as a boundary, "insofar as this term is taken to mean a porous edge that permits flow or traffic across it in more than one direction. It is closest to being a threshold, given that it is through my body's edge that I gain access to the world" (Casey, "At the Edges of my Body" 245). This conception of the skin as a "porous edge" accords with Merleau-Ponty's dialectic of the flesh and the Flesh of the world, in that it allows for braiding to take place, while preserving the material integrity of the body.

In the multi-authorial work entitled *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*, Laura Sewall writes that the ecological self is characterised by its experiencing "a permeability and fluidity" that may manifest as "an empathy and identity with family, friend, lover, community, humanity, and similarly, with the whole of the nonhuman world" (Sewall 203). If permeability is to be understood in a figurative way in Sewall's argument, I find that the permeable dimension of the ecological self is illustrated quite literally in Hardy's and Lawrence's novels, through the creation of characters whose bodies are characterised by the "porous edges" Casey is evoking. In fact, material permeability naturally leads to emotional permeability in the two authors' works, since a porous skin implies an intentional movement towards the world. Contrary to philosophers, novelists have many literary devices at their disposal in order to illustrate the necessary permeability of the ecological self and to make visible to the modern readers a natural process which they often tend to neglect. Lawrence's *Women in Love*, which, in appearance, is merely about the journey of two couples as they fall

[12] "The mesh" is introduced by Timothy Morton in his book *The Ecological Thought* and serves to illustrate the notion of interconnectedness (Morton 15).

in and out of love, is actually about the journey of two protagonists as they strive to find their ecological selves or, in Gerald's case, to deny it. Many scenes are made very visual by the author, so that the crucial moment when one character accesses his or her ecological self is necessarily imprinted in the reader's mind as a very material and concrete process. The picnic scene in which Gudrun encounters the cattle by the river is the first demonstration of the young woman's openness to the world, as the scene illustrates not only a connection between Gudrun and the highland cows, but an actual exchange of energy from one to the other. Insofar as Gudrun has "the electric pulse from their breasts running into her hands" (Lawrence, *WL* 168), it makes no doubt that the edges of her body are indeed porous and capable of welcoming the vital flow coming from the cattle. Later, this will be confirmed during the two couples' trip to the Austrian Alps, where Gudrun will physically experience the collapse of the environment into the symbioment. Indeed, the trivial activity of sledging becomes an opportunity for the young woman to achieve this sense of belonging that she has been yearning for. If the boundaries of Gudrun's body are clearly described as permeable during the whole descent, the boundaries of the natural world are indeed shown to be similarly porous, which results in a very reciprocal process:

> For Gudrun herself, she seemed to pass altogether into the whiteness of the snow, she became a pure, thoughtless crystal. (…) And it seemed to her like a garden, with the peaks for pure flowers, and her heart gathering them. (…)
>
> She felt as if her senses were being whetted on some fine grindstone, that was keen as flame. The snow sprinted on either side, like sparks from a blade that is being sharpened, the whiteness round about ran swifter, swifter, in pure flame the white slope flew against her, and she fused like one molten, dancing globule, rushed through a white intensity. Then there was a great swerve at the bottom, when they swung as it were in a fall to earth, in the diminishing motion. (Lawrence, *WL* 420)

Here, Gudrun and the white snow of the Alps are being braided together in such a powerful way that they become one unique whole. Permeation becomes what Will W. Adams calls "interpermeation"[13] and Gudrun, who has "no separate consciousness for Gerald" (Lawrence, *WL* 420), can achieve an ultimate form of environmental consciousness. Indeed, Adams

[13] Adams defines interpermeation as "the vital way in which one thing flows or passes into another thing, dissolves and diffuses throughout the other, pervades the other, affects every aspect of the other, and actually becomes part of the other" (Adams, "The Interpermeation of Self and World" 45).

explains how “in interpermeation, the supposed separation of self and world is transcended”, which naturally leads us “to understand ourselves and reality differently, and to be more aware and compassionate with others and the natural world” (Adams, “The Interpermeation of Self and World” 39). According to Adams, the degree of permeability of one’s body therefore determines one’s ability to empathise and care for the other, human or non-human. In that sense, Birkin, in *Women in Love*, is probably the character who comes closest to the ideal ecological self that Lawrence is trying to invoke in his fiction. Contrary to Gudrun, who experiences a symbiotic relating to the world quite by chance, during a trivial activity, Birkin is willingly seeking a material give-and-take interaction with the natural world as he goes out into the open field and decides to take off his clothes. As he does so, Birkin gets involved in an interpermeation process which results in offering him the ontological answers he has been longing for:

> He was happy in the wet hill-side, that was overgrown and obscure with bushes and flowers. He wanted to touch them all, to saturate himself with the touch of them all. He took off his clothes, and sat down naked among the primroses, moving his feet among the primroses, his legs, his knees, his arms right up to the arm-pits, then lying down and letting them touch his belly, his breasts. It was such a fine, cool, subtle touch all over him, he seemed to saturate himself with their contact. (…)
>
> Nothing else would do, nothing else would satisfy, except this coolness and subtlety of vegetation traveling into one’s blood. How fortunate he was, that there was this lovely, subtle, responsive vegetation, waiting for him, as he waited for it; how fulfilled he was, how happy! (…)
>
> The leaves and the primroses and the trees, they were really lovely and cool and desirable, they really came into the blood and were added on to him. He was enriched now immeasurably, and so glad. (Lawrence, *WL* 106-107)

This passage is built around the sense of touch which is commonly located at the edge of one’s body and which is made possible by the skin acting as a threshold rather than a boundary – as was suggested earlier by Casey. The fact that Birkin “touches them all” and “let[s] them touch his belly” in return suggests that the permeation is complete and that the unilateral mode of relating to the world, typical of the Anthropocene, has been transcended. The young man experiences a sort of material empathy which ultimately allows him to become, quite literally, a larger-than-life character who has been nourished and enlarged by the plants. The ontological

power of interpermeation is a phenomenon that can also be observed in Hardy's work, in which, Elaine Scarry argues, "there is an enhancement, almost a physical enlargement of the individual that results from his immersion in the material of his work" (Scarry 96). In her book entitled *Work and the Body in Hardy and other Nineteenth-Century Novels*, Scarry suggests that there is much interpermeation at work in Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, as she notes how "animal tissue, human tissue, vegetable tissue repeatedly collides with something outside its own boundaries" (Scarry 95). Permeation is indeed a common feature of Hardy's fiction, insofar as the distant position of the observing narrator often creates optical illusions suggesting that characters are being absorbed into the setting, forming an actual symbioment.[14] As is the case in Lawrence, the most commonplace activities become opportunities for the narrator to draw the reader's attention to the way characters and settings are interlaced. Earlier in this chapter, I mentioned how the villagers, on their way back from the Chaseborough fair, become an integral part of the setting and demonstrate the irrelevance of the notion of the environment. I would like to qualify this argument by underlining how Tess and the villagers are actually engaged in an interactive process that suggests both the permeability of their bodies and of the world. As they walk along the path, "themselves and surrounding nature" are said to be "forming an organism of which all the parts harmoniously and joyously interpenetrat[e] each other" (Hardy, *Tess* 65). What at first glance might appear as a hyperbolic representation of the close friendship between young people who are having a particularly good time actually takes up an ecological dimension through the process of interpermeation. Because "it is only when intimacy is felt palpably as no separation that its essential connection with care becomes evident" (Puhakka 11), this scene suggests that the villagers feel responsible for both their mates and the natural world as a whole. Opening oneself to the organic whole is both to become a larger self and to decide to be selfless, that is, to care for who or what is not oneself. Such an altruistic personality is to be found in another of Hardy's novel, *The Return of the Native*, with the character of Diggory Venn, the reddleman, who thinks about others' needs and wellbeing before his own. Interestingly enough, Venn comes across as a very mystic character covered in an organic substance, the reddle, which seems to bring him even closer to the natural world. In several

[14] An example of such a device may be found in the first pages of the novel (Phase the First, chapter III), when Tess gets her first glimpse of her future husband: "It was not till the rays of sun had absorbed the young stranger's retreating figure on the hill that she shook off her temporary sadness and answered her would-be partner in the affirmative" (Hardy, *Tess* 19).

instances, Venn appears to be just another part of the natural environment rather than a human being:

> The reddleman would now have been quite invisible, even by daylight; the turves standing upon him with the heather upwards, looked precisely as if they were growing. (Hardy, *TRN* 83)
>
> He vanished entirely. The nook among the bambles where his van had been standing was as vacant as ever the next morning, and scarcely a sign remained to show that he had been there, excepting a few straws, and a little redness on the turf, which was washed away by the next storm of rain. (Hardy, *TRN* 163-164)

In the blink of an eye, Venn's presence is literally "washed away" by the storm, as if the man were reduced to the red substance covering his body just as he is reduced to his occupation and reddish appearance by the other characters. If, as William A. Cohen notes in an article, the material dimension of Clym is not to be downplayed, "Diggory is literally saturated with [the landscape], for his skin is impregnated with rufous material dug out of the earth" (Cohen 448). As the most selfless of all, Venn is also the most organic character, thus emphasising the link between interpermeation and the emergence of an environmental consciousness. Hardy's and Lawrence's novels are thus filled with characters who are showing us the way towards a world in which humans cannot make indelible alterations to the Earth anymore, since they have become the Earth themselves. To Merleau-Ponty's previously quoted rhetorical question about the relevance of putting a limit between body and world, Hardy and Lawrence offer an answer through their fiction, by demonstrating how there is indeed no boundary and how the interests of the Earth are our own interests too. The lives of Hardy's and Lawrence's characters are not unfolding in an Anthropocenic setting; rather, they are evolving in an era which has yet to come and which Albrecht confidently coins as the Symbiocene. Albrecht defines this future geological era in a way which, in my opinion, could very well sum up the two authors' ecological approach in their novels. Albrecht writes:

> The symbiocene, as a period in the history of humanity on this Earth, will be characterized by human intelligence and praxis that replicate the symbiotic and mutually reinforcing life-reproducing forms and processes found in living systems. This period of human existence will be a positive affirmation of life, and it offers the possibility of the complete reintegration of the human body, psyche and culture with the rest of life. (Albrecht 102)

What both this definition and Hardy's and Lawrence's work on characterisation suggest, however, is that a sense of involvement in the natural world is a prerequisite for any ecological commitment. In other words, there still seems to remain an anthropocentric dimension to a symbiotic mode of relating to the earth. Indeed, what if humans were actually separate from nature and were protected from the consequences of the destruction of the natural world? What if global warming were not threatening human habitat and safety? Then would humans really care for nature for the sake of nature? Would ecology ever have emerged as an utter disinterested movement? Darwin would likely have answered negatively to that question, since he could not believe that "any animal in the world [could] perform an action for the exclusive good of another of a distinct species" (Darwin 324). In a more hopeful note, I would like to suggest that if humanity as a whole might not be the answer to the ecological conundrum, the ideal of the ecological self might still be found in the non-(hu)man.

CHAPTER EIGHT.
Making Unimportant Lives Matter:
The Emergence of the Ecological Self as a Non-(hu)man Self in Hardy's and Lawrence's Novels

"Whatever the mystery which has brought forth man and the universe it has its own ends, man is not the criterion"
(Lawrence, WL 478)

In chapter six and seven, I have attempted to demonstrate how Hardy and Lawrence's ecological approach is built on embodiment and embeddedness, as they take care to emphasise the intentional dimension of both mind and body. The ecological self that they are drawing out in their fiction has porous mental and bodily edges and engages in a give-and-take relationship with the world which, as Laura Sewall points out, is "not unlike that shared with a lover" (Sewall 213). In the present chapter, I intend to bring sensuality, sex and gender issues into the ecological conversation, so as to better delineate Hardy and Lawrence's ideal ecological self. Interestingly enough, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online offers the word "fleshly" as the closest association to "sensuality" which is said to be "consisting in the gratification of the senses" in many different ways, and not exclusively through sex. Insofar as the ecological self is meant to be entangled in the Flesh of the World, it seems relevant to turn to the two authors' treatment of sensual (or fleshly) pleasures in their novels, in an attempt to further assess the ecological dimension of their writings. To what extent is sensuality part of Hardy and Lawrence's ecological thinking? In what forms is sensuality explored in their fiction? Those questions naturally lead us to take a closer look at the various romantic and/or erotic relationships around which Hardy's and Lawrence's plots are built, as the heteronormativity of those relationships calls in turn for an assessment of the role of gender in sensual encounters. I propose to determine whether or not the ecological self is, according to the two authors, a gendered self, and to demonstrate how gender studies are indeed relevant and crucial to ecocritical studies. The development of the field of ecofeminism in the 1970s has proved as much, positing that "the oppression of women goes hand in hand with the destruction of nature" (Lanone, "Of Furtive Hedgehogs and Steam Machines" 1).[1] We will see how Hardy and Lawrence's ecological self might therefore be found in the female characters of their novels, which raises the issue of the problematic association of nature[2] with the female gender. In *D. H. Lawrence, Ecofeminism and Nature*, Terry Gifford reminds us that "the apparent essentialism implicit in female identification with nature (…) is precisely what ecofeminism, as it emerged in Europe, set out to challenge" (Gifford 2). Beyond any essentialist discourse, I suggest that Hardy and Lawrence take up the challenge of redefining the affinity between woman and nature, by putting forward the empowering dimension of such a relationship.

[1] Lanone reminds us that the word "ecofeminism" was coined by French Feminist Françoise D'Eaubonne in 1974.
[2] The use of the term "nature" has been controversial those past decades in ecocritical studies, for its implication of a conception of nature as an inert object. Throughout this chapter, "nature" will be used from a phenomenological perspective, in keeping with/in accord with Husserl and Merleau-Ponty's conception of it as that entity "with which I have a primordial and original type of relationship" (Merleau-Ponty, *Nature* 142, my translation: « La Nature, c'est ce avec quoi j'ai une relation de caractère original et primordial »).

Associating woman with nature only becomes reductive if one considers nature as separate from and inferior to humanity. In the same way, identifying female characters with non-human characters or underlining their peculiar sensitivity to the suffering of non-human creatures is only problematic if one takes up an anthropocentric position and believes in an all-powerful human race. As we set out to define Hardy and Lawrence's ecological self, both gender studies and animal studies will be useful in locating the ideal environmental argument outside of the constraints of patriarchy, and of human supremacy as a whole.

