

A Comparative Study of Hardy's
Tess of the D'Urbervilles
and Haykal's Zainab

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to study **Tess of the D'Urbervilles** and **Zainab** from a comparatistic point of view. The justification for studying the two novels together lies in the striking similarities between them in terms of content, mode, characterization, ideational and thematic concerns, period, and structure.

For the first time the Arabic novel, at the hands of Haykal, sets out to depict the life experiences of Egyptian peasants in a transitional period and to dramatize love in a social context, which provides us with insights into the human condition in general. **Tess**, in its turn, deals with the lives of English peasants in a transitional society, and it is basically a love story designed to serve as a means of conducting an enquiry into the complexities of human conditions.

As one might expect, common thematic concerns and ideational preoccupations in the two novels beget similar methods of representation. Indeed, the two novels employ a 'representational mode' of narrative based on the interaction of sociological and psychological concepts of behaviour.

Finally, the paper suggests that, for all their affinities from different perspectives, each of the two novels has its distinct local quality and native temper. However, the novel is the art most influenced by indigenous spiritual, cultural, and social values.

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Literary works should be studied together, whatever their national origins, as soon as they are ideationally or factually related, as soon as they belong to the same current or period of time, the same aesthetic category or genre, or as soon as they illustrate the same themes or motifs (Jost, 1974: 12-13).

Francois Jost's definition of the nature of the "comparatistic inquiry" (Jost, 1974: 33) provides us with a justification for lumping **Tess of the D'Urbervilles** (1891) and **Zainab** (1941) together in a comparative study, from the point of view of content, period, structure, mode, genre, characterization and other literary conventions.

It is of interest to point out here that in his preface to the second edition of **Zainab**, Haykal describes his novel as a pioneering literary work in which he sets out to break new ground⁽¹⁾ in Arabic literature, yet acknowledging his indebtedness to European literature as a source of inspiration, thus providing us with a further justification for adopting a comparative approach in this article. But this does not mean that this article is so much concerned with establishing direct European influences⁽²⁾ on Haykal as it is meant to study his pioneering effort to open up the Arabic novel to new areas of thought and feelings in the European tradition. Hence, while focusing on the study of the comparative points of **Tess** and **Zainab**, this article will also (where appropriate) consider whatever similarities that **Zainab** may have in common with other European literary works.

In this study **Tess** may, in fact, serve as a "comparative pair", so to speak, by which we can "properly" read and "classify" **Zainab** in its capacity as a "pioneering" work. David Lodge's relevant views may illustrate the point I am trying to make:

No book, for instance, has any meaning on its own, in a vacuum. The meaning of a book is in large part a product of its differences from and similarities to other books. If a novel did not bear some resemblance to other novels we should not know how to read it, and if it wasn't different from all other novels we shouldn't want to read it. Any adequate reading of a text, therefore, involves identifying and classifying it in relation to other texts, according to content, genre, mode, period and so on (Lodge, 1981:3-4).

David Lodge's remarks are not made in a context related to comparative literature, yet they coincide with Jost's notions in that they define one form of comparativism whereby literary works can be adequately read and identified by being related

to each other from different viewpoints. In light of Jost's and Lodge's notions, I shall now address myself to examining the two novels.

For the first time the Arabic novel, at the hands of Haykal, addresses itself to depicting the life experiences of Egyptian peasants in a transitional period and dramatizing love in a social context, which provides us with insights into the human condition in general. **Tess**, in its turn, deals with the lives of English peasants in a transitional society, and it is basically a love story designed to serve as a means of conducting an enquiry into the complexities of human conditions. As one might expect, common thematic concerns and ideational preoccupations in the two novels beget similar methods of narrative representation. In the phrase of Scholes and Kellogg, both novels, I would argue, employ a "representational mode" (Scholes and Kellogg, 1966: 84) of narrative which seeks to reproduce actuality requiring for its development sociological and psychological concepts of behaviour and mental processes, such as those which inform the characterization of the central figures in **Tess** and **Zainab**. Indeed, **Tess** and **Zainab** are sociological novels and psychological studies, sociological in that they set out to depict the impact of societal values on the private lives of the individuals, and psychological insofar as they are constructed to dramatize the traumatic experiences of central characters as they strenuously struggle to realize themselves in unpropitious environments and trying social circumstances.

Tess's urge for self-realization in response to her natural bent and her disappointment at her limited chances to make the most out of life are expressed in her words to Angel: "My life looks as if it had been wasted for want of chances" (Hardy, 1974: 164)⁽³⁾. A few lines later on, Tess, becoming more philosophical, goes on to reveal her repugnance to treading the beaten track which hardly harmonizes with her passion for cultivating her individuality:

Because what's the use of learning that I am one of a long row only-finding out that there is set down in some old book somebody just like me, and to know that I shall only act her part; making me sad, that's all. The best is not to remember that your nature and your past doings have been just like thousands "and thousands", and that your coming life and doings 'll be like thousands' and thousands' (Hardy, 1974: 165).