1. From Ecosensualiy to Eco-awareness: the Ecological Power of Love

In place of the more commonly used concept of ecosexuality, I propose to use the term ecosensuality to explore the way nature is made integral part of erotic experiences in Hardy and Lawrence. In his 2022 book quoted above, Gifford contends that eroticism necessarily includes "a non-sexual mode of connection" and "a spiritual dimension for which the word 'sex' seems inadequate" (Gifford 108). It is indeed a psycho-sensorial mode of connection that is put forward by both authors in their fiction, one which does not merely apply to human-nature sensual encounters but which includes human-human erotic encounters among nature (in the symbioment). As Fiona Fleming reminds us in her article "Thomas Hardy and Ecosexuality", the ecosexual movement which was launched in 2008 "by the artists-activists Beth Stephens and Annie Sprinkle" originates in "a metaphorical shift from Earth as mother to Earth as lover" (Fleming, "Thomas Hardy and Ecosexuality" 2), without necessarily including the ecological dimension of human erotic experiences. If the representation of Earth as lover is indeed present in Lawrence's fiction, and in particular in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the bulk of the two authors' ecosensual argument is based on the incorporation of human desire into the rest of nature. From that perspective, whenever nature is being sexualised, as a lover or as a means to express one's desire, it is only done in an attempt to make nature part of a symbiotic erotic experience and not as a way to objectify it. Because ecology, Timothy Morton suggests, "has to do with warmth and tenderness; hospitality, wonder and love" (Morton 77), the incorporation of the natural world into the realm of human desires participates in making Hardy's and Lawrence's love stories part of a green writing tradition. In an attempt to add an ecological layer to the romantic narrative arcs of their novels, the two authors make sure that the characters' feelings and desires are indeed expressed in natural terms. In Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, for instance, the narrator uses various rhetorical figures to associate love with the natural world, as a way to

remind the reader that to get romantically attached to someone is an ecological experience. Indeed, Eustacia's intense yearning for affection is compared to the experience of someone walking in a desert, who "would be thankful for brackish water" (Hardy, *TRN* 72), thus simultaneously making her longing for love an actual vital need and associating it with one of the four natural elements. By the end of the novel, after the love story between Eustacia and Clym has unfolded and ended tragically, it is through a natural metaphor that Clym's incapacity to love again is expressed. Through an internal focalisation on Clym, the narrator explains:

> His passion for her had occurred too far on in his manhood to leave fuel enough on hand for another fire of that sort, as may happen with more boyish loves. Even supposing him capable of loving again, that love would be a plant of slow and laboured growth, and in the end only small and sickly, like an autumn-hatched bird. (Hardy, *TRN* 377)

As part of the traditional representation of passion as fire, the reference to fuel may even be analysed as a paronomasia with the word "feel", thus using again one of the four natural elements to qualify a character's (in)ability to get romantically attached. Love becomes earthly, as the two-folded vegetal and animal metaphor conveys the frailty of the romantic feelings that Clym might develop in the future. "Intimacy need not be mental", Edward S. Casey writes, "but can be found in our body and in the places around us: in the houses and gardens, fields and forests, in which our bodies live and move" (Casey *Getting Back into Place* 312). It is precisely because desire stems from the body and the body is entangled in the Flesh of the World that intimacy, in Hardy's and Lawrence's fictions, is indeed best described in natural terms. So as to better explain his reluctance to let himself go when in sensual encounters with Clara, Paul, in Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, declares to the young woman: "If I start to make love to you, I just go like a leaf down the wind" (Lawrence, *SL* 407). Whether it be in Hardy or in Lawrence, there is always a sense of vulnerability that emerges from their vegetal metaphors, thus implicitly associating the state of being in love with the living experience of non-human entities which are, just like lovers, exposed to the threat of otherness. Through that type of rhetorical device, the authors are able to raise awareness among their readers about the vulnerable state of the natural world which they should cherish and protect, as we would a lover whom we do not wish to hurt. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Lawrence suggests that the modern innovations and practices that have led to the Anthropocene are endangering the natural world in the same way that they are threatening human intimacy. After his first sexual encounter with Connie,

Mellors reflects on what has happened and on the social constraints that necessarily need to be overcome to experience such a blissful connection. As he thinks back to the pleasure he has felt, his lingering desire draws him back into the wood:

> Stretching with the curious yawn of desire, for he had been alone and apart from man or woman for four years, he rose and took his coat again, and his gun, lowered the lamp and went out into the starry night, with the dog. Driven by desire, and by dread of the malevolent Thing outside, he made his round in the wood, slowly, softly. He loved the darkness and folded himself into it. It fitted the turgidity of his desire which, in spite of all, was like a riches: the stirring restlessness of his penis, the stirring fire in his loins! Oh, if only there were other men to be with, to fight that sparkling-electric Thing outside there, to preserve the tenderness of life, the tenderness of women, and the natural riches of desire. (Lawrence, *LCL* 120)

In this passage, Mellors' symbiotic connection with the wood is only reinforced by his desire for Connie, which is clearly referred to as a natural treasure that should be preserved, like an endangered species. "The tenderness of life" (associated to nature) and "the tenderness of women" (associated with sexual desire) come together into "the natural riches of desire", and the act of love consequently becomes an act of resistance against the destruction of nature by modern societies. Because one is able to connect to the world through the senses, the gratification of the senses achieved through erotic encounters participates in building a healthy relationship with the rest of the world and in fostering a sense of responsibility towards it. As opposed to ecosexuality, I would argue that to be ecosensual is not necessarily to feel tenderness towards nature, but to become aware of the ecological dimension of any tender or erotic gesture towards the other. Taking up the challenge of conveying to the reader what tenderness is about, Lawrence once again turns to nature and natural metaphors that serve to associate intimacy with the experience of being entangled with the rest of nature, in the symbioment. The flawed intimacy between Connie and her husband Clifford is described in natural terms, only to better emphasise the unnaturalness of it. In reference to Connie's attachment to her husband, the narrator writes about "her roots, perhaps mortal ones", being "tangled with Clifford's" (Lawrence, *LCL* 84), and uses the extended vegetal metaphor to underline how unhealthy that type of intimacy actually is: "It was as if thousands of little roots and threads of consciousness in him and her had grown together into a tangled mass, till they could crowd no more and the plant was dying" (Lawrence, *LCL* 83). More than being unhealthy, Connie's and Clifford's

relationship is portrayed as toxic for both parties, precisely because their intimacy involves neither the flesh nor the Flesh.[3] What is lacking in the two characters' relationship, Lawrence suggests, is not only the physical dimension, but also the natural one, that is, the involvement of natural elements in the experience of their intimacy. Insofar as the notion of environment has been annihilated, it comes as no surprise that nature should have a role to play in any romantic encounter, just as any romantic bond should have an impact on the preservation of nature. In Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, love is given to be understood by the reader within the frame of the natural world, while characters themselves are meant to turn towards nature in order to see signs that their love is being reciprocated. Not only are the characters' romantic feelings associated with nature metaphorically, but they are directly expressed *through* nature, that is, using natural elements. Wildeve is a character particularly apt to use non-human entities for his own benefits, namely to express his love to Eustacia and encourage her to love him back. As he stands outside of Clym and Eustacia's home, the natural world becomes a compelled ally in his scheme to win her love back:

> Wildeve contemplated her for a minute, and then retreating into the heath beat the ferns lightly, whereupon moths flew out alarmed. Securing one, he returned to the window, and, holding the moth to the chink, opened his hand. The moth made towards the candle upon Eustacia's table, hovered around it two or three times, and flew into the flame.
>
> Eustacia started up. This had been a well-known signal in old times when Wildeve had used to come secretly wooing her to Mistover's. (Hardy, *TRN* 264)

Beyond Wildeve's utilitarian view of nature, I suggest that this passage is one instance of the involvement of nature in the romantic plot of the novel and serves to remind the readers that all characters, even those who are reluctant to admit it, actually need the intervention of nature to build long-standing relationships. When the natural world is indeed included in the development of a couple's relationship, characters, such as Eustacia and Clym at the onset of their romance, are "enclosed in a sort of luminous mist" and to appear "like those double stars which revolve round and round each other, and from a distance appear to be one" (Hardy, *TRN* 235). Here, the stellar comparison used by the narrator to portray the two happy lovers serves to demonstrate that nature is involved in the growth of their feelings to the point that they

[3] See chapter 7 for a clarification of the difference between Merleau-Ponty's flesh and Flesh (of the world).

ultimately become integral parts of the natural world.[4] A sense of belonging, to one's lover and to the world, is therefore predominant in those passages where natural forces have a central role to play in fostering – or impeding – the development of love stories.

In her article "Thomas Hardy and Ecosexuality", Fiona Fleming contends that "the sensual enjoyment Eustacia derives from the caresses of brambles and brush-like bushes comments on the sexual inadequacy of her human lovers, Wildeve and Yeobright, and establishes the heath as a surrogate lover" (Fleming 30). If my own ecosensual argument intends to go beyond the ecosexual Earth-as-lover conception in Hardy and Lawrence, I nevertheless concur with Fleming's view of the heath as a triggering factor in Eustacia's realisation of her utter solitude. It is indeed during her numerous walks in the fields, through her physical contact with the heath, that her senses are awakened and her desire rekindled. Despite their aversion for the heath, Eustacia and Wildeve are forced to admit that the symbioment in which they are entangled has been facilitating their encounters and the growth of their feelings. In an attempt to convince Eustacia that she should not give up on him, Wildeve reminisces about the good times they had, sheltered by the seclusion of the heath: "Eustacia, how we roved among the bushes last year, when the hot days had got cool, and the shades of the hills kept us almost invisible in the hollows!" (Hardy, *TRN* 85). Yet, if the heath can be protective of one's love, it can also be responsible for preventing a relationship to be built – or in Eustacia and Wildeve's case, built anew. Indeed, as soon as their relationship becomes adulterous, their symbioment seems to cease to facilitate their encounters and to stand, quite literally, between them: "He had come forward after throwing the last pebble, and the fire now shone into each of their faces from the bank stretching breast-high between them" (Hardy, *TRN* 333). Here, Wildeve has been throwing pebbles at Eustacia's window to draw her attention, but when she reluctantly comes out, they remain physically separated by the bank that Eustacia now uses as a shield against temptation: "Don't, don't come over to me!" (Hardy, *TRN* 333). Surprising as it might be to a character who has such a strong aversion against what she merely considers as her "environment", the heath still remains an ally in the preservation of her moral values. In fact, nature seems to be guiding the way for Eustacia to commit to a healthy relationship with Clym who has been the object of her desire even before he appeared on the scene. Natural elements, in *The Return of the Native*, know how to be discreet when needed, so as to leave room for love stories to unfold. The moon, which is traditionally associated with female energy and

[4] It is worth noting that the reference to astronomy to talk about love is a topos in Hardy's writing, and one which has been extensively explored in his novel *Two on a Tower*, published four years after *The Return of the Native*.

womanhood in general, has an ecosensual function and is not merely limited to any essentialist discourse. Rather than protecting female organic functions, the moon acts as a catalyst for Eustacia's and Clym's desire for one another, thus playing an active role in the development of their relationship. In chapter IV of Phase Third, while the effacement of the moon through the eclipse makes the Blackbarrow even darker, the two characters' passionate love can shine brighter:

> While he watched the far-removed landscape a tawny stain grew into being on the lower verge—the eclipse had begun. This marked a preconcerted moment—for the remote celestial phenomenon had been pressed into sublunary service as a lover's signal. Yeobright's mind flew back to earth at the sight; he arose, shook himself and listened. Minute after minute passed by, perhaps ten minutes passed, and the shadow on the moon perceptibly widened. He heard a rustling on his left hand, a cloaked figure with an upturned face appeared at the base of the Barrow, and Clym descended. In a moment the figure was in his arms, and his lips upon hers. (Hardy, *TRN* 193)

Here, the entire eclipse process is turned into an ecosensual phenomenon that involves the two lovers. Whether the eclipse has been triggered by Eustacia and Wildeve's encounter, or whether the physical fusion of the two characters has been made possible by the eclipse, the reader is at a loss to determine, but the result is undoubtedly a harmonious picture of two individuals sealing their love in close cooperation with natural forces. Later, the sun will take over and the two lovers will "form a very comely picture of love at full flush, as they [will walk] along the valley that late afternoon, the sun sloping down on their right, and throwing their thin spectral shadows, tall as poplar trees, far out across the furze and ferns" (Hardy, *TRN* 204). While the heath did not seem to be willing to foster the development of a relationship between Eustacia and Wildeve, the young woman is repeatedly comforted by nature in her decision to choose Clym as a husband. In a very similar way, the natural world seems to be awakening and thriving after Connie, in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, has had her first sensual encounter with Mellors. Despite the adulterous nature of this relationship, the naturalness and healthiness of it is emphasised by the representation of a luxuriant nature: "As she ran home in the twilight, the world seemed a dream, the trees in the park seemed bulging and surging at anchor on a tide, and the heave of the slope to the house was alive" (Lawrence, *LCL* 178). In both Hardy and Lawrence, the reader is actually encouraged to take a side and to approve the one relationship in the novel that involves nature, rather than a relationship that might be happening in spite of

it. In Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, a romantic tie comes across as desirable – that is, natural – when that relationship actually stems from nature and seems to originate in a common intimate connection with the natural world. As the narrator sets the context in which Paul and Miriam's romance starts, the narrator notes how Miriam's obsession with bird nests is paralleled by Paul's admiration of celandines on their way back. "So it was in this atmosphere of subtle intimacy", the narrator observes, "this meeting in their common feeling for something in nature, that their love started" (Lawrence, *SL* 179). In Miriam's experience, the love of nature and the love for the other are actually inseparable as one nourishes the other, in an ecosensual process which considers love as a tool for environmental action. In *D. H. Lawrence, Ecofeminism and Nature*, Gifford considers how "flowers become a medium through which to register the characteristics and tensions in the evolution of Paul's relationship with Miriam" (Gifford 75). Gifford's argument can be illustrated by the following passage, in which nature, rather than acting as a lover, needs the recognition of that lover to properly materialise in Miriam's world:

> He followed her across the nibbled pasture in the dusk. There was a coolness in the wood, a scent of leaves, of honeysuckle, and a twilight. The two walked in silence. Night came wonderfully there, among the throng of dark tree-trunks. He looked round, expectant.
>
> She wanted to show him a certain wild-rose bush she had discovered. She knew it was wonderful. And yet, till he had seen it, she felt it had not come into her soul. Only he could make it her own, immortal. (Lawrence, *SL* 194-195).

Beyond Miriam's access to the natural world being mediated by a male character, which is an issue I will come back to later on in this chapter, this passage metaphorically illustrates the process of a romantic feeling taking roots, or rather, the action of looking for roots which could be strong enough to allow the growth of an enduring love. By giving Paul access to the wild-rose bush she is so fond of, Miriam is simultaneously opening herself up to him, as a flower would to the shining sun, resulting in a state of "communion" (Lawrence, *SL* 195), both between the two lovers and between them and the natural world:

> It was very still. The tree was tall and straggling. It had thrown its briars over a hawthorn bush, and its long streamers trailed thick, right down to the grass, splashing darkness everywhere with great spilt stars, pure white. In bosses of ivory and in large splashed stars the roses gleamed on the darkness of foliage and stems and grass. Paul

> and Miriam stood close together, silent, and watched. Point after point, the steady roses shone out to them, seeming to kindle something in their souls. (Lawrence, *SL* 195)

Here, the wild-rose bush acts as a declaration of love from Miriam to Paul and marks the actual blooming of their feelings for one another. Before Paul, the narrator explains, "her friend, her companion, her lover, was Nature" (Lawrence, *SL* 201). In Lawrence's work, however, I suggest that the nature-as-lover paradigm is overcome to a certain degree, in that the natural world is a medium to ultimately access the other, rather than an end in itself to find love and affection that humans have failed to offer. As "the love in her finger-tips caress[es] the leaves" and "the passion in her heart [comes] to a glow upon the leaves" (Lawrence, *SL* 201), Miriam's feelings are not actually directed towards nature, and the leaves become the recipient of a love they will be responsible for transmitting to Paul in turn. If there is to some extent, as Robert Langbaum remarks, a sexualisation of nature in Lawrence's work (Langbaum 72), I would argue that the author's approach does not aim at making nature an object of desire to be possessed by humans, but rather participates in including human sexual experience in the natural world, thus drawing a parallel between the symbiosis that happens during sexual intercourse and the symbiosis that is achieved in a healthy relationship with nature. Because ecology "has to do with sexuality" (Morton 2), erotic scenes give Lawrence the opportunity to illustrate the evolution from a conception of nature as "the environment" to a meaningful mode of relating to the symbioment. Still in *Sons and Lovers*, the author chooses a natural setting to set the sexual encounter between Paul and Clara, so as to demonstrate, just as Hardy does in *The Return of the Native*, that sensuality cannot be experienced apart from nature:

> All the while the peewits were screaming in the field. When he came to, he wondered what was near his eyes, curving and strong with life in the dark, and what voice it was speaking. Then he realised it was the grass, and the peewit was calling. The warmth was Clara's breathing heaving. He lifted his head, and looked into her eyes. They were dark and shining and strange, life wild at the source staring into his life, stranger to him, yet meeting him; and he put his face down on her throat, afraid. What was she? A strong, strange, wild life, that breathed with his in the darkness through this hour. It was all so much bigger than themselves that he was hushed. They had met, and included in their meeting the thrust of the manifold grass stems, the cry of the peewit, the wheel of the stars. (Lawrence, *SL* 398)

In this passage, Paul seems to be all the more aware of the activities of the natural world after he has experienced sex with Clara, implying that physical proximity with another human being naturally leads to a deepened connection with the world. In her article "A Lover of Nature: Lawrence and Ecosexuality", Laura Ryan reminds us that the ecosexual movement has precisely stemmed from the realisation that humans' alienation from nature was directly related to the neglect of our desires, thus associating "the ecological crises and the erotic crises" (Ryan 2). If Paul and Clara had not had sex out in the open, they could not have met and recognised the importance of "the thrust of the manifold grass stems, the cry of the peewit, the wheel of the stars". Therefore, the "sexual consciousness" Lawrence advocates for in "A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover" (Lawrence, *LCL* 309) seems to emerge simultaneously with an environmental consciousness, as both a proper awareness of the teeming life of the natural world, and as an awareness of one's responsibility towards it.

In *D. H. Lawrence and Tradition*, Langbaum contends that "jouissance", in Lawrence's work, "offers a glimpse of the over-worldly and is the first step towards a reconnection with the spiritual, with an 'other' residing beyond the Symbolic, in the Real – the space where the death instinct and pleasure and pain thrive in full force" (Langbaum 5). Drawing from Langbaum's argument, I suggest that erotic scenes, in Lawrence, have indeed the function of allowing characters to access the Flesh of the world, through fleshly pleasures. In *Sons and Lovers*, not only have Paul and Clara included nature in their sensual encounter, as exemplified in the extract quoted above, but they in turn have been encompassed by something greater than themselves, something that enlarges their selves and makes their human existence insignificant at the same time:

> It was for each of them an initiation and a satisfaction. To know their own nothingness, to know the tremendous living flood which carried them always, gave them rest within themselves. If so great a magnificent power could overwhelm them, identify them altogether with itself, so that they knew they were only grains in the tremendous heave that lifted every grass blade its little height, and every tree, and living thing, then why fret about themselves? They could let themselves be carried by life, and they felt a sort of peace each in the other. There was a verification which they had had together. Nothing could nullify it, nothing could take it away; it was almost their belief in life. (Lawrence, *SL* 398)

Quite unequivocally, this extract illustrates Langbaum's argument according to which Lawrence's "extensive oeuvre stands as testimony to his faith that man and nature acquire cosmic balances and sustainability through the nourishing force of jouissance" (Langbaum 6). A sense of lightness pervades the passage, through the imageries of the breeze and of a tranquil and ever-flowing flood, as if the weight of an exceptional humanity was lifted off the two characters' shoulders. In that instance, Lawrence seems to be suggesting that the experience of the symbioment is not an individual experience but is more likely to be achieved in unison with the loved one who automatically becomes the mediator of our connection to the world. In *Sons and Lovers*, both Clara and Paul fulfil in turn this function for one another, which allows them to feel the very same sense of belonging, at the same time. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, however, only the male lover – Mellors – seems to be assuming that role for Connie, leaving her quite dependent on his touching her flesh to access the Flesh of the world. While nuancing the unilateral character of Connie and Mellors' sexual experience, Terry Gifford admits that the female and the male lovers take up different ontological functions in the act of love-making. He writes: "The tenderness of masculinity that Connie brings out in Mellors is reciprocated by the connection to the whole of creation that Connie gains from sex with him" (Gifford, "Flowers as 'Other'" 71). What transpires in Gifford's reading is, in my opinion, the imbalanced power dynamics between the female and the male lovers, as one is helping the male other to open up again, while the male other is granting to Connie the power to enlarge her being and ultimately find her ecological self. While one process leads to an improvement of the self, it still remains non-essential, as opposed to the vital and primordial need that Connie gets to fulfil through Mellors. As a result, the erotic scenes between the two lovers are characterised by a certain passivity on the part of the female character who is entirely at the gamekeeper's mercy, having her symbiotic powers withdrawn whenever he withdraws from her body: "And yet, when he had finished, soon over, and lay very, very still, receding into a silence and a strange motionless distance far, farther than the horizon of her awareness, her heart began to weep. She could feel him ebbing away, ebbing away, leaving her there like a stone on a shore" (Lawrence, *LCL* 172). The metaphor of the stone left on a shore is quite telling, in that it includes Connie into the natural world, with which the sexual experience has allowed her to connect, while representing the subsequent dissociation from the symbioment that inevitably happens with the withdrawal of the male lover. During sex, through physical contact with Mellors, Connie has been the sea, but once their bodies draw apart, the young woman can only be a stone left on a shore by the sea, because the sea, in fact, might very well be the man. In the wake of one of their sexual

encounters, Connie's womb is described by the narrator as being "open and soft and softly clamouring like a sea-anemone under the tides, clamouring for him to come in again and make a fulfilment for her" (Lawrence, *LCL* 133). Here, the simile associating Connie with "a sea-anemone under the tides" participates in feeding the imagery of the sea as male and in supporting a passive representation of woman during sex. If Lawrence wishes to demonstrate that the Flesh of the World may be accessed through the sexual experience, the passivity of his female character suggests that an active mode of relating to the natural world lies beyond her reach as an individual. In fact, only through the intimate contact with the phallus can Connie be granted proper agency, starting as a sea-anemone and becoming, thanks to Mellors, the sea itself:

> And it seemed she was like the sea, nothing but dark waves rising and heaving, heaving with a great swell, so that slowly her whole darkness was in motion, and she was ocean rolling its dark, dumb mass. Oh, and far down inside her the deeps parted and rolled asunder, in long, far-travelling billows, and ever, at the quick of her, the depths parted and rolled asunder, from the centre of soft plunging, as the plunger went deeper and deeper, touching lower, and she was deeper and deeper and deeper disclosed, and heavier the billows of her rolled away to some shore, uncovering her, and closer and closer plunged the palpable unknown, and further and further rolled the waves of herself away from herself, leaving her, till suddenly, in a soft, shuddering convulsion, the quick of all her plasm was touched, she knew herself touched, the consummation was upon her, and she was gone. She was gone, she was not, and she was born: a woman. (Lawrence, *LCL* 174)

If my reading of Lawrence's erotic scenes tends to underline its patriarchal undertones, it does not intend to exclude or ignore the pride of place that the female experience is given in his novels, along with his efforts to put female pleasure at the forefront of sexual encounters, so as to better normalise it.[5] The scene quoted above is, in my opinion, quite ambivalent, in that it illustrates the author's wish to break the taboo around women's sexual pleasure while it places symbiotic and ontological powers in the hands of the male character alone. As she is taken up into the whirlwind of male waves, Connie is able to connect to the symbioment and to become the sea herself. As a result, the heroine's self is regenerated and she can become the woman she

[5] In *D. H. Lawrence, Ecofeminism and Nature*, Gifford reminds us of Lawrence's "willingness to invite the input of the real female upon which the fictional character is based", and to seek counsel in his female friends as he creates his female characters, to the point of letting them write whole passages (Gifford 76).

evidently had not been until becoming in physical contact with Mellors' manhood. To the organic dimension of the sexual experience conveyed through the imagery of the sea, Lawrence adds a questionable comment on the way female characters are entirely reliant on male characters to access their most accomplished self, that is the ecological self. In that sense, I suggest that Lawrence's use of ecosensuality in *Lady Chatterley's Lover,* through the description of female orgasm in oceanic terms, attests to the author's willingness to ultimately represent the ecological self as a female self, without, however, succeeding in picturing that ideal self outside of patriarchal bounds. What remains unequivocal, in Lawrence's work, is the reinstatement of sexuality in the natural world, as an instinctive experience one should not be ashamed about. In the late-Victorian era, when Hardy was writing his fiction, such an enterprise was more delicate and would probably have caused harsher criticisms and censorship than Lawrence himself suffered in the early twentieth century. Therefore, there are no proper erotic scenes in Hardy's fiction, only scenes which have a sensual undertone or which can be metaphorically interpreted as erotic. Even so, the reader can tell that Hardy's approach of female pleasure is quite different from that of Lawrence. In her work entitled *Women and Sexuality in the Works of Thomas Hardy*, Rosemarie Morgan draws our attention to a particular note Hardy took down in his notebook, while reading George Sand's novel *Mauprat*. From that particular work, Hardy transcribes the following quote: "Men imagine that a woman has no individual existence, and that she ought always to be absorbed in them; and yet they love no woman deeply, unless she elevates herself, by her character, above the weakness and inertia of her sex"[6] (Morgan 41-42). The fact that Hardy took down those words in his notebook says a lot about the imbalance and the paradox that he saw at the root of gender dynamics. The "uncultivated-garden episode" in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, which has been extensively commented upon by critics, and namely by Rosemarie Morgan herself, is indeed one of the most telling examples of Hardy's representation of female erotic desire, to be contrasted with Lawrence's. Beyond the comparison of Tess's sensual experience to a garden that "had been left uncultivated for some years" (Hardy, *Tess* 122), I suggest that this particular scene has an ecosensual dimension which relies exclusively on the female experience, instead of being dependent on the male other. If Tess's desire is indeed aroused by the proximity of her lover Clare, the young woman indulges in an ecstatic mode of relating to her body and to the world, in which she is an active participant. In Hardy's representation of female pleasure, the preservation of a woman's ontological integrity is not antithetical with the vulnerable state

[6] See *The Literary Notes of Thomas Hardy*, 2 vols, ed. Lennart Björk (Gothenburg, 1974), vol. 1, p.271.

induced by the orgasmic process of letting go. Tess can indeed walk "stealthily as a cat through this profusion of growth, gathering cuckoo-spittle on her skirts, cracking snails that were underfoot, staining her hands with thistle milk and slug-slime", all the while "undulat[ing] upon the thin notes [of Clare's harp] as upon billows," their harmonies "pass[ing] like breezes through her, bringing tears to her eyes" (Hardy, *Tess* 122-123). As was noted by Morgan, "the Tess sexually aroused by her passion for Angel is therefore centred in a world of lush fecundity, of vigorous regeneration" (Morgan 61) which, however, does not nullify the woman she has been up until that moment of strong desire for Clare. I can only concur with Morgan's reading of Tess as a non-passive character, whose connection to the natural world is facilitated and made more intense by the encounter with a male lover, but whose access to the ecological self is primarily dependent on her female sensibilities. More often than not, male desire for the heroine is actually what stands in the way of her connecting up to the symbioment. In the tragic passage of her rape which happens out in nature, it is relevant to note that no ecosensual undertone is given to the scene, as a way to emphasise how an ecosensual experience cannot be achieved through non-consensual sex. Tess's rape happens upon "dead leaves", as "darkness and silence rule[s] everywhere around" (Hardy, *Tess* 73). Instead of becoming a woman through the experience of sex, Tess is here robbed of her womanhood (translated as maidenhood in the novel) and, simultaneously, of her harmonious connection to the natural world. While it is most likely that Lawrence would have similarly condemned non-consensual sex as non-ecosensual, his representation of Connie's passivity during sexual intercourse that serves to encompass her being in the symbioment necessarily contrasts with Tess's compelled passivity which, in hurting her most intimate flesh, denies her access to the Flesh of the World. In both authors, however, nature is included in healthy erotic experiences and the naturalness of sex is equally emphasised. Whether or not the mediation of a male character is deemed necessary for female heroines to live harmoniously in the symbioment, it seems that the two authors' conception of the ecological self is most likely to be found in the female mode of relating to the world. Hardy and Lawrence are therefore facing a challenge, that of locating the female experience at the heart of the symbioment, without falling into any essentialist trap.

2. The Natural Woman: between Oppression and Empowerment

In her 2010 book entitled *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self*, Stacy Alaimo sets out to explain, in her introduction, the main reasons why the association of

women with nature is so problematic to Western twentieth-century readers. She writes: "Because woman has long been defined in Western thought as a creature mired in 'nature' and thus outside the domain of human transcendence, rationality, subjectivity and agency, most feminist theory has worked to disentangle woman from nature" (Alaimo 4-5). The use of the verbs "disentangle" is particularly striking here, since the process of entanglement with the world is precisely what makes the symbioment possible, and what makes the Anthropocenic concept of the environment irrelevant. How then, are we to reconcile women's entanglement in the natural world with a feminist discourse aiming at relocating womanhood in humanity, along with men? Such a challenge is not easily taken up, as pointed out by Gifford who admits that "diverse and contradictory representations of gender and nature relations can be found" in D. H. Lawrence's works, and that "the question of whether women are empowered by a close, even a closer association with nature (…) is a matter for discussion" (Gifford, *Ecofeminism* 3). Any readers of either Hardy or Lawrence are indeed most likely to be struck by the numerous identifications of women to nature, through various metaphors. What must be noted, however, is the point of view from which those identifications are being made. Indeed, it is most often through a male gaze that female characters are associated with nature, as male characters tend to use natural terms to describe the physical beauty of their lovers. In Lawrence's *Women in Love*, Birkin sees "the lovely golden light of spring transfused through [Ursula's] eyes, as through some wonderful window" (Lawrence, *WL* 250), and notes how her face is "upturned exactly like a flower, a fresh, luminous flower, glinting faintly golden with the dew of the first light" (Lawrence, *WL* 312-313). Flowers are the preferred medium through which male characters identify women with the natural world, which only reinforces the hegemonic discourse considering the female individual as a beautiful and fragile being, to be protected by man. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Connie is similarly compared to a flower by her lover Mellors who opposes the sensibilities of her womanhood to the "world of the mechanical greedy, greedy mechanism, and mechanised greed" (Lawrence, *LCL* 119):

> Poor thing, she too had some of the vulnerability of the hyacinths, she wasn't all tough rubber-goods-and-platinum, like the modern girl. And they would do her in! As sure as life, they would do her in, as they do in all naturally tender life. Tender! Somewhere she was tender, tender with a tenderness of the growing hyacinths, something that has gone out of the celluloid women of today. But he would protect her with her heart for a little while. For a little while, before the insentient iron world and

> the Mammon of mechanised greed did them both in, her as well as him. (Lawrence, *LCL* 119)

Interestingly enough, not all the female experiences are located within nature in this passage. In fact, the "natural woman" who is as vulnerable as hyacinths and who embraces her materiality is nothing but the ideal woman, in Mellors' eyes, as opposed to the superficial woman of the modern world. The gamekeeper's identification of his lover with nature is accompanied by a somewhat patronising discourse which suggests Connie's inability to fend for herself. However, one cannot omit the nuances that Lawrence seems to want to add on to such a discourse, insofar as Mellors includes himself into the natural world, along with Connie and in opposition to the industrial world, thus going "beyond the essentialism of 'woman is to nature as man is to culture'" (Gifford, "Flowers as 'Other'" 73).[7] In fact, nature does not seem to be a realm reserved to women, and Lawrence's male characters may want to bring women closer to nature simply as a way to bring them closer to themselves. Hardy's heroes tend to use the same strategy to seduce their lovers, complimenting their beauty with natural terms and using natural imageries to declare their love. In the eyes of Angel Clare, Tess is "like an undulating billow warmed by the sun [and] all this fluff of muslin about [her] is the froth" (Hardy, *Tess* 144), while Eustacia appears to Wildeve as a plant which has its roots in the wrong soil: "Such a rare plant in such a wild place it grieves me to see" (Hardy, *TRN* 344). If the paternalistic undertone which could be picked up in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* cannot be found in Hardy's work, the two passages quoted above still underline the delicate nature of women, as perceived by Angel and Wildeve. But then, whenever the focalisation shifts from that of male characters to that of the narrator, the identification of women to nature takes up an empowering dimension which actually goes against any essentialist discourse. From the perspective of the narrator of *The Return of the Native*, Eustacia does not appear as a vulnerable and ill-rooted plant anymore, but she becomes an actual force of nature, drawing her strength from her similarity with the natural world:

> To see her hair was to fancy that a whole winter did not contain darkness enough to form its shadow. It closed over her forehead like nightfall extinguishing the western glow. (Hardy, *TRN* 68)

[7] Gifford uses a formulation first coined by Sherry Ortner.