Many commentators (Ghent, 1953: 196-97 and Cecil, 1978: 137) have pointed out the incongruity of such philosophical mode of thinking on the part of a peasant girl with only a Sixth Standard training. Similar criticism⁽⁴⁾ has been levelled at Haykal's portrayal of Zainab whose liberal ideas and mode of action hardly befit her social background and are well out of tune with her environment. In both cases the incongruity can be ascribed to a tendency on the part of both novelists to transmit their idiosyncratic ideals to their heroines, making of them repositories of those ideals. This, as the ensuing discussion will reveal, fits in with the reformist dimension, the thesis-like quality operative in both novels.

Zainab, of course, is not so much sophisticated as Tess, yet she is as equally preoccupied, in D.H. Lawrence's terminology, with arriving at her 'intensest self' (Lawrence, 1973: 55) as Tess is. It is mainly in the realm of love, not as a frivolous romantic whim, but as a "grand passion" conducive to full self-realization that Zainab is able to find her element. But reality falls well short of living up to Zainab's personal needs; instead of consummating her love affair with Ibrahim, a poor, but kind-hearted honest peasant labourer, Zainab has been made to marry Hasan, a wealthy farmer, against her own wishes. Zainab's enduring, pure emotional attachment to Ibrahim and her repulsion for Hasan, heedless of the materialistic prospects of her marriage with him, mark her off from the female careerist Thurayya in Isa Ubaid's short novel of that name, which is sometimes discussed in conjunction with **Zainab** (Jad, 1983: 13-16). Thurayya's careerism is such that she ends up by embracing Islam in order to marry a rich man, Ahmad Bey.

In her indifference to worldly gain and her spiritual aloofness, Zainab is on a par with Tess who has been compelled to marry her wealthy seducer Alec D'Urberville only in a desperate attempt to save her poverty-stricken family. Nor is Tess tempted to marry the "gentleman", Angel Clare, having an eye to whatever materialistic prospects that her marriage with him may hold: 'There was hardly a touch of earth in her love for Clare' (Hardy, 1974: 234). Angel himself is aware of Tess's lofty passions:

That she had already permitted him to make love to her he read as an additional assurance, not fully trowing that in the fields and pastures to "sigh gratis" is by no means deemed waste; love-making being here more often accepted inconsiderately and for its own sweet sake than in the carking anxious homes of the ambitious, where a girl's craving for an establishment paralyzes her healthy thought of a passion as an end (Hardy, 1974: 215).

D. H. Lawrence's comments on the spiritual aloofness of Hardy's fictional characters are particularly relevant to Tess: "One thing about them is that none of the heroes and heroines care very much for money, or immediate self-preservation, and all of them are struggling hard to come into being" (Lawrence, 1973: 22).

Ali B. Jad⁽⁵⁾ analyses Zainab's noble emotions in terms of the mechanism of the "novel of sensibility" which flourished in France and England in the eighteenth century. But in her intellectual orientation and urge for freedom Zainab, as Charles D. Smith has pointed out (Smith, 1979: 251), is a fictional disciple of Qasim Amin whose reformist social ideals (especially in defence of the rights of women), together with the radical social principles of Ahmad Lutfi Al Sayyid (the "teacher of the generation" ⁽⁶⁾), had a tremendous impact on the formation of Haykal's social theory which is bodied forth in the life drama of his fictional characters, as the following discussion will more elaborately reveal. But here one is tempted to suggest that Haykal's apparent approval of his heroine's radical turn of thought and his sympathetic under-

standing of her constant attraction to Ibrahim even after her marriage (that is, under the pressure of her powerful urge for independence) owe something to the tone of the narrative in Flaubert's novel **Madame Bovary** (1857). In **Madame Bovary** Flaubert goes so far as to encourage his heroine to commit adultery in the course of her struggle to be herself. A qualification is indispensable here that if Emma Bovary's amorous adventures are undertaken to satisfy her romantic whims, this is hardly the case with Zainab. For Zainab, as has already been pointed out, love is a "grand passion", a self-fulfilling experience in which her whole being is involved. Zainab and for that matter Tess can be considered of the sisterhood of Emma Bovary only insofar as they are all imbued with a remarkable radical sense of independence.