> Like the summer condition of the place around her, she was an embodiment of the phrase 'a populous solitude' – apparently so listless, void, and quiet, she was really busy and full. (Hardy, *TRN* 71).
>
> In her winter dress, as now, she was like the tiger-beetle, which, when observed in dull situations, seems to be of the quietest neutral colour, but under a full illumination blazes with dazzling splendour. (Hardy, *TRN* 92).

I suggest that those three quotations illustrate the reason why "environmental feminists have long insisted that feminism needs to take the materiality of the more-than-human world seriously" (Alaimo and Hekman 4). Rather than being considered as a misogynistic tool at the service of a patriarchal discourse, the identification of women to nature might very well be turned into a weapon to be used by the feminist movement, so as to demonstrate how vulnerability does not equal weakness. To Alaimo and Hekman, such a subversion of the traditional woman-nature paradigm is in accord with the recent works of material feminists who "are developing theories in which nature is more than a passive social construction but is, rather, an agentic force that interacts with and changes the other elements in the mix, including the human" (Alaimo and Hekman 7). In that sense, the specific female ability to be close to nature, as suggested in Hardy's and Lawrence's works, might be the particularity which precisely makes the female gender very much active and in control, rather than passive and in need of protection. In *Sons and Lovers*, Mrs Morel seems to summon up the courage to confront her husband through her close proximity to nature. Going out into her garden during a cold summer night helps her to gather her thoughts and her strength to defend herself from toxic male behaviour:

> The moon was high and magnificent in the August night. Mrs. Morel, seared with passion, shivered to find herself out there in a great white light, that fell cold on her, and gave a shock to her inflamed soul. (…)
>
> She hurried out of the side garden to the front, where she could stand as if in an immense gulf of white light, the moon streaming high in face of her, the moonlight standing up from the hills in front, and filling the valley where the Bottoms crouched, almost blindly. (…)
>
> She became aware of something about her. With an effort she roused herself to see what it was that penetrated her consciousness. The tall white lilies were reeling in the moonlight, and the air was charged with their perfume, as with a presence.

> Mrs. Morel gasped slightly in fear. She touched the big, pallid flowers on their petals, then shivered. They seemed to be stretching in the moonlight. She put her hand into one white bin: the gold scarcely showed on her fingers by moonlight. She bent down to look at the binful of yellow pollen; but it only appeared dusky. Then she drank a deep draught of the scent. It almost made her dizzy. (…) After a time the child, too, melted with her in the mixing-pot of moonlight, and she rested with the hills and lilies and houses, all swum together in a kind of swoon. (Lawrence, *SL* 33-34)

In this passage, the entanglement of the female character to the natural world, which has been condemned by most feminists as part of a hegemonic discourse, has an empowering and regenerating effect on Mrs Morel who seems to be "drinking" the scent of the air as a thirsty person would drink fresh water to retrieve some energy. Through a synaesthetic experience, Mrs Morel engages in a profound connection with the summer night which, far from devaluing her worth as a human being, serves to enlarge her female self in the face of male adversity. Here, Lawrence subverts the essentialist concept of Mother Nature, showing how a symbiotic connection between a mother *and* nature results in the emergence of the strongest kind of human being. Female characters, in Lawrence, thrive on the abundant riches of the natural world and are therefore more likely to feel strong and confident in natural spaces teeming with life. In *Women in Love*, Ursula rapidly feels that her female self is being restrained by the stillness of the snowy Alps: "She wanted at this instant to have done with the snow-world, the terrible static, ice-built mountain tops. She wanted to see the dark earth, to smell its earthy fecundity, to see the patient wintry vegetation, to feel the sunshine touch a response in the buds" (Lawrence, *WL* 434). The type of synaesthetic encounter with the natural world which could be found in *Sons and Lovers* is reproduced here, with a particular focus on the reproductive energy Ursula is looking for through that connection. As is often the case in Lawrence's work, a contradiction is therefore introduced within a discourse initially meant to empower women, that of reducing the female gender to its reproductive function. In his novels, Lawrence seems to be oscillating between a reassessment of the Mother Nature concept through a representation of matriarchal forces in nature, and an empowerment of womanhood which necessarily implies the status of motherhood. A dichotomy of reduction and enlargement remains central to Lawrence's treatment of the female self in nature, as an illustration of the persistent conception of woman as a being who thrives (that is, enlarges herself) in taking care of others (thus reducing her own interests). Looking after others, even when it means sacrificing herself in the process,

is something that Hardy's Tess has been taught to do from her earliest childhood, as the oldest daughter of the family. Yet, the reader is not under the impression that Tess is indeed thriving in those contexts which require that type of responsibility from her. When she lives at home, the young woman is eaten up with guilt whenever she fails to put others' interests before her own, and when she begins to work for Alec, she is tortured by the need to please him, while being responsible for the well-being of the fowls she is taking care of. The narrator introduces Tess as the "appointed supervisor, purveyor, nurse, surgeon, and friend" to the animals (Hardy, *Tess* 58), using an accumulation of positions which emphasises the burden that such responsibilities represent for the young woman. In Morgan's words, "the Tess perceived by Hardy is a sentient, physical being inhabiting a palpably physical world" (Morgan 65) which, I argue, allows her to resist the patriarchal reduction of her womanhood to the function of care-giver. Hardy's treatment of landscape is, according to Catherine Lanone, part of the author's wish to denounce the requirements of "ruthless productivity" that are imposed on both women and nature (Lanone, "Of Furtive Hedgehogs and Steam Machines" 41). She contends that "the harvest scenes [in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*] are no idyllic celebrations of fecundity, but moments of excessive demand where the land and the female body are taken to task" (Lanone, "Of Furtive Hedgehogs and Steam Machines" 41). From that perspective, the Mother Nature topos in fiction may also be used as a way to highlight the patriarchal exploitation of both mothers and nature, so as to better subvert it.

As soon as one finds the woman-nature paradigm problematic and depreciatory for the female gender, it implies that one considers the natural world as being apart from humanity, and inferior to it. On the contrary, a shift of perspective allows one to realise that the issue might actually lie within the position of man himself, standing outside the symbioment and attempting to control both women and nature. Such a point of view is featured in Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, as the heroine returns from Alec D'Urberville's expecting a child and being the subject of many judgmental talks in the village. While the narrator underlines how those inquisitive eyes make the young woman feel out of place whenever she goes outdoor, he also takes care to remark on the irrationality of such a feeling:

> It was they [the people who gossip] that were out of harmony with the actual world, not she. Walking among the sleeping birds in the hedges, watching the skipping rabbits on a moonlit warren, or standing under a pheasant-laden bough, she looked upon herself as a figure of Guilt intruding into the haunts of Innocence. But all the while she was making a distinction where there was no difference. Feeling herself in antagonism

she was quite in accord. She had been made to break a necessary social law, but no law known to the environment in which she fancied herself such an anomaly. (Hardy, *Tess* 85-86)

In this extract, Hardy's narrator plays on the dichotomy between harmony and discordance, through the use of antitheses such as "distinction" in opposition to "no difference" or "antagonism" and "in accord". Through those antitheses, the narrator suggests that Tess's way of thinking – along with that of the reader – should be completely reversed, so as to reassess the concept of naturalness. Indeed, what is natural and healthy, the narrator argues, is Tess's mode of relating to the materiality of her body and of the world. What is unnatural, on the other hand, is the others' perception of Tess's pregnant body and their effort to tear her away from the material world. Feeling in harmony with the natural world therefore becomes an act of resistance for the female character, against a patriarchal society which tends to keep women away within nature, until they do something that is deemed unnatural by a social law. In a society which fails to recognise Tess's traumatic rape as unnatural and proceeds to deprive the young woman of her harmonious connection to the symbioment, the "woman is to nature what man is to culture" formulation suddenly turns very much in favour of the female gender which is able to rise above the cruelties of a patriarchal culture. What is striking in Hardy's fiction is the way female characters are repeatedly included in or removed from the symbioment, according to the point of view from which they are being portrayed. While the gossip of the villagers remove Tess from her privileged position in the natural world, the requirements of her outdoor work make her an integral part of nature again, to the point of letting her blend entirely with the field she is working:

> But those of the other sex were the most interesting of this company of binders, by reason of the charm which is acquired by woman when she becomes part and parcel of outdoor nature, and is not merely an object set down therein as at ordinary times. A field-man is a personality afield; a field-woman is a portion of the field; she has somehow lost her margin, imbibed the essence of her surrounding, and assimilated herself with it. (Hardy, *Tess* 87-88)

What could be simply interpreted as another striking illustration of Merleau-Ponty's chiasm becomes more complex as the narrator makes a strong difference between the way a man and a woman relate to their natural surroundings. As Eithne Henson suggests, no actual reason is given to justify the way a field-man is able to preserve his individuality, while a field-woman

has inevitably to lose herself to the field she is working in (Henson 194). The mere fact that her individuality should be lost in the process goes against Merleau-Ponty's conception of the chiasm as resulting in "difference without contradiction" (Merleau-Ponty, *VI* 135) rather than in any assimilation. If a man can only work in the field while a woman has to become the field itself, then the woman loses her selfhood to become the object of man's exploitation, that is, the ground which he can literally trample on. In this sense, Merleau-Ponty's ecological Flesh of the World becomes a patriarchal chiasm, "a fleshy tabernacle" (Hardy, *Tess* 310), like her own female body, that keeps on stifling her rather than allowing her to thrive as a human being. The previously-mentioned interpermeation process that should generate love often happens, in the character of Tess, as a consequence of the heroine being threatened by male characters and having no choice but to let her femininity be absorbed by her surroundings. For instance, after having been harassed by men and having had to take shelter among dying pheasants, Tess decides to "run no further risks from her appearance" (Hardy, *Tess* 280), disguising herself with old clothes and cutting off her eyebrows. As a result of such change, Tess seems to be more than ever in harmony with nature: "Thus Tess walks on; a figure which is part of the landscape; a field-woman pure and simple, in winter guise; a grey serge cape, a red woollen cravat, a stuff skirt covered by a whitey-brown rough wrapper, and buff-leather gloves" (Hardy, *Tess* 280). Beyond its implication of a symbiotic mode of relating to the world, Tess's fusion with nature in this passage serves as a condemnation of men's "aggressive admiration" (Hardy, *Tess* 280) that forces a woman out of her flesh, into the Flesh of a patriarchal world. As Charlotte Bonica suggests, it is first and foremost "Tess's sexuality" that "represents her connection to [the natural world]" (Bonica 853), thus linking the treatment of environmental issues to the treatment of gender issues in Hardy's work. In what Henson refers to as "the narrator's controlling gaze" (Henson 196), I actually read the male author's phenomenological admission that he cannot fathom what the experience of life feels like as a woman, and yet, that he can, as a man, limit the negative effects he may have on that experience, just as one should do regarding the non-human. Portraying a female protagonist being absorbed by her natural surroundings the way she is being absorbed by the patriarchal society is not condoning any effacement of the female self, but rather condemning a world that treats women and the non-human in the same destructive way – as non-men. The narrator of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* makes a distinction between a symbiotic encounter with nature, which is welcomed by the heroine and allows her to grow, and an invasive permeation process which, in Lanone's words, illustrates "the economic demand for productivity coloniz[ing] both the fields and the field-woman" (Lanone,

"Of Furtive Hedgehogs and Steam Machines" 45). In the following passage, the rain becomes a symbol of the systemic exploitation of field-women who have no choice but to work in harsh conditions, and for whom the sensation of the rain falling on their skin has nothing to do with a harmonious communion with nature:

> They worked on hour after hour, unconscious of the forlorn aspect they bore in the landscape, not thinking of the justice or injustice of their lot. Even in such a position as theirs it was possible to exist in a dream. In the afternoon the rain came on again, and Marian said that they need not work any more. But if they did not work they would not be paid; so they worked on. It was so high a situation, this field, that the rain had no occasion to fall, but raced along horizontally upon the yelling wind, sticking into them like glass splinters till they were wet through. Tess had not known till now what was really meant by that. There are degrees of dampness, and a very little is called being wet through in common talk. But to stand working slowly in a field, and feel the creep of rain-water, first in legs and shoulders, then on hips and head, then at back, front, and sides, and yet to work on till the leaden light diminishes and marks that the sun is down, demands a distinct modicum of stoicism, even of valour. (Hardy, *Tess* 285-286)

Here, the rain is not merely falling on their skin but is seeping in their flesh, resulting in a forced symbiosis between the two female characters and nature which, in turn, suggests a violation of their integral selves. If there is indeed permeation, there is nothing of the reciprocity that characterises the interpermeation process and the ultimate access to the Flesh of the World. For the two women, being wet-through becomes synonymous with being used-up, as the rain stands for patriarchal oppression weaving its way into their daily lives. As a counterpoint to the ideal symbiotic experience in which the ecological self emerges, it is interesting to contrast it with a rain scene in Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, where heavy rain fosters Connie's connection both with her lover and with the world:

> She opened the door and looked at the straight heavy rain, like a steel curtain, and had a sudden desire to rush out into it, to rush away. She got up, and began swiftly pulling off her stockings, then her dress and underclothing, and he held his breath. Her pointed keen animal breasts tipped and stirred as she moved. She was ivory-coloured in the greenish light. She slipped on her rubber shoes again and ran out with a wild little laugh, holding up her breasts to the heavy rain and spreading her arms, and running

> blurred in the rain with the eurhythmic dance movements she had learned so long ago in Dresden. (Lawrence, *LCL* 221)

What is striking when reading this passage along with Hardy's scene previously quoted, is the different implications that the experience of being wet through bears for an aristocrat woman and for field-women. Here, Connie welcomes the rain and extends her whole body towards it, in a clear posture of offering, both to the world and to her lover. As opposed to Hardy's rain scene in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, this passage is not used by the author to condemn any patriarchal exploitation of women, and, I would argue, is not deprived of any sexist undertone. In "Fantasia of the Unconscious", written nearly ten years before Lawrence's last novel, the author makes an observation on gender distinctions which enlightens the function of the rain in this scene. He writes: "Woman is really polarised downwards, towards the centre of the earth. Her deep positivity is in the downward flow, the moon-pull. And man is polarised upwards, towards the sun and the day's activity. Women and men are dynamically different, in everything" (Lawrence, *PFU* 195). From that point of view, raindrops falling inescapably to the ground recall the downward movement that Lawrence associates with women and which seems to condition Connie's attraction to the rain. Because his lover "is polarised downwards", the rain falling on Connie's naked body will then have the effect of encouraging Mellors to "ti[p] her up" and bring her to the ground to have sex with her (Lawrence, *LCL* 221). In that sense, I suggest that this passage is yet another example of the patriarchal dimension contained in some of Lawrence's scenes of symbiotic encounter with the natural world. Women, in most of Lawrence's novels, are often portrayed as "poor young thing[s], (…) young female creature[s]" who are meant to be lifted up by the male upward movement and exploited (Lawrence, *LCL* 120). In *Sons and Lovers*, the flower metaphor is the privileged rhetorical figure through which the female need to be elevated is conveyed. In chapter nine, a scene featuring Paul, Clara and Miriam wandering in a wild field of flowers encourages the reader to reflect on the disposable nature of beautiful flowers and on the moral issue that is raised by the act of picking them up to put them in a vase at home. Throughout this scene, I suggest that flowers stand for women:

> The flowers were very fresh and sweet. He wanted to drink them. As he gathered them, he ate the little yellow trumpets. Clara was still wandering about disconsolately. Going towards her, he said:
>
> "Why don't you get some?"

"I don't believe in it. They look better growing."

"But you'd like some?"

"They want to be left."

"I don't believe they do."

"I don't want the corpses of flowers about me," she said.

"That's a stiff, artificial notion," he said. "They don't die any quicker in water than on their roots. And besides, they look nice in a bowl—they look jolly. And you only call a thing a corpse because it looks corpse-like."

"Whether it is one or not?" she argued.

"It isn't one to me. A dead flower isn't a corpse of a flower."

Clara now ignored him.

"And even so—what right have you to pull them?" she asked.

"Because I like them, and want them—and there's plenty of them."

"And that is sufficient?"

"Yes. Why not? I'm sure they'd smell nice in your room in Nottingham."

"And I should have the pleasure of watching them die."

"But then—it does not matter if they do die."

Whereupon he left her, and went stooping over the clumps of tangled flowers which thickly sprinkled the field like pale, luminous foam-clots. Miriam had come close. Clara was kneeling, breathing some scent from the cowslips.

"I think," said Miriam, "if you treat them with reverence you don't do them any harm. It is the spirit you pluck them in that matters. (Lawrence, *SL* 278)

I suggest a reading of this scene according to which Clara would be resisting Paul's ascendancy over her by defending the flowers' right to stay rooted in the ground and to avoid the upward movement which would precipitate their withering away. In *D. H. Lawrence, Ecofeminism and Nature*, Gifford comments on the author's use of the flower imagery in *Sons and Lovers*, arguing that "flowers become a medium through which to register the characteristics and tensions in the evolution of Paul's relationship with Miriam" (Gifford 75). To that assertion, I would add that this strategy is also applied to Paul's relationship with Clara, as exemplified in the extract quoted above. Here, Clara's feminist discourse according to which a woman does not need to be lifted up the ground and confined in a room to thrive, is confronted to Miriam's more nuanced point of view, implying that patriarchal control of women is only a bad thing if men are not keeping women's best interests in mind. Miriam's concluding remark, for its

nuanced tone and defence of traditional gender roles, seems to be voicing the author's own equivocal view on the place of women in heterosexual relationships. Like a flower in a vase, Miriam "ma[kes] herself look so beautiful and fresh, for him" and seems to "blossom for him alone" (Lawrence, *SL* 339), which suggests a conception of women as beautiful and passive creatures, made for the viewing pleasure of men. From that perspective, the association of women with flowers tends to bring them closer to the realm of the non-human, perceived as inferior to the human species by an anthropocenic culture. Whether it be done from an anti-patriarchal point of view, or as a reinforcement of gender roles, the identification of woman to nature in Hardy's and Lawrence's novels encourages the reader to seek for the ideal ecological self in the non-human, or, more accurately, in the non-man.

3. From Gender Studies to Non-Human Studies: Seeking the Ecological Self in Invisible Lives

In his essay entitled "'A Merciful Man': Thomas Hardy and the Thinking of (in)Humanity", Adrian Tait observes how "Hardy draws a connection between both 'man's inhumanity to man' and his inhumanity towards (in the same breath) women and animals" (Tait 7). Here, Tait puts forward two specificities of Hardy's writings, which are the continual reassessment of man's humaneness and the identification of women with non-human creatures. Considering Hardy's well-known commitment to animal's rights and welfare – to which we will come back later on in this chapter – I would suggest that the association of women and animals is not performed, in Hardy's novels, as a way to depreciate the female gender, but quite the contrary, to value their worth over that of men. About *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Catherine Lanone argues that "the parallelism between animals and Tess places her plight within the wider context of patriarchal violence towards both the human and the non-human, so that Hardy's vision of rural dislocation and female violation might be defined in terms of eco-grief" (Lanone, "Exploiting Body and Place" 2). The most striking example illustrating Lanone's point is probably the scene between Tess and the dead pheasants in the plantation where she has been hiding herself from the threat of men. This scene has been extensively analysed by critics such as Isabelle Gadoin, in her article "Tess à Stonehenge : transfert d'une scène-clé du roman à l'écran", where she writes that the agonising death of the pheasants, some of them put out of their misery by Tess herself, symbolises the self-sacrificing nature of the heroine and

foreshadows her upcoming death (Gadoin 109).[8] The parallel between Tess's destiny and that of the pheasants is indeed quite obvious throughout the scene, as the animals "had been driven down into this corner the day before by some shooting-party", the same way Tess "[had taken] to her heels with the speed of the wind, and, without looking behind her, [had] r[u]n along the road till she came to a gate which opened directly into a plantation" (Hardy, *Tess* 278; 277). As Lanone aptly puts it, the mirroring effect at work in this passage demonstrates the author's wish to condemn "a patriarchal society where rich men may hunt freely, women and birds may be caught, maimed and abandoned" (Lanone, "Of Furtive Hedgehogs and Steam Machines" 32). While the vision of the dead pheasants makes Tess feel sorry for them and helps her to put her own troubles into perspective, Connie's encounter with the hens kept by Mellors in the wood, in Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, has the effect of making the young woman feel sorry for herself and envious of the birds' conditions. Indeed, seeing the birds "cluster[ing] themselves down on the eggs in the soft nestling ponderosity of the female urge, the female nature, fluffing out their feathers", makes Connie feel that she herself is "so forlorn and unused, not a female at all, just a mere thing of errors" (Lawrence, *WL* 113). The contrast between Hardy's and Lawrence's bird scenes is quite striking, in that the former uses the pheasants as a way to warn the heroine that she should fly away as far as possible from the threat of men, while, in the latter, the brooding hens seem to be telling Connie that she should get back in touch with men, so as to fulfil her destiny as a woman. As was touched upon earlier through the close reading of an extract of *Women in Love*, Lawrence tends to associate a woman's empowering journey with what he considers to be a woman's greatest power, that of procreation (which necessarily requires the contribution of man). I believe that Lawrence genuinely admired women's capacity to give life and the strength and courage of all mothers. On the other hand, one cannot ignore the way this type of discourse, from the perspective of twenty-first-century readers, inevitably falls within the scope of a patriarchal mode of thinking in which the female body is first and foremost valued for its reproductive functions. Such a mode of thinking is one that Hardy's female characters have internalised from their childhood, and that they have learned to use in their best interests. Among the female characters in *Jude the Obscure*, Arabella may not be the reader's favourite one; yet, she remains one of the strongest and most independent female characters in Hardy's fiction, one who seems to have learned the ropes of the patriarchal system and worked to turn them in her favour. As she is scheming for Jude to

[8] This reference was brought to my attention by Catherine Lanone, in "Exploiting Body and Place in Thomas Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles" (20).

marry her, in the early days of their courtship, the young woman strategically decides to lure him into committing to her by showing off her maternal instinct. To do so, Arabella uses a strategy that must have inspired Lawrence's writing of the hen scene in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, since she uncovers a cochin's egg that she says she has been hatching. To Jude's question as to why she would do "such a strange thing", the young woman replies: "It's an old custom. I suppose it is natural for a woman to want to bring live things into the world" (Hardy, *JO* 47). I read Arabella's hatching scheme and her answer to Jude's question as an ironical subversion of the patriarchal order she has been made to submit to, insofar as the female character uses the organic function that she has been reduced to in an attempt to empower herself and become independent from her father's authority. As opposed to Lawrence's Connie who looks as the brooding hens with envy, Arabella uses the cochin's egg as a tool to achieve her personal goals, which, in reality, have nothing to do with becoming pregnant. In that sense, Hardy demonstrates once again that women's (self-)identification with non-human creatures is not to be interpreted as a tool to bring women down, but rather as a symbolic weapon which may be used by women themselves in order to take control of their own destinies. It is precisely this male fear of the female power that leads most of Lawrence's heroes to associate women with non-humans, in a desperate effort to keep in check a creature who – they know – is in fact stronger than them. Gifford observes such a fear in the character of Birkin, "at the opening of the 'Moony' chapter of *Women in Love*". Gifford notes: "As he throws stones at the image of the moon reflected on in the millpond Birkin seems to feel not only that feminine forces threaten him, but that such dominant matriarchal forces seem to be part of the order of nature" (Gifford, *Ecofeminism* 2). One way to keep those forces in check is to associate them with the strength of animals which, since the dawn of time, have been kept under man's control through hunting or domestication. A scene in which Ursula and Gudrun have witnessed Gerald being cruel to his mare initiates a debate between the four main characters about the cowardice or "*courage"* we need to have "to use the lower animal life for our needs" (Lawrence, *WL* 139, emphasis in the original). In an attempt to prove his point about the willing submission of horses to the authority of men, Birkin uses a simile with the female gender, arguing that "woman is the same as horses: two wills act in opposition inside her". He goes on: "With one will, she wants to subject herself utterly. With the other she wants to bolt, and pitch her rider to perdition" (Lawrence, *WL* 141). Beyond the sexist and patronising tone of this assertion, I suggest that the rhetorical device used by Birkin actually betrays his own insecurities in the face of strong women who might actually "bolt" in front of him. A few lines further, he admits that "it's a dangerous thing to domesticate even

horses, let alone women" (Lawrence, *WL* 141). Indeed, Ursula, the object of his desire, has not let herself be domesticated and does not hesitate to mock Birkin's theory by declaring that she is "a bolter" herself (Lawrence, *WL* 141). Further on in another chapter, he makes a new attempt at making Ursula yield to his will, using another animal metaphor to try and dictate how she should behave, as a woman. In this scene, Ursula and Birkin observe Birkin's male cat, Mino, and a female wild cat having a row, as Mino is provoking and attacking her. The whole passage is, in my reading, an allegory of Ursula's and Birkin's courtship and of the power dynamics that rule their relationship. Ursula commands Mino to stop bullying the female cat, the same way the young woman is trying to defend herself against what she considers to be Birkin's "assumption of male superiority" (Lawrence, *WL* 150):

> "Now why does he do that?" cried Ursula in indignation.
>
> "They are on intimate terms," said Birkin.
>
> "And is that why he hits her?"
>
> "Yes," laughed Birkin, "I think he wants to make it quite obvious to her."
>
> "Isn't it horrid of him!" she cried; and going out into the garden she called to the Mino:
>
> "Stop it, don't bully. Stop hitting her."
>
> The stray cat vanished like a swift, invisible shadow. The Mino glanced at Ursula, then looked from her disdainfully to his master.
>
> "Are you a bully, Mino?" Birkin asked.
>
> The young slim cat looked at him, and slowly narrowed its eyes. Then it glanced away at the landscape, looking into the distance as if completely oblivious of the two human beings.
>
> "Mino," said Ursula, "I don't like you. You are a bully like all males." (Lawrence, *WL* 149)

Through this conversation, Ursula is resisting Birkin's control by using the same reifying tool he has been using to reduce her to "a mere stray, a fluffy sporadic bit of chaos" (Lawrence, *WL* 150). In associating a cat's manners to toxic behaviours displayed by human males, the young woman manages to turn the situation around and prove that the identification of humans to animals may very well be used to undermine patriarchy rather than to support and sustain it. A scene which, at first sight, may appear as an allegorical passage meant to display male supremacy, is actually turned into a feminist manifesto by Lawrence, in the defence of female humans and non-humans alike. Once again, the identification of women to animals performs

an enlargement of the female self and has the unexpected effect of strengthening their humanity, since, according to Hardy, "to be human [is] also to be humane" (Tait 5).

In Lawrence's and Hardy's novels, the association of women with non-humans comes hand in hand with a particular female ability to bond with non-humans and empathise with their troubles. Their predisposition to embrace their material selves and connect to the symbioment naturally allows them to be aware of the way "our bodies", in Louise Westling's words, "attest to the impossibility of a world without animals and to our own biological enmeshment within and inclusion on a continuum of other creatures" (Westling 72). Indeed, Hardy's and Lawrence's female characters often feel closer, "on a continuum of other creatures", to non-human beings than to their human counterparts. At various times in the story, the narrator of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* underlines how the heroine may be afraid of many things, but "not of outdoor things" (Hardy, *Tess* 123), just as the narrator of *Women in Love* stresses how the behaviour of man leads Ursula to "lov[e] only children and animals" (Lawrence, *WL* 244). Such particular affinities with non-humans make female characters proper advocates for animal rights and allow the two authors to include those moral issues in their novels. As touched upon earlier, Gudrun and Ursula are witnessing a scene in the "Coal-Dust" chapter, where Gerald is forcing his mare to stand still by a railroad crossing, while a locomotive is roaring by in full speed. The way the narrator depicts the scene, emphasising the cruelty of the situation and the horror felt by the mare, leaves no doubt as to Lawrence's own sensitivity to non-human suffering:

> The locomotive chuffed slowly between the banks, hidden. The mare did not like it. She began to wince away, as if hurt by the unknown noise. But Gerald pulled her back and held her head to the gate. The sharp blasts of the chuffing engine broke with more and more force on her. The repeated sharp blows of unknown, terrifying noise struck through her till she was rocking with terror. She recoiled like a spring let go. But a glistening, half-smiling look came into Gerald's face. He brought her back again, inevitably. (Lawrence, *WL* 110)

As he or she reads this passage, the reader is led to feel outraged about Gerald's behaviour and to identify with the two women who are trying to make it stop: "No –! No –! Let her go! Let her go, you fool, you fool – –!" Ursula cries out, adding a few lines further: "Does he think it's manly, to torture a horse? It's a living thing, why should he bully it and torture it? (…) Does he think he's grand, when he's bullied a sensitive creature, ten times as sensitive as himself?"