In **Zainab** this contributes to the emergence of the heroine as a young Egyptian peasant injected with European blood. The same holds true for Hamid, the central male character in the novel, who is basically cast in the role of the representative of his creator's social ideals (in his book **Fajr al-Qissa al-Misriya**, Yahya Haqqi goes so far as to identify Hamid with Haykal), ideals inspired by the writings of the two social thinkers Qasim Amin and Ahmad Lutfi Al sayyid whose campaign for effecting social reform at the turn of the century figures as one of the most remarkable landmarks in the modern social history of Egypt. Haykal's desire to place his hero's mode of thought in historical perspective is brought to the fore by his direct reference to Hamid's remarkable interest in the writings of Qasim Amin.⁽⁷⁾ But just as Zainab is injected with European blood reflecting Haykal's personal attraction to Western thought, so Hamid is over-exposed to the radical ideals of European thinkers (Spencer, Darwin, and some German philosophers). But what strikes us most is the Millian flavour of Hamid's social vision which, it would seem, derives directly from his creator's infatuation with the doctrines of John Stuart Mill⁽⁸⁾ whose social principles, it is worthwhile to note, coincide with those held by Qasim Amin and Ahmad Lutfi Al Sayyid. The point is important in that it affords intellectual and ideational links between Hamid and Angel—an English fictional disciple of Mill, as I shall soon be arguing.

Hamid, however, is by no means unaware of his difficult position; on the contrary, at a revealing moment of a forceful spiritual dislocation generating from his growing sense of estrangement from his immediate environment, Hamid succumbs to an emotional outburst betraying how far he has been overburdened with being made to take, as it were, an overdose of Western thought: "Enough of this philosophy that has been flung at us by Franco - German thinkers. Let us hold to our heritage and proceed to develop it in slow steps whereby we guarantee its permanence. Do I want to violate law and custom and to yield to my whims by living according to theories?" (Haykal, 1963: 275).⁽⁹⁾

Imbibing too much Western thought on the one hand, and internalizing the pressures and constraints of local social restrictions on the other, Hamid finds himself a prey to internal psychological conflict, the initial symptoms of which are accentuated in his already discussed emotional reaction to his position. Hamid's inner

self-division is more pronouncedly underlined by his ambivalent attitude towards social conventions and established morality. For instance, for all his West-inspired distaste for the institution of marriage, Hamid is full of veneration for the sanctity of the marriage contract. In an authorial comment on the love relationship between Hamid and Zainab, Haykal says: "Had it not been for his respect for the legal ties between the two sexes, he could have considered possessing Zainab's heart as his overriding desire" (Haykal, 1963: 97). Nor is Hamid able to act on the force of his proclaimed social iconoclasm. So much is revealed by the juxtaposition between his constant complaints against conservative social conventions which prevent him from meeting with his cousin Aziza or marrying Zainab, and his failure to get the better of his conventionally-based sense of social superiority in dealing with a peasant girl like Zainab, who is placed so far beneath him (the land owner's son) on the social ladder. Upon first kissing Zainab, Hamid, we are told, "experiences tremorous passionate excitement commingled with sensations of aloofness and social superiority" (Haykal, 1963: 33) as a reaction to lowering himself to the level of a peasant girl. The novel abounds in similar situations in which self-rebuke on the part of Hamid, on account of his social condescension, alternates with outbursts of condemnation of unfavourable social circumstances in which he finds it impossible to marry a girl from the lower classes or to see his cousin.

The theme of ambivalence, genetrating similarly from the dialectical conflict between conventional and unconventional morality, receives equal emphasis in depicting the life drama of Angel, an English counterpart of Hamid in more than one respect. Angel is a Millian self-seeker who is passionately concerned with self-realization in response to his individualistic needs. Hence, his repudiation of conventional morality, his rejection of communion, his decision, against the wishes of his parents, not to pursue an ecclesiastical career, and his self-imposed exile — or rather moral flight to Brazil where, Hardy is keen to tell us, "conventions wouldn't be so operative" (Hardy, 1974: 305). But Angel's alleged unconventionality proves to be, in existentialistic terms, a "bad faith" upon being first put to the test. Angel cannot help judging Tess's past by orthodox conventional standards, though he has been first attracted to her as an "unconventional" girl. Angel's failure to eradicate the roots of the conventional side of his personality reflects his strict evangelical upbringing. Consequently, he suffers from a persisting internal duality bordering on a schizophrenic rift in which, in Freudian terms, a divorce between the "intellectual and emotional functions" (Rycroft, 1978: 147)⁽¹⁰⁾ in Angel's psyche takes place. A striking textual evidence to this is dramatized in the cursorily discussed sleep-walking scene where Angel's tender emotions towards Tess momentarily gain the upper hand against the force of his nullified reason which dictates that he should get rid of her. Angel's inner disturbance which is in part brought about by the tyranny of external social forces (the "rod of conventions") (Hardy, 1974: 314) testifies to the interplay of psychology and sociology as a means of characterization in **Tess** as is the case in **Zainab**.