(Lawrence, *WL* 111; 113). In Ursula's rhetorical questions lies the principle of humaneness that Hardy considers as essential to grant a human status to anyone, thus suggesting that Lawrence wished to carry on Hardy's heritage regarding the treatment of non-human characters in fiction, so as to cultivate, as Anna West suggests about the Victorian author, "an animal ethics that destabilizes the animal-human divide, privileges animal alterity, and seeks alternative understandings of language, reason, and moral agency" (Feuerstein 6). Indeed, the "animal-human divide" is narrowed down to such a degree, in both authors' novels, that the pain suffered by non-human characters can be felt by the human characters present in the scene, and by extension, by the readers themselves. As she is observing the struggle of Gerald's mare, Gudrun is not only indignant, but she seems to be feeling in her own body the pain that is being inflicted on the animal: "But as strong as the pressure of his compulsion was the repulsion of her [the mare's] utter terror, throwing her back away from the railway, so that she spun round and round, on two legs, as if she were in the centre of some whirlwind. It made Gudrun faint with poignant dizziness, which seemed to penetrate to her heart" (Lawrence, *WL* 111). Through this process of material empathy, Gudrun can bridge the gap between the human world and the animal world, suggesting to the reader that such torture should not be considered acceptable, if subjecting humans to it would be deemed inadmissible. Gudrun's sense of injustice and physical pain remains with her until after Gerald and his mare are gone, turning into a sort of fascination which, as is often the case in Lawrence, comes to undermine the feminist message of the scene:

> Gudrun was as if numbed in her mind by the sense of indomitable soft weight of the man, bearing down into the living body of the horse: the strong, indomitable thighs of the blond man clenching the palpitating body of the mare into pure control; a sort of soft white magnetic domination from the loins and thighs and calves, enclosing and encompassing the mare heavily into unutterable subordination, soft blood-subordination, terrible. (Lawrence, *WL* 113)

Here, a confusion between Gudrun and the mare serves to add a sexual undertone to the passage and to suggest that the young woman is both trying to resist Gerald's control and wishing to submit to it. This illustrates Birkin's theory of the two conflicting wills within a woman's mind, but also Lawrence's own theory about women being polarised downwards, and therefore meant to be brought down by the weight of man. Within one passage, Lawrence manages to defend the rights of animals, to value women's ability to empathise with their sufferings, all the while failing to convey a message of empowerment regarding his female characters. This type of

contradiction is what makes the author's work so hard to decipher but also what makes his stories so effective to render the complexities of gender dynamics in our western societies. In Hardy, on the other hand, there is no distinction in the way female characters and non-human creatures are treated in his novels, as the author often uses one single scene to defend the rights and value of both. Just as Ursula and Gudrun are standing up for the mare in *Women in Love*, Sue, in *Jude the Obscure*, cannot resolve to give up on her pet pigeons and let them be put in a cage when it is time for the couple to move out, the thought of it causing her "more sadness (…) than [parting] from all the furniture" (Hardy, *JO* 242). Even though she manages to gather the strength to sell them to a poulterer, she will not resist to the urge to set them free when she sees them, a few moments later, "in a hamper by the door" of his shop: "An emotion at sight of them, assisted by the growing dusk of evening, caused her to act on impulse, and first looking around her quickly, she pulled out the peg which fastened down the cover, and went on" (Hardy, *JO* 242). Through this scene, I argue that Hardy is not only condemning the entrapment of birds in cages, but he is also implicitly associating the pigeons' fate to the fate of those women who, like Sue, have been entrapped in an unhappy or undesired marriage. What Sue did for the pigeons, she would probably have wished someone had done for her, when she felt imprisoned in her marriage with Phillotson and had to – quite literally – fly through the window in order to extricate herself from that union. Their love for birds might be one of the things that bring Sue and Jude closer, and Jude's empathy for non-human creatures as a whole seems to have been a comforting thought to the wounded animal Sue had metaphorically become after her marriage with Phillotson. Indeed, the ability to bond with animals is not a quality reserved to the female gender, in Hardy. The association that is made between Sue's pet pigeons and the young woman's own lot is similarly applied to the character of Jude who has been employed by a farmer to scare rooks away from his field. As he is striving to do so, the young boy quickly becomes aware of the connections that exist between the birds' situation and his own:

> He sounded the clacker till his arm ached, and at length his heart grew sympathetic with the bird's thwarted desires. They seemed, like himself, to be living in a world which did not want them. Why should he frighten them away? They took upon them more and more the aspect of gentle friends and pensioners – the only friends he could claim as being in the least degree interested in him, for his aunt had often told him that she was not. He ceased his rattling, and they alighted anew. (…)

> They stayed and ate, inky spots on the nut-brown soil, and Jude enjoyed their appetite. A magic thread of fellow-feeling united his own life with theirs. Puny and sorry as those lives were, they much resembled his own. (Hardy, *JO* 14).

In this scene, the human-animal divide is once again transcended, as "the thread of fellow-feeling" illustrates Merleau-Ponty's image of the chiasm, in which all beings are intermeshed. The alliteration in /f/ only emphasises the idea of fluidity and continuity between species, in keeping with Darwin's own contention that each species has not been independently created and that all organic beings have affinities "due to inheritance or community of descent" (Darwin, 14; 515). As a character who feels, deep down inside himself, that he belongs with animals even more than with humans, Jude represents the ideal of the ecological self who has this particular ability to live in the symbioment. Experiencing such a connection with the rest of nature inevitably comes with an extraordinary empathetic ability that Hardy is trying to foster in his readers by using animals, as Elisha Cohn suggests, "solely in the ethical sense" (Cohn 519). The well-known pig-killing episode in *Jude the Obscure* is obviously the most striking illustration of the author's wish to reflect on the way animals are being treated in our societies, in that it encourages readers to identify with Jude and his guilt after having slaughtered the pig.[9] Not only does Jude feel that he has done something wrong in killing the pig, but the narrator underlines how he feels "dissatisfied with himself as a man for what he ha[s] done" (Hardy, *JO* 55). The ethical becomes ontological, in Hardy, as the way one treats non-humans tends to determine the humane qualities of a person. According to the Victorian author, the ultimate goal for any human is to experience a symbiotic connection with the non-human world, so that ill-treatment of animals should be considered as self-destruction. In *The Return of the Native*, such mode of relating to the non-human is achieved by Clym, when the young man is forced to put his studies on hold because of an eye condition and finds himself working as a furze-cutter, spending his days outdoors. In the following passage, the description of Clym's physical work becomes a way for the narrator to convey the idea that his activity and that of his non-human co-workers are inextricably entangled:

> His familiars were creeping and winged things, and they seemed to enroll him in their band. Bees hummed around his ears with an intimate air, and tugged at the heath

[9] It seems relevant to note that the pig-killing episode was reprinted in *The Animal's Friend* in December 1895 under the title "A Merciful Man (Scene from *Jude the Obscure*), by Thomas Hardy". The *Animal's Friend* was a periodical published by The Victorian Society for the Protection of Animals. Hardy had sent along the particular pig-killing episode to the periodical with an authorisation for reprinting it, free of charge (Tait 1-2).

> and furze-flowers at his side in such numbers as to weigh them down to the sod. The strange amber-coloured butterflies which Egdon produced, and which were never seen elsewhere, quivered in the breath of his lips, alighted upon his bowed back, and sported with the glittering point of his hook as he flourished it up and down. Tribes of emerald-green grasshoppers leaped over his feet, falling awkwardly on their backs, heads, or hips, like unskilful acrobats, as chance might rule; or engaged themselves in noisy flirtations under the fern-fronds with silent ones of homely hue. Huge flies, ignorant of larders and wire-netting, and quite in a savage state, buzzed about him without knowing that he was a man. In and out of the fern-dells snakes glided in their most brilliant blue and yellow guise, it being the season immediately following the shedding of their old skins, when their colours are brightest. Litters of young rabbits came out from their forms to sun themselves upon hillocks, the hot beams blazing through the delicate tissue of each thin-fleshed ear, and firing it to a blood-red transparency in which the veins could be seen. None of them feared him. (Hardy, *TRN* 247)

Negative feelings such as fear or guilt are utterly absent from this lengthy description whose symbiotic force lies mainly in the enumeration of different species and different activities which get included in Clym's own work, to the point that there is no demarcation between the young man's movements and those of bees, butterflies, grasshoppers, flies, snakes and rabbits. Cohn observes a difference in the representation of non-humans in *The Return of the Native* and in the later novels such as *Jude the Obscure*, arguing that in the earlier novel Hardy "depicts insects and birds – animals that exist in multiplicity (…) – rather than the particularized, comparatively domestic pigs and horses of the later novels, whose individuality is tied to their role as the objects of ethical care" (Cohn 501). I interpret such variations in Hardy's treatment of non-human characters as an evolution of the author's thinking and commitment to animal rights, along with a likely realisation that the representation of an idyllic symbiotic relation to the non-human world was not enough to make his readers actually commit to the defence of animals. By the end of his career, Hardy probably felt that appealing to his readers' sense of guilt and empathy for suffering might be more efficient in fostering actual change than the appeal to the readers' sense of belonging to the rest of the world. Be that as it may, both strategies participate in further delineating the contours of the ecological self, as an activist self.

The experience of life in the symbioment, in Hardy and Lawrence, comes hand in hand with an awareness that human and non-human lives are intertwined on a daily basis, not only because men have made use of animals to complete various tasks, but because our actions have

always had a direct impact on non-human lives. In a symbiotic mode of relating to the world, there is no question of avoiding the impact one is going to have on all the other beings entangled in the chiasm; what remains possible, however, is to make that impact matter – in other words, to try and make a difference rather than to make a mark. In Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, the narrator takes care to remind the reader that all actions performed by human characters in the story are bound to have consequences on the lives of non-human characters, thus using the concept of symbioment to convey a message in favour of the defence of animal rights. On Egdon heath, every human action, as discreet as it may be, has the power to attract "the attention of every bird within eyeshot, every reptile not yet asleep, and set the surrounding rabbits curiously watching from hillocks at a safe distance" (Hardy, *TRN* 107). At times, the consequences of human actions on non-human characters may be insignificant, or positive, but at other times, the narrator underlines how those actions may have tragic results, such as the destruction of their habitats. Indeed, Egdon Heath appears as a shared space in which an action on one organism may change the living conditions of another drastically: "He unlocked the gate, and found that a spider had already constructed a large web, tying the door to the lintel, on the supposition that it was never to be opened again" (Hardy, *TRN* 311). Now that Clym is back, the smart spider will have to find another sheltered spot to build her webby home and the reader suddenly feels a speck of injustice for the creature whose living space has been relying on the stability of a man's marriage. If, as Buell suggests, "the human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest" (Buell 7) in an environmental text, then this particular instance brings Hardy's novel a step closer to its qualification as green writing. In Hardy's world, non-human characters do defend their interests and stand up for themselves whenever their peace is disturbed by humans for too long. As Wildeve and Venn are indulging in a gambling game in the open air, in the middle of the night, the equilibrium of the heath is destabilised in such a way that a death's-head moth has to take it upon itself to extinguish their lantern so that they stop playing and disturbing the quiet of the night. The numerous interruptions of the game by heath-croppers that Venn has to chase away is another clue that points at the negative impact of the two men's activity on their surroundings and that shows how they refuse to endorse the role of spectators that has been imposed upon them by the two characters. When Wildeve decides to use glowworms to replace their lantern and be able to continue playing, the creatures put up some resistance in burning with a dim light and making things difficult for the young man to retrieve the money he has already lost: "'Never give in – here are my last five!' he cried, throwing them down. 'Hang the glowworms – they are going out. Why don't you burn, you

little fools? Stir them up with a thorn'" (Hardy, *TRN* 230). Through this scene, Hardy is condemning the conception of animals as creatures to be used by humans for their own benefits, emphasising how life in the symbioment is about reciprocity and not about exploitation. In that sense, I concur with Anna Feuerstein's argument according to which Hardy's *The Return of the Native* "recognizes the claims animals have on human attention beyond their imbrication in a larger environment and offers a more horizontal representation that includes animals" (Feuerstein 4). Such a "horizontal representation" of the human-animal relationship necessarily requires for the narrator, and by extension the reader, to approach human and non-human experiences from a similar perspective throughout the entire plot. Yet, how is one to avoid what Birkin calls, in Lawrence's *Women in Love*, the "detestable (…) maudlin attributing of human feelings and consciousness to animals" (Lawrence, *WL* 139)? Must the ecological self necessarily avoid and condemn such anthropomorphic devices? In chapter six of this work, I have touched upon the ecological significance of anthropomorphism and have shown how it allowed both authors to represent human and non-human experiences on an equal footing or, in Lawrence's case, to value the animals' mode of relating to the world over that of humans. If, in *Women in Love*, the evocation of anthropomorphism serves to suggest to the reader that non-humans deserve better than to be compared to humans, in Hardy's fiction as a whole, I would argue that the device is used by the narrator to advocate for animals' rights. In her essay "L'animal chez Hardy: de l'artifice littéraire à la réalité biologique", Peggy Blin-Cordon contends that "anthropomorphism and a rhetoric of sentimentality" are the two main devices used by the author to deal with animal ethics in his novels, and to foster compassion for the sufferings of animals (Blin-Cordon 10, my translation).[10] Indeed, in order to empathise with the suffering of the other, one needs to be able to understand and feel, in one's own terms, the type of pain that the other is experiencing. While Hardy recognises that it will never be possible for him to know what is going on in a horse's mind when he is forcefully put to work in the middle of the night, the author still wishes to suggest that there are every reason to believe that forced labour should be as traumatic for an animal as it would be for a human being. Thus, in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, as Prince is woken up by the heroine in the middle of the night to go on a delivery journey, the narrator approaches the horse's state of mind in human terms: "The poor creature looked wonderingly round at the night, at the lantern, at their two figures, as if he could not believe that at that hour, when every living thing was intended to be at shelter and at rest,

[10] Blin-Cordon writes: « C'est la compassion, voire la sollicitude que Hardy choisit pour traiter de l'éthique animale, en utilisant pour principaux outils l'anthropomorphisme et la rhétorique de la sentimentalité dans ses deux derniers romans. »

he was called upon to go out and labour" (Hardy, *Tess* 30). In most of Hardy's anthropomorphic descriptions of non-human minds, the type of emotion that seems to be recurring is surprise, as human behaviours tend to appear quite unnatural, or even irrational, to the non-human characters present on the scene. Another example of this device can be found in *The Return of the Native*, during the gambling scene featuring Wildeve and Venn mentioned above, as a way for the narrator to emphasise the immorality of such behaviours: "The heath-croppers had returned noiselessly, and were looking on with erect heads just as before, their timid eyes fixed upon the scene, as if they were wondering what mankind and candlelight could have to do in these haunts at this untoward hour" (Hardy, *TRN* 230). Here, Hardy's use of anthropomorphism has the same effect as Lawrence's non-use of the device, insofar as both strategies serve to value the non-human – namely, their ability to judge what is right and moral – over the human propensity to act recklessly and irrationally. According to Rebecca West, Hardy's "depictions of animals are exceptional for his era" because they are done in "psychological terms – a demonstration of his involvement with the scientific developments of his days" (R. West 5). The exploration of the psyches of those non-human beings that Hardy perceives as "pensive mutes" (Hardy, *The Life* 114) participates in delineating an "ecological democracy" which, to Hardy, "depends upon the human to enact representation and to encourage more equality between animals and humans" (Feuerstein 4). The ecological self, in Hardy, is not actually a being who applies his or her own perspective to non-humans' lives, but one who "makes speculations, based on appearance" (A. West 6). Indeed, A. West underlines how the author "recognizes the space between physical embodiment in a shared sensory world and mental access to the mind of the other, acknowledging through 'seems' and 'as if' the fact that one cannot know what it is like to be in the mind of the other, human or non-human" (A. West 6). In that sense, Hardy and Lawrence concur to argue that the experience of life in the symbioment is not about erasing alterity altogether, but rather about taking up a posture that aims at reducing the gap between self and other. "Whatever the mystery which has brought forth man and the universe", Birkin declares in Lawrence's *Women in Love*, "it is a non-human mystery, it has its own ends, man is not the criterion" (Lawrence, *WL* 478).

Drawing from Birkin's assertion, I would argue that man is precisely not the criterion on which the two authors have delineated the ideal ecological self in their fiction. In Hardy and Lawrence, the ecological self is a sensual, empathetic, female self who manages to transcend the limitations of gender norms and find empowerment in nature. The ecological self is a male

self who can connect to non-human lives and take care of them, beyond his own interests. The ecological self is a non-human self, whose life is intertwined with those of humans and who lives in close cooperation with them. The ecological self is all of those selves at the same time, all of those invisible lives which do not matter and yet matter the most, acting as so many modes of healthy relating to the world. And finally, the ecological self is the ultimate relational self that the two authors are drawing out in their fiction, that type of protagonist who stands in the space-between – between human and non-human, between male and female, between human and nature, between Hardy and Lawrence.

CONCLUSION:
Songs of Thomas Hardy and D. H. Lawrence's Relational Ontology

It is no easy task to bring to a close a work which has been built around a web-like structure, and which has been designed to offer a circular exploration of Hardy's and Lawrence's works. As a conclusion, I will therefore attempt to connect the different types of relations that I have pinpointed in this study, so as to offer my understanding of what makes up the two authors' relational ontology. To do so, and in an effort to help my readers navigate their way out of this work, I propose to use some of Hardy's and Lawrence's poems (or some extracts) as connecting links between the different chapter reviews of this study. Thus, I invite my readers to embark, one last time, on a journey across Hardy's and Lawrence's works, punctuated by songs meant to inspire new voyages, and to make us linger, just a bit longer.

Thomas Hardy, 'Heredity' (Hardy, *Poems* 434)

I AM the family face;
Flesh perishes, I live on.
Projecting trait and trace
Through time to times anon,
And leaping from place to place
Over oblivion.
The years-heired feature that can
In curve and voice and eye
Despise the human span
Of durance - that is I;
The eternal thing in man,
That heeds no call to die.

I have initiated this study by demonstrating how the relational dynamic at work in Hardy's and Lawrence's fiction originates in characterisation, that is, in the various strategies that they use to bring their characters to life. Destiny plays a key part in making their life-stories reliant on circumstances that lie beyond their control, and yet, that ultimately shape their personalities. Determinism is an issue extensively explored and reassessed in both authors'

novels, as the notion does not necessarily come with the fatality that is usually associated to it. If external forces determine the place, the social class and the genetic lineage in which a character is born, it is still up to him or her to make the most of those circumstances and relate to them in his or her own way. Issues of heredity, for instance, are quite central to the works of the two authors, and more specifically to those of Hardy, as evidenced by the poem quoted above. While the poem's speaker introduces heredity as "the eternal thing in man", my reading of Hardy's fiction has demonstrated that the author's conception of heredity goes beyond the notions of immutability and fatality, towards envisioning a type of heredity which would not be reduced to genetics. Such reflections obviously remind one of Darwin's own work on heredity, and namely, of his extensive study of variation and adaptation. To the naturalist, while "the laws of reproduction, and of growth and of inheritance" are crucial to the development of a species (Darwin 18), its ability to adapt to new conditions and the variations that result from this adaptation are not less important to its survival through time (Darwin 13). In their novels, I suggest that Hardy and Lawrence offer a microcosm of Darwin's larger theory of evolution, using their plots to explore on a smaller and more relatable human-scale the way characters succeed or fail to adapt to the circumstances their creators have imposed upon them. Just like true naturalists, Hardy and Lawrence are conducting experiments through their fictions, attributing a particular environmental, social or genetic background to a character and exploring the way that character may develop, in accordance with, or in spite of, those circumstances. I have tried, in the first chapter of this work, to interpret the results of such experiments and I have found that the two authors use the same multi-layered strategy of characterisation which relies on the co-emergence of setting, social class and inheritance. In the six novels under study, Hardy and Lawrence are not only subverting the concept of self-made hero, but they are reinventing it, offering to their readers heroes who are made in-relation, and whose sense of self emerges from their own way of relating to the immutable. In that sense, I contend that the two authors' characterisation strategy lays the foundation for the development of a relational ontology that posits a centrifugal mode of existing.

D. H. Lawrence, 'Wedlock' (Lawrence, *Poems* 245)[11]

[11] The relevance of this poem in relation to the present study was brought to my attention by Elise Brault-Dreux in her essay entitled "'Creep closer in, that I am more' –Is there a "theory of human relativity" in the Poetics of *Look! We Have Come Through*?"

I

Come, my little one, closer up against me,
Creep right up, with your round head pushed in my breast.

How I love all of you! Do you feel me wrap you
Up with myself and my warmth, like a flame round the wick?

And how I am not at all, except a flame that mounts off you.
Where I touch you, I flame into being; — but is it me, or you?

That round head pushed in my chest, like a nut in its socket,
And I the swift bracts that sheathe it: those breasts, those thighs and knees,

Those shoulders so warm and smooth: I feel that I
Am a sunlight upon them, that shines them into being

But how lovely to be you! Creep closer in, that I am more.
I spread over you! How lovely, your round head, your arms,

Your breasts, your knees and feet! I feel that we
Are a bonfire of oneness, me flame flung leaping round you,
You the core of the fire, crept into me.

II

And oh, my little one, you whom I enfold,
How quaveringly I depend on you, to keep me alive
Like a flame on a wick!

I, the man who enfolds you and holds you close,
How my soul cleaves to your bosom as I clasp you,
The very quick of my being!

Suppose you didn't want me! I should sink down
Like a light that has no sustenance
And sinks low.

Cherish me, my tiny one, cherish me who enfold you.
Nourish me, and endue me, I am only of you,
I am your issue.

How full and big like a robust, happy flame
When I enfold you, and you creep into me,
And my life is fierce at its quick
Where it comes off you!

III

My little one, my big one,
My bird, my brown sparrow in my breast
My squirrel clutching in to me;
My pigeon, my little one, so warm,
So close, breathing so still.

My little one, my big one,
I, who am so fierce and strong, enfolding you,
If you start away from my breast, and leave me,
How suddenly I shall go down into nothing
Like a flame that falls of a sudden.

And you will be before me, tall and towering,
And I shall be wavering uncertain
Like a sunken flame that grasps for support.

IV

But now I am full and strong and certain
With you there firm at the core of me
Keeping me.

How sure I feel, how warm and strong and happy
For the future! How sure the future is within me
I am like a seed with a perfect flower enclosed.

I wonder what it will be,
What will come forth of us.
What flower, my love?

No matter, I am so happy,
I feel like a firm, rich, healthy root,
Rejoicing in what is to come.

How I depend on you utterly,
My little one, my big one!
How everything that will be, will not be of me,
Nor of either of us,
But of both of us.

V

And think, there will something come forth from us,
We two, folded so small together,
There will something come forth from us.
Children, acts, utterance,
Perhaps only happiness.

Perhaps only happiness will come forth from us.
Old sorrow, and new happiness.

Only that one newness.

But that is all I want.
And I am sure of that.
We are sure of that.

VI

And yet all the while you are you, you are not me.
And I am I, I am never you.
How awfully distinct and far off from each other's being we are!

Yet I am glad.
I am so glad there is always you beyond my scope,
Something that stands over,
Something I shall never be,
That I shall always wonder over, and wait for,
Look for like the breath of life as long as I live,
Still waiting for you, however old you are, and I am,
I shall always wonder over you, and look for you.

And you will always be with me.
I shall never cease to be filled with newness,
Having you near me.

As I explored the various human relationships that make up Hardy's and Lawrence's plots, I have, I hope, demonstrated that writing love stories, for the two authors, amounts to much more than diverting the readers and making them dream about the prince or princess charming. In fact, the six love stories under study are less about love than about growth, gender roles, or violence. Upon turning the last page of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, for instance, the reader might not be left reminiscing about the tragic beauty of the love story between two star-crossed lovers; on the contrary, he or she is more likely to be thinking back on the development of the female protagonist throughout the plot, and namely, about the way her relationships with

men have impacted it. Indeed, a closer look at the narrative function of love in the two authors' novels has enabled me to assert that the feeling of love was used by Hardy and Lawrence as a tool allowing them to treat the issue of otherness and its function in the process of self-construction. As we navigated back and forth, along the novels of the corpus, we were confronted with various representations of love, from a feeling that might annihilate the self, to a feeling that might, on the contrary, be the key to finding oneself. In Lawrence's own words, "the tale is about becoming complete, or about the failure to become complete" (Lawrence, *Study* 20). I would argue that such an oscillation between two drastically opposite conceptions of love highlights the intricacies of human relationships and of the process of relating as a whole. "Where I touch you, I flame into being; — but is it me, or you?", Lawrence's speaker asks to his beloved in the poem quoted above, raising the issue of endosymbiosis in romantic relationships. As one of Lawrence's greatest fears and obsessions, the threat of having one's integral self being absorbed by the loved one can therefore be found both in fictional and his poetic work. In his essay entitled "Intimate Responsivity as Essence-Calling-Path-Fruition: Eco(psycho)logical Ethics Via Zen Buddhist Phenomenology", Will W. Adams comes to a conclusion which, I argue, could very aptly sum up Hardy's and Lawrence's perspective on love in their novels: "In real relationships, we will hurt each other, sometimes unintentionally, sometimes intentionally. Yet, the ongoing relational path is (our) life itself" (Adams 79). What the two authors are demonstrating in their fiction is indeed the inescapability of otherness, this urging need to realise oneself through the contact with the Other, and, consequently, this human tendency to bear with the violence of the Other, in an illusory attempt to save oneself. On that issue, the dichotomy between male selfhood and female otherness, put forward by Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex*, has been very enlightening, allowing a thorough exploration of the way gender may impact one's way of relating to the world. Just as bildungsromane have traditionally been written as cautionary tales for young readers, I suggest that Hardy's and Lawrence's bildungromances are meant to point to their readers, young and old, healthy modes of relating to the Other that will ultimately lead to healthy modes of relating to oneself.

D. H. Lawrence, 'Climb Down, O Lordly Mind!' (Lawrence, *Poems* 473-474)

Climb down, O lordly mind!
O eagle of the mind, alas, you are more like a buzzard.
Come down now, from your pre-eminence, O mind, O

lofty spirit!
Your hour has struck
your unique day is over.
Absolutism is finished, in the human consciousness too.
A man is many things, he is not only a mind.
But in his consciousness, he is two-fold at least:
he is cerebral, intellectual, mental, spiritual,
but also he is instinctive, intuitive, and in touch.
The mind, that needs to know all things
must needs at last come to know its own limits,
even its own nullity, beyond a certain point.
Know thyself, and that thou art mortal,
and therefore, that thou art forever unknowable;
the mind can never reach thee.
Thou art like the moon,
and the white mind shines on one side of thee
but the other side is dark forever,
and the dark moon draws the tides also.
Thou art like the day
but thou art also like the night,
and thy darkness is forever invisible,
for the strongest light throws also the darkest shadow.
The blood knows in darkness, and forever dark,
in touch, by intuition, instinctively.
The blood also knows religiously,
and of this, the mind is incapable.
The mind is non-religious.
To my dark heart, gods are.
In my dark heart, love is and is not.
But to my white mind
gods and love alike are but an idea,
a kind of fiction.
Man is an alternating consciousness.

Man is an alternating consciousness.
Only that exists which exists in my own consciousness.
Cogito, ergo sum.
Only that exists which exists dynamically and unmentalised,
in my blood.
Non cogito, ergo sum.
I am, I do not think I am.

In his working notes to *The Visible and the Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty writes: "What one might consider to be 'psychology' (…) is in fact ontology" (Merleau-Ponty 176). This assertion supports the perspective from which I have designed the third chapter of this work, in that it underlines the relevance of an investigation into the characters' psyches, within the scope of an ontological study. Psychology, however, is not limited to the realm of the psyche, in Hardy and Lawrence. According to the speaker in Lawrence's poem entitled 'Climb Down, O Lordly Mind!', man, "(…) in his consciousness, (…) is two-fold at least: / he is cerebral, intellectual, mental, spiritual, / but also he is instinctive, intuitive, and in touch". To get in touch, in every way, indeed serves as a leitmotiv in Lawrence's poetic and fictional work, suggesting that the access to otherness is only made possible by an embodied approach to the world. For any reader to grasp the complexities of the characters' consciousness, he or she needs to pay attention to the physical manifestations of the inner workings of their minds. In other words, a reader gets to make sense of the characters' interiorities by focusing on the description of their senses, that is, on the way they feel rather than on the way they think. The exploration of the concept of affect has allowed me to point out how the two authors are using their fiction to bridge the gap between the mental life and the physical life, all the while maintaining a Humean dualism between the two. Interestingly enough, in Lawrence's poem quoted above, the notion of Cartesian dualism is evoked by the speaker, only to be debunked and the speaker offers an alternative to the famous Cogito: "Non cogito, ergo sum". In offering a counterpoint to Descartes' Cogito, Lawrence condemns an all-mental mode of relating to the world that he wants to replace with a sensual approach, both to the world and to fiction. As I explored the way Hardy's and Lawrence's characters could make sense of the world exclusively through the senses, I was able to identify in their novels a similar pattern that aimed at producing a type of realism relying on the senses. Based on the two authors' efforts to make the impalpable palpable to their readers, I suggest that Hardy and Lawrence are reinventing the genre of Sensation

Fiction, proposing a type of literature that is meant to convey what being human *feels* like. Allowing one's readers to relate to the story, which is the ultimate aim of any author, takes up another dimension in Hardy's and Lawrence's fiction, as the two authors offer to their readers an embodied experience of reading, in which they can both identify to the characters but also engage with the material world, within and beyond the frame of the book.

D. H. Lawrence, 'Climbing Down' (Lawrence, *Poems* 667)

They are afraid of climbing down from this idiotic tin-pot heaven
of ours
because they don't know what they'll find when they do get down.
They needn't bother, most of them will never get down at all,
they've got to stay up.
And those that do descend have got to suffer a sense-change
into something new and strange.
Become aware as leaves are aware
and fine as flowers are fine
and fierce as fire is fierce
and subtle, silvery, tinkling and rippling
as rain-water
and still a man,
but a man re-born from the rigidity of fixed ideas
resurrected from the death of mechanical motion and emotion.