It is only in "Phase the Seventh", given the symbolic title «Fulfilment», that Angel succeeds in subduing his conventionality by taking a courageous decision to live together with Tess under the same roof as a married couple despite their illegal posi-

tion. The experience is equally self-fulfilling for Tess insofar as it provides her with an opportunity to exercise her rights as an individual. But this phase of self-fulfilment is not made to last. It has been painfully interrupted by the arrival of the police to arrest Tess upon discovering her killing of Alec. Tess's and Angel's attempts to regard their own desires and personal code as their own supreme laws, heedless of the authority of conventional morality, look forward to Sue's and Jude's decision to live together as a married couple in response to their personal needs, oblivious of the illegality of their position, in Hardy's last novel **Jude the Obscure** (1895 - 1896). Such an undertaking in both novels gives measure to the intensity of the characters' passions for acting as individuals, exercising their individualistic rights. These are the most remarkable sentiments that Hardy's characters have in common with their Egyptian counterparts.

In their individualistic modes of thought and action Hardy's fictional characters seem to be engaged in living out the premises of Hardy's social vision as it is inspired by the writings of John Stuart Mill whose "Essay on Liberty" Hardy, upon his own admission, committed to memory. (Gittings, 1978:152) Hardy's Mill-inspired, far-reaching understanding of the individual's rights to act in compliance with his idiosyncratic needs is recorded in **The late years of Thomas Hardy:**

I consider a social system based on individual spontaneity to promise better for happiness than a curbed and uniform one under which all temperaments are bound to shape themselves to a single pattern of living. To this end I would have society divided into groups of temperaments with a different code of observance for each group. (Hardy, 1930: 41)⁽¹¹⁾

This Mill-inspired plea for giving free rein to the indulgence of individualistic passions finds its way as a powerful force informing the attempts of Hardy's fictional characters to be themselves (especially in **Tess** and **Jude the obscure**), much in the same way that the modes of thought of Haykal's characters seem to be inspired in part by the social theories of Qasim Amin and Lutfi Al Sayid.

Yet, in no small measure, Hardy's central characters in his last two novels reveal themselves also to be typical children of the 1890s, a transitional decade in which the social scene witnessed the emergence of the phenomenon of the "new" man and woman. The peculiar temper and current views of the decade are strikingly summed up by Holbrook Jackson in his book **The Eighteen Nineties:**

... those who lived through the Nineties as young men and women will remember that this search for a new mode of life was anything but melancholy or diseased. The very pursuit was a mode of life sufficiently joyful to make life worth living. But in addition there was the fleeting of expectancy, born not alone of a mere toying with novel ideas, but born equally of a determination to taste **new sensation**, even at some personal risk, for the sake of life and growth... those who were of

the period desired to be in the movement, and not mere spectators. It was a time of experiment. Dissatisfied with the long ages of convention and action which arose out of precedent, many set about testing life for themselves. The new man wished to be himself, the new woman threatened to live her own life (Jackson, 1923:30) [My underlinings]

Sue and Jude make no secret of their quest for "new sensations" or their engagement in a kind of social "experiment" (Hardy, 1974: 372) carried away by their enthusiasm for indulging their "modernistic" orientation in an extremely excessive fashion. This may not entirely apply to Tess and Angel, yet, up to a point, they have their own share of the modernistic frenzy of the age. It will be remembered here that Hardy, in a frequently quoted authorial comment on Angel's mode of thought, ascribes his troubles mainly to the fact that he has been infected with the 'ache of modernism' (Hardy, 1974: 163).

Zainab and Hamid are perhaps conceived to be Egyptian versions of the new man and woman. However, such a theme, as is suggested by the title of Qasim Amin's book **Al Mar'ah Al-Jadida**, was not alien to the social atmosphere in Egypt by the time Haykal was writing his novel. In fact, in this book Qasim Amin's ideas lead him far beyond the problems facing women; in a tone particularly relevant to the thematic concerns of **Zainab** Qasim Amin writes:

There are those who say to you purify your souls and you will realize yourselves. They urge you to serve your people and country. We believe this to be talk only. For changing our ways and modes of behaviour we need more than preaching. We want definite ends and means, and we need to prepare the young for the new life.⁽¹²⁾

Quest for "self-realization" and aspiration for social "change", that would pave the way for the individual to realize himself, are certainly two supreme passions in the lives of Zainab and Hamid. But, given their restrictive environment and the enormous social limitations imposed upon them, Zainab and Hamid can by no means go as far as Hardy's characters in turning their backs on societal values. Like Hardy's characters, neither Zainab nor Hamid is able to come to terms with an environment where emotions are regulated by social conventions and conformity rules supreme; yet, unlike their English counterparts, Zainab and Hamid are incapable of setting up alternatives by which they can live their lives on their own terms, or experience some sort of "fulfilment" guided by their personal desires, however fleetingly that might be.

In contrast to Tess's stormy life Zainab leads an uneventful passive life. The difference can be accounted for in terms of Zainab's awareness of the formidable force of social conventions militating against her as she strives for independence. Zainab's deeply-rooted religious sense contribute as well to her holding back from going to extremities in her social rebellion. Her religious sense comes to the fore in her

deep respect for the sanctity of the marriage contract - thereby keeping up her marriage tie with Hasan. Hamid's identical veneration for legal marriage ties, as I have already pointed out, derives also from his religious sense which is further underlined in his confession of his sins to Shaikh Amer in a Roman Catholic fashion.

The Western flavour of Hamid's confession is also meant to lay more emphasis on his division between two cultures - East and West. In this, one would in passing note, **Zainab** anticipates the main tension in what might be described as the "Arabic" **Bildungsroman**. In this type of novel a young hero is exposed to Western culture by making a trip to the West, whereupon he suffers from culture shock leading to his painful estrangement from his native culture and the narrative revolves around his attempts to arrive at a kind of synthesis whereby he can outgrow his self division. This educational pattern is central to the structure of experience in the lives of a number of young heroes of Arabic novels which can lay claim to the typological term of **Bildungsroman**. Hamid, of course, does not travel to the West, but he is as equally influenced by Western thought as Ismail, the young emigrant hero of Yahya Haqqi's novella **The Saint's Lamp** (1944), Muhsin, the hero of Tawfiq Al-Hakim's **Bildungsroman Bird or the East** (1938), and, to cite another example, Dr. Ibrahim the hero of the novel of that name by Dhu-al Nun Ayyub. But Hamid's main disqualification for conforming to the type lies in his chronic passivity with its sociological and psychological dimensions. For it is typical of the hero of the **Bildungsroman** either in Arabic literature or in the European models to demonstrate remarkable resilience and activity in his attempts to make his experience function, to make life yield his desired ambitions.

Hamid's passivity puts him somewhat into the same category with the hero of what Lukács typologically designates as the novel of "Romanticism of Disillusionment", where the central character is marked with definitive inaction, a tendency for introspection and contemplation due to "an over-intensified, over-determined desire for an ideal life as opposed to the real one, [yet] a desperate recognition that this desire is doomed to remain unsatisfied" (Lukács, 1978: 116) Lukács cites Frederick Moreau, the pathetic hero of Flaubert's novel **Sentimental Education** (1869), as the most distinguished representative of this type of hero. Hamid perhaps is not so much weak as Frederick, yet his spiritual affinity with the kind of hero described by Lukács is unmistakable. Hamid's characteristic passivity expresses itself succinctly in his frequently recurring spells of contemplation, especially at crucial moments in his life where action is particularly called for.

Particularly instructive in this respect is Hamid's long valedictory letter to his father upon his secretive departure in protest against the marriage of his cousin. The point is that, instead of acting in the face of unfavourable circumstances, Hamid responds by expressing his indignation and frustration in a letter. Madame de Staël's general remark that the epistolary method "always presupposes more sentiment than action" (Watt 1976: 199) may illustrate Hamid's position. His letters to Aziza point as well in the same direction; all he could do in reaction to his failure to consummate his love relationship with his cousin is to write to her passionate letters bespeaking his lack of initiative to act, his innate proclivity to contemplation. Hamid's

letter to his father serves somewhat the purposes of an internal monologue, in which we get insights into the complexities of Hamid's in most feelings and emotional reaction to the social conditions he is made to contend with in his striving towards self-realization. It is in this letter that the narrative acquires an obvious tract-like quality with Hamid acting as a mouthpiece of Haykal. Small wonder then that Haykal tries to enlist our sympathy for his hero as he, most effectively, lays bare his moral dilemma in the face of stubborn social circumstances.

Hamid's recognition of his futile attempts to satisfy his desire in the sense defined by Lukács is noticeably accentuated in the domain of love which, according to Sartre,⁽¹³⁾ functions as a catalyst whereby the essence of the individual's personality is most adequately revealed. Throughout the novel Hamid projects his aspirations on an ideal woman, yet he is fully aware of the futility of his quest for one—Zainab is beneath him socially, Aziza is too conventional to fulfill his expectations, and we are given to understand, he falls in love with ten more girls without ever finding what he is looking for with any. More tellingly, Hamid, as is revealed in his letter to his father, sets out on his journey after the marriage of his cousin motivated by his insistent search for an ideal woman:

I should leave everything behind and embark on wandering
in search of my ideal beloved, and it is only by finding her that
I can live happily (Haykal, 1963: 282).

Hamid is of course endowed with vigorous sexual desires and he makes no secret of his robustious physical attraction to Zainab, yet his enthusiastic quest for an ideal woman seems to have close bearing on the romantic concept of the Eternal Womanhood, as it is enshrined in the final words of the chorus in Goethe's play **Faust part Two** (1832) :

All things corruptible
Are but a parable;
Earth's insufficiency
Here finds fulfilment;
Here the ineffable
Wins life through love;
Eternal Womanhood
Leads us above.

(Goethe, 1981: 288).