The last line of this poem written by Lawrence underlines two ideas that are central to both Hardy's and Lawrence's fiction: the pre-eminence of the material over the mechanical, and the dialectic between motion and emotion, which rules our embodied experience of the world. As part of their exploration of embodied cognition, I have found that the two authors use the tension between motion and inertia so as to demonstrate how those two notions, in their paradoxical interdependency, may help to unravel the mystery of human consciousness. In encouraging us to "climb down", Lawrence's poetic persona is indeed taking up a phenomenological approach to the world, reminding us of the importance of going back to the things themselves, as Husserl famously wrote. To go back or to climb down – those phrases

both suggest that movement lies at the heart of any process of reconnection to the material world, and that kinaesthesia makes possible not only our own self-awareness, but our awareness of that world (Sheets-Johnson 30). The present "relative" study, structured around constant back-and-forth movements between the two authors, serves as yet another demonstration that any relation must originate in motion. In an attempt to better convey a relational ontology in their fiction, Hardy and Lawrence use movement in various different ways, on a macro level as motion performs narrative functions and is involved in characterisation, and on a micro level, allowing the authors to broach topics such as kinaesthetic empathy, which opens up new phenomenological ways of relating to otherness, through the movements of the body. As I analysed the way the characters moved, in both authors' novels, I could notice how motion was gendered and how Hardy and Lawrence were using movement to deal with the power dynamics between men and women. In Lawrence, I have found that women were often condemned to immanence and that only men, as exemplified in the poem quoted above, could hope to be "re-born from the rigidity of fixed ideas". More often than not, Lawrence's women are not granted motility, but are instead being moved by man, in every sense of the word, as they fall in love and are subsequently set in motion by the male impetus. Studying movement in Lawrence's work is also a roundabout way to investigate his conception of gender roles and of womanhood more specifically, since a vision of woman as "stable" and "eternal" (Lawrence, *Study* 57) must necessarily be associated with a lack of motility. While Lawrence declares that "the Female shall not exist" in Hardy's novels, since "where it appears, it is a criminal tendency to be stamped out" (Lawrence, Study 95), I would argue that close-readings of the two authors' novels, supported by phenomenological theories of motion by Evan Thompson or Christine Leroy, have suggested otherwise. Behind their apparent torpidity, I suggest that Hardy's female characters are probably more dynamic than any of Lawrence's heroines, in that they might not move fast or far enough, but they are moving on their own…

Thomas Hardy, 'Self-Unconscious' (Hardy, Poems 331-332)

Along the way
He walked that day,
Watching shapes that reveries limn,
And seldom he
Had eyes to see
The moment that encompassed him.

Bright yellowhammers
Made mirthful clamours,
And billed long straws with a bustling air,
And bearing their load
Flew up the road
That he followed, alone, without interest there.
From bank to ground
And over and round
They sidled along the adjoining hedge;
Sometimes to the gutter
Their yellow flutter
Would dip from the nearest slatestone ledge.
The smooth sea-line
With a metal shine.
And flashes of white, and a sail thereon,
He would also descry
With a half-wrapt eye
Between the projects he mused upon.
Yes, round him were these
Earth's artistries.
But specious plans that came to his call
Did most engage
His pilgrimage,
While himself he did not see at all.
Dead now as sherds
Are the yellow birds,
And all that mattered has passed away;
Yet God, the Elf,
Now shows him that self
As he was, and should have been shown, that day.
O it would have been good
Could he then have stood
At a clear-eyed distance, and conned the whole,

But now such vision
Is mere derision.
Nor soothes his body nor saves his soul.
Not much, some may
Incline to say.
To see therein, had it all been seen.
Nay! he is aware
A tiling was there
That loomed with an immortal mien.

In this poem, the speaker describes a man who fails to take in the world around him as he walks out in the open air. The notion of self-unconscious that is being explored by Hardy's poetic persona actually resonates a lot with the representation of consciousness that he invokes in his fiction. For Hardy, as much as for Lawrence, consciousness is a material and fluid entity which does not rely merely on the sense of sight but which calls upon one's capacity for embodied intentionality. To be conscious, according to both authors, is to be able to extend towards what is not oneself, or, as I have argued, to be able to show tenderness towards the Other and the world. States of utter oblivion, when characters are engaged in sensual encounters with otherness and are getting in proper touch with them are therefore not antonymous with the traditional conception of states of awareness. In fact, the notion of self-unconscious which seems to be used by Hardy's speaker as a synonym for lack of consciousness is, I have found, explored very differently in his fiction, as a way to reveal the nature of his characters and to organise the plot in a certain way. In Hardy and Lawrence, characters fall in love as one falls unconscious, and the state of unconsciousness takes up an embodied dimension which makes it particularly apt to allow the protagonists to connect to the world in a meaningful way. As soon as the body is introduced as the primary tool for self-awareness and awareness of the world, the issue of gender comes into play, insofar as the female body is not perceived and considered in the same way as the male body. Both Hardy and Lawrence show, through their novels, that the way men perceive the bodies of women have a direct impact on the way women ultimately perceive themselves and the world around them. As female characters are reduced to their bodies or, on the contrary, are being robbed of their material selves, their consciousness is simultaneously being fragmented, and their ability to relate to the Other in a healthy way is substantially impacted. Yet, in the six novels under study, the heroines are carving out a path

to emancipation, achieving a state of empowerment by playing by the rules of gender roles, in Lawrence, or by standing up against them and displaying a provocative "unconsciousness of gender" (Hardy, *JO* 119), in Hardy. According to theorists of the Enactive Approach, such as Francisco Varela or Christian Spahn, it is indeed in the organic, that is, in this gap between the mental and the physical (Spahn 85), between the conscious and the unconscious, that lies any human's power to grow as an individual, beyond the boundaries of the skin.

Thomas Hardy, 'Nature's Questioning' (Hardy, *Poems* 66-67)

When I look forth at dawning, pool,
Field, flock, and lonely tree,
All seem to gaze at me
Like chastened children sitting silent in a school;
Their faces dulled, constrained, and worn.
As though the master's ways
Through the long teaching days
Had cowed them till their early zest was overborne.
Upon them stirs in lippings mere
(As if once clear in call.
But now scarce breathed at all) ~
'We wonder, ever wonder, why we find us here!
'Has some Vast Imbecility,
Mighty to build and blend,
But impotent to tend.
Framed us in jest, and left us now to hazardry?
'Or come we of an Automaton
Unconscious of our pains? . .
Or are we live remains
Of Godhead dying downwards, brain and eye now gone?
'Or is it that some high Plan betides,
As yet not understood,
Of Evil stormed by Good,
We the Forlorn Hope over which Achievement strides?'

Thus things around. No answerer I. . .
Meanwhile the winds, and rains,
And Earth's old glooms and pains
Are still the same, and Life and Death are neighbours nigh.

In the second part of this work, an exploration of the organic in Hardy and Lawrence has allowed me to locate consciousness outside of the constraints of the human mind, as an intentional force driving the self inexorably towards the world. As the two authors are decentring human consciousness, away from the higher spheres of the brain, I have found that they are similarly decentring the human species itself, suggesting that its place is among the rest of nature, rather than on a pedestal. So as to reduce the gap between their characters and the setting in which their lives are unfolding, the two authors are adopting various strategies meant to enhance the affinities between humans and nature. I have proposed to call one of those strategies "ecomorphism", as a way to refer to the authors' choice of attributing environmental features to their human characters, and as a counterpoint to anthropomorphism, which constitutes a diverging point between Hardy and Lawrence. Indeed, if the two authors concur in their vision of the human being as unexceptional, they are taking up two different approaches to convey the same idea. On the one hand, I would argue that Hardy uses a phenomenological anthropomorphism as a way to underline the impossibility for humans to fathom the non-human experience, but also as a way to emphasise the importance of trying. On the other hand, I have found that Lawrence is rejecting any form of anthropomorphism, on the ground that non-humans are deserving better than to be compared to an evil humanity. The first approach, then, relies on a valuing of the non-human experience, while the second approach is based on a devaluing of the human experience, stemming from a loss of faith in humanity as a whole. In both authors, however, I have noted that the environment was systematically endowed with a consciousness, whether it be as part of an anthropomorphic approach or as part of a strategy to grant a higher kind of consciousness to the natural world. Reading works by anthropologists and ecopsychologists, like Gregory Bateson, have helped us define the ethical considerations of attributing a consciousness to the non-human world and, inversely, of reserving cognitive abilities for humans only. The conception of environmental consciousness as an environment endowed with a consciousness is a feature particularly common in Hardy's work and is not limited to his fiction, as exemplified in the poem quoted above. In this poem, "field, flock, and lonely tree, / All seem to gaze at" the speaker, and the natural world is granted a voice with

which they can voice the same types of questionings any human being has had in his or her life. While the poetic persona of Hardy's poem gives a voice to nature, the narrators of the two authors' novels go as far as to give agency to natural elements and to include them as driving forces in the unfolding of the plot. There is indeed something in the atmosphere of Hardy's and Lawrence's novels, that makes palpable to the reader the interweaving of human and non-human destinies and which metaphorically represents the idea of an open mind. The reader therefore gets to know the protagonists through the natural world in which they are living and that natural world is in turn welcomed into the inner workings of their minds, resulting in a renewed conception of environmental consciousness which resembles the notion of Anima Mundi, with the difference that the human mind is encompassed in that greater consciousness too. As soon as one keeps an open mind, Hardy and Lawrence suggest, then one can finally get in touch with otherness, in a meaningful way.

D. H. Lawrence, 'Non-existence' (Lawrence, *Poems* 613)

We don't exist unless we are deeply and sensually in touch
with that which can be touched but not known.

This concise poem written by Lawrence seems to encompass the very essence of the relational ontology I have attempted to pinpoint in his fiction and that of Hardy. Those two verses sound also very much like two lines that could have been drawn from Merleau-Ponty's own work, in which he lays out his theory of the body as the primary tool for perception. In their novels, the two authors propose new ways of knowing that do not require any intellectual faculties, but that rather rely on one's embodiment, that is, one's intimate connection to one's body. Hardy's and Lawrence's protagonists are either very embodied figures, or characters, like Connie Chatterley, who are engaged in a restorative journey back to their body, and back to the world. Indeed, the relation to one's body appears as the primordial relation, according to the two authors, in that an acknowledgement of one's materiality is a prerequisite for any proper acknowledgement of the materiality of the world. In our modern fast-paced modes of living, slowing one's body down amounts to going back to what matters, in every sense of the word, and to enter into a non-exploitative mode of relating to the natural world. A soon as the body is encompassed in what Merleau-Ponty calls the Flesh of the world, then a shift of perspective is made possible, from an anthropocenic to a symbiocenic mode of being in the world. The

concept of Symbiocene, coined by Glenn Albrecht in 2019 has been very useful to identify the complex mode of relating between characters and setting in the two authors' novels. I have shown how Hardy and Lawrence perform a destruction of "the environment" as a concept in their novels, and write stories of interpermeation between characters and settings, from which inevitably stems a sense of belonging to the rest of nature. Because touching is a two-fold process implying to be touched in return, the two authors show how an embeddedness in the Symbiocene must result in an ethical commitment, insofar as being involved amounts to being concerned – in other words, to caring. Hardy's and Lawrence's proposal for an embodied ecology therefore posits that nature is among us rather than around us, as the notion of environment suggests, and that any ecological commitment starts in caring for oneself, for others, and more particularly for those lives which got entangled, and ultimately forgotten in the Flesh of the World.

Thomas Hardy, 'Dead 'Wessex' the Dog to the Household' (Hardy, *Poems* 915-916)

Do you think of me at all,
Wistful ones?
Do you think of me at all
As if nigh?
Do you think of me at all
At the creep of evenfall,
Or when the sky-birds call
As they fly?
Do you look for me at times,
Wistful ones?
Do you look for me at times
Strained and still?
Do you look for me at times,
When the hour for walking chimes,
On that grassy path that climbs
Up the hill?
You may hear a jump or trot,
Wistful ones,

You may hear a jump or trot -
Mine, as 'twere -
You may hear a jump or trot
On the stair or path or plot;
But I shall cause it not,
Be not there.
Should you call as when I knew you,
Wistful ones,
Should you call as when I knew you,
Shared your home;
Should you call as when I knew you,
I shall not turn to view you,
I shall not listen to you,
Shall not come.

If I had to find a single voice for the ecological self, in Hardy's work, I would probably look into the poem quoted above, in which Hardy gives a voice to his late dog, Wessex. Indeed, I would argue that there is more to this poem than an apparent tribute from the poet to his companion, in that it makes visible – or rather, heard – one of those non-human lives that are too often invisible, even though they make our lives actually matter. Throughout the third part of this work, I have tried to demonstrate how "the ecological self is a dialogical self" (Brown 152) in Hardy's and Lawrence's novels, just as the speaker of this poem is seeking to dialogue with his master, in an attempt to maintain the intimate relation that they once had. If it might not have appeared suitable for Hardy to choose a non-human being to act as narrator of his novels, the choice of Wessex as poetic persona for this poem shows the author's belief in a mode of writing the human experience through the non-human, and more specifically, through the exploration of relationships with non-humans. In Hardy and Lawrence, female characters are particularly inclined to create powerful bonds with non-human characters, since they often appear on the side of nature, rather than on the side of man. Supporting close-readings of the corpus with theories in ecofeminist studies and material feminism, I have demonstrated that such an association of women with nature was deprived of any essentialist discourse, and that the two authors were actually subverting the notion of Mother Nature through concepts such as the Natural Mother, who finds strength in nature in order to stand up against men. As they

delineate the contours of an ecological self who is characterised by its empathy and openness towards the Other, Hardy and Lawrence are able to comment upon all those man-made rules and systems of values which impact our relations to others and to the world, one of which being patriarchy. In the end, the language of love is the mode of communication that both authors are repeatedly using to foster an ecological commitment in their readers, and probably the one language that turns their novels into green writing.

As we reach the last chorus of this poetic postlude, the various features of Hardy and Lawrence's common relational ontology have been delineated, through the various types of relations that make up the two authors' stories, and that are also key to living a fulfilling life. The very relational dynamics that exists between the two novelists has also been extensively demonstrated and explored, in all its hues and complexities, allowing me to assert that the Victorian and Modernist etiquettes with which they have been labelled are not only irrelevant, but are deleterious to any in-depth reading of Hardy's and Lawrence's works, and to any attempt from a reader to fathom their ontological views. The present work argues that Hardy's work enlightens Lawrence's, just as Lawrence's enlightens Hardy's. I believe that the secret to both Hardy's and Lawrence's hearts resides in this space between their works on the shelf, and on the reader's own input, as he or she goes from one book to another, trying to navigate through the Flesh of their worlds.

As I write the last words of this work, it would be presumptuous of me to assert that I have indeed grasped the full extent of Hardy and Lawrence's relational ontology. The poetic journey that I have initiated in this conclusion appears to be a fitting direction for me to take, and one that should reveal new modes of relating, through literature. If novels are spaces where bonds are perpetually being created and broken, the genre of the poem does not appear, at first glance, to be a relational medium per se. In fact, a poem is inherently made to be self-sufficient and to convey the essence of a thought, in a limited space and often in a constrained form. It seems quite relevant to me to wonder how such constraints might impact the unfolding of Hardy's and Lawrence's relational ontology, and how the genre one author chooses to write in might actually influence his way of thinking and of understanding the world. Thus, there might remain one relation that still needs to be explored, the relation between Hardy and Lawrence as poets.

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