Disenchanted with the insufficiency of the actual life of reality, Hamid, it might be argued, sets out to seek "fulfilment", to "win life", by his attempt to find his ideal woman who may lead him to happiness.⁽¹⁴⁾

An instructive analogy can also be drawn between Hamid's romantic quest for an ideal women and Frederick Moreau's pinning his romantic dreams on an ideal women. By projecting their aspirations on ideal women and embarking on seeking

them, the two heroes seem to be indulging their romantic passions for pursuing the "poetry" of the "unattainable" as a means of counterbalancing the sordidness of reality, whereof the two heroes are particularly aware. In his attempt to keep up his romantic quest, Frederick refrains from taking any step to possess Mme. Arnoux, in whom he recognizes his ideal woman, when she towards the end of the novel, at least as Frederick himself is given to believe, comes round to his place to offer herself to him.

Stock traditions of romantic love inform as well Angel's idealization of Tess to match his spiritual aspirations. Underscoring Angel's investment of Tess with idealistic qualities, Hardy says that Angel loves Tess "fancifully and ideally" (Hardy, 1974).

In another place in the novel we read: "Yet Clare's love was doubtless ethereal to a fault, imaginative to impracticability" (Hardy, 1974). So intense is Angel's idealization of Tess that he finds it extremely hard to come to terms with her human frailties. As we have it in **Zainab**, love in **Tess** assumes a revealing function in the Sartrean sense. Like Hamid, Angel has his own share of physical robustness, but the force of his spiritualism is such that he tries to subdue his desires, and thereby suffering from some sort of neurotic disorder (Sumner, 1981: 131). In contrast, Hamid's etherealism is not given sufficient attention to give rise to the development of the flesh-spirit dichotomy inside Hamid's soul. Hamid's love troubles originate partly from external social circumstances and partly from his vague search for a Beatrice.

But what sets Angel more conspicuously apart from his Egyptian fictional relative is his urge for action. Both heroes, as I have already shown, are identically concerned with realizing themselves, both undergo painful experiences resulting from the disparity between the poetry of their personal ideals and the prosaic world of reality, and both have rejected conventional morality without being able to live up to the moral demands of their social rebellion. But if Hamid chooses to recoil into his own cell, seeking aesthetic satisfaction in introspection and withdrawal, Angel is willing to engage in active attempts to be himself but only to get involved in an open conflict against hostile social conditions. Angel's problematic relationship with the outside world, his idealistic turn of thought and emotions, and his adventurous spirit are all typical characteristics of the hero of the novel of «Abstract Idealism» (Lukács, 1978: 97) — another Lukácsian typological classification of the novel form — in which the narrative hinges on tracing the fortunes of an idealistic, problematic hero who seeks adventures in order to be proved and tested by them hardly hampered by contemplation or a predilection for withdrawal, which characterizes the hero of the novel of «Romanticism of Disillusionment».

A great deal if this may apply as well to Tess whose adventurous spirit and active attempts to form her selfhood distinguish her from the inactive heroine Zainab. In her reluctance to take on society as she struggles for self-fulfilment, Zainab is a female version of Hamid. Along these lines similar distinctions could be drawn between Zainab and her younger Egyptian fictional sister Zohra in Najib Mahfouz's **Miramar** (1967). In Zohra Najib Mahfouz portrays his own version of the «new fella-ha» (Mahfouz, 1978: 51) whose self-assurance and defiant mode of thought and ac-

tion are far beyond the reach of Zainab. The point couldn't be more emphasized than by reminding ourselves of Zohra's courageous act of running away from the village to save her soul from the evils of an arranged marriage (Mahfouz, 1978: 70) — one hardly need labour the point that this is of course a far cry from Zainab's submission to her fate.

Zohra's active social revolt parallels that of Tess. In consonance with their characteristic sense of independence, both heroines set out to shape their own destinies hardly impeded by established social traditions and conventions. Zohra's social revolt is underlined in what she tells Mansour Bahy:

Then she told me a terrible story about her grandfather and the old man they would have forced her to marry. She concluded, «And so I ran away.» I was disturbed. «But what will people say?» «I don't care anyway. It's better than what I escaped from » (Mahfouz, 1978: 71).

Tess of course can go far beyond this in defying social conventions. But just as Zohra's revolt has led to her exile, so Tess incurs society's painful ostracization by her flagrant infringement of social mores. At one stage in **Tess**, The Durbeyfields were even forced to leave their native village of Marlott on account of the disgraceful position of their unmarried - mother daughter. And finally Tess was put to death at the hands of society. Symbolically speaking, death in **Tess** functions as an indication of the individual's impossible task to live by personal values in defiance of established patterns of behaviour and social concepts in nineteenth century England.

Death has a similar symbolic function in **Zainab** where the heroine's death culminates a prolonged process of frustration and spiritual disintegration symbolizing the drying up of all chances of self - realization on the individual's own terms. As a matter of fact, Hardy has a much stronger and surer sense of Tess's moral plight than Haykal does of Zainab. On the other hand, Zainab's inner conflict is less intense and less fully explored than that of Tess, but both heroines are presented as victims of societal values which the two novelists are keen to condemn as is suggested by the sympathy they accord to their heroines, so much so that they bestow upon them romantic haloes as they strive towards self - realization in a society indifferent to their needs and personal rights. In **Zainab** Haykal even exploits his heroine's final utterance as she lies on her death-bed to voice his condemnation of worn out societal values. While gasping for breath in her struggle against death, Zainab is particularly keen to elicit a pledge from her mother to save her sisters the pain and suffering inflicted upon her: «Tomorrow or after tomorrow I shall die, mother, but I urge you not to marry my sisters against their own wishes; it is sinful to do otherwise» (Haykal, 1963: 330). An echo of this amelioristic note resounds in **Miramar** where Zohra, as noted, revolts against becoming a victim of an arranged marriage.

More outspoken than Haykal in his indictment of negative societal values,

Hardy makes this authorial comment, recording his strongest condemnation of «arbitrary» social laws responsible for Tess's troubles:

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 pleasures therein. Most of the misery had been generated by her conventional aspect, and not by her innate sensations (Hardy, 1974: 127).

In conjunction with social laws and conventions, Hardy sets up a "structure of causation" which works hand in hand with social machinery in determining the turn of events in Tess's life. On several occasions in the novel Hardy underscores the decisive role played by the "past" and hereditary forces⁽¹⁵⁾ (especially Tess's susceptibility to illusion, a trait she inherits from her father) in giving her life drama its shape. This, of course, reflects the intrusion of the "scienticism" of the nineteenth century into the domain of literature. It is of interest to point out here that Haykal himself in his book the **Revolution of Literature** underlines the impact of scienticism on the literature of the nineteenth century:

The literature of the eighteenth century was sentimental as it was addressed only to the higher classes who were exclusively preoccupied with love and refined sentiments. Whereas the literature of the nineteenth century aimed at a much wider readership and it accommodated the new scientific spirit of the age; therefore transcending sentimentalism to present the actual life of reality as is exemplified by the writings of Zola, Flaubert, and Maupassant. (Haykal n. d. 72)

In writing his novel, as its full title indicates (**Zainab, Country Scenes and Manners**), Haykal has been obviously influenced by the emergence of "realism" as a predominant literary mode of presentation in the nineteenth century as the quotation purports. A more important evidence to this is the "mimetic" mode of representation at work in **Zainab**⁽¹⁶⁾ in the manner of **Tess**, a mode based on the interaction of sociological and psychological factors in the development of the action in both novels. But in **Zainab** one would in vain look for any signs of "causation" or the naturalists' "concept that man's psychological make up is the resultant of hereditary and environmental factors; that is, as characterizational devices as is the case in **Tess** or, for that matter, in the writings of "Zola". Yet, inspired by Hamid's frequent references to marriage as a means of "preserving species", commentators have tried to trace the social implications of Darwin's theories⁽¹⁷⁾ in **Zainab**, especially the notion of "natural selection" within the context of the theme of love.

For David Semah. Haykal's reluctance to dramatize the impact of science on the individual's life in any deterministic sense relates to his basic preoccupation with presenting Egyptian society as it is, controlled by Islamic values. (Semah, 1974: 97 - 98) After all, the novel is the art most influenced by indigenous spiritual, cultural, and social values. Thus, as we have been seeing, for all their affinities from the perspective of characterization, structure, content, ideational preoccupations, and mode of representation, each of the two novels has its distinct local quality and native temper.

Notes

- 1 — Haykal, **Zainab** (Cairo, 1963), PP. 7-10. All references are to this edition.
- 2 — This Topic has been extensively dealt with by Ali B. Jad in his book **Form and Technique in the Egyptian Novel 1912 - 1971**. (London: Ithaca Press, 1983), PP. 58-64. Jad concentrates on investigating the influence of French Literature on Haykal with particular stress on Rousseau's writings.
- 3 — Hardy, **Tess of the D'Urbervilles** (Macmillan, 1974). All references are to this edition.
- 4 — See Abd-Muhsin Taha Badr, **Tatawwur Al-Riwaya Al-Arabiyya Al-Haditha fi Misr 1870-1938 / The Development of the Modern Arabic Novel in Egypt 1870-1938** (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1963), P. 330. Badr maintains that Zainab is by no means a typical Egyptian peasant girl. See also Hamilton A. R. Gibb, **Studies on the Civilization of Islam** (princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982). Gibb maintains that in writing **Zainab** Haykal was considerably influenced by French literature; nevertheless, he admits the essential Egyptianness of the novel:

But unless it can be shown that this influence has been so strong in detail, as well as in method and style, as to make the work in effect an adaptation from the French, it is impossible to deny to **Zainab** the credit of being the first Egyptian novel, written by an Egyptian for Egyptian readers, and whose characters, settings, and plot are derived from contemporary Egyptian life. (P. 194).

- 5 — Consider the following quotation from **Form and Technique in the Egyptian Novel 1912-1971**:

Zainab shows even a tremendous specific influence of Rousseaus's La Nouvelle Heloise and Emile. I cannot claim that I am the first reader to point out the influence of **La Nouvelle Heloise** on **Zainab**: Henri Peres wrote about this in a study he published in 1959. But Peres refers only to some similarities in one or two aspects of plots and characterization between **Zainab** and **La Nouvelle Heloise**. He does not mention the influence of **Emile**. Nor does he seem to recognize that the influence of **La Nouvelle Heloise** pervades **Zainab** throughout (rather than merely as regards some aspects of plots and characterization). In fact it is not possible to understand **Zainab** fully without a somewhat detailed comparison with the works in question. Without such a comparison we cannot determine, for instance, the extent of the originality or derivativeness of **Zainab**. we cannot relate it to the tradition of the European novel of "sensitivity", to which it seems to belong and we shall miss the chance of gaining several insights. (p. 61.) Moreover, Jad draws analogies between Hamid's world weariness and Werther's **Weltschmerz**.

- 6 — Jamal Muhammad Ahmad, **The Intellectual Origins of Egyptian Nationalism** (Oxford Univer-

sity Press, 1960). P. 66. Jamal Ahmad dwells at length on the intellectual influence exercised by Lutfi Al Sayyid on Egyptian men of letters in the early parts of this century.

- 7 — **Zainab**, P. 254. Haykal describes Hamid as an avid reader of the writings of Qasim Amin.
- 8 — See Muhammad Husain Haykal, **Thawrat - Al - Adab [The Revolution of Literature]** (Cairo: Dar al Ma'arif). In this book Haykal records his spiritual attraction to Mill's social philosophy (P. 212).
- 9 — Throughout, the translation of the text is mine.
- 10 — See also Rosemary Sumner, **Thomas Hardy: Psychological Novelist** (London: Macmillan, 1981), PP. 132 - 34. In this book Rosemary comments on Angel's 'internal disturbance' in terms of the Freudian Ego-Id dichotomy.
- 11 — It would be interesting to compare Hardy's thesis with what Mill writes in his essay 'On liberty':

If a person possesses any tolerable amount of common sense and experience, his own mode of laying out his existence is the best, not because it is the best in itself, but because it is his own mode. Human beings are not like sheep; and even sheep are not undistinguishably alike. A man cannot get a coat or a pair of boots to fit him unless they are either made to his measure, or he has a whole warehouseful to choose from: and is it easier to fit him with a life than with a coat, or are human beings more like one another in their whole physical and spiritual conformation than in the shape of their feet? If it were only that people have diversities of taste, that is reason enough for not attempting to shape them all after one model. But different persons also require different conditions for their spiritual development. ("On Liberty", in **Utilitarianism, On Liberty, Essay on Bentham** (Collins, 1979), P. 197).

- 12 — Quoted by Jamal Muhammad Ahmad, **The Intellectual Origins of Egyptian Nationalism** (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1960), p. 51.
- 13 — For Sartre, men reveal themselves in their truth only when they are shown in "love", in 'hate', and in "anger".
- 14 — Charles D. Smith interprets the dramatic function of love in Haykal's fictional works in a symbolic autobiographical context: "Haykal's fiction dealt consistently with love relationships and their potential fulfillment in Egyptian society. His treatment of these relationships varied according to his sense of his ability to gain political leadership." "Love Passion and Class in the Fiction of Muhammad Husain Haykal," **Journal of the American Oriental Society** Xcix/2 (1979), P. 249. Smith's contention may somewhat apply to Hamid's love adventures as symbolic comments on the dialectic of 'aspiration' and "failure" in his life drama.
- 15 — See John Lucas, **The Literature of Change: Studies in the Nineteenth - Century provincial Novel** (London: The Harvester Press, 1977), PP. 177-178. Lucas dwells at length on the significant role played by heredity in the lives of the central characters in **Tess** and **Jude the Obscure**.
- 16 — **However, in Zainab** residual sentimentalism can be easily detected; that is, under the influence of Rousseau on Haykal's writings.
- 17 — See Jad, **Form and Technique in the Egyptian Novel 1912-1971**, P. 60. Jad points out that Hamid's ideas on love, sex and marriage are influenced by Darwin's theories. See also Sameer M. El-Barbary, "Haykal's **Zainab**: Western Affinities", **Arab Journal for the Humanities**. Issue No. 27, Vol 7 (Summer 1987), P. 276. El-Barbary concentrates on the theme of "sexual selection" in the novel, relating it to Darwin's doctrines.

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