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THOMAS HARDY and RICHARD JEFFERIES

A Talk given by Mrs. A.M. Ward, B. A. on March 5th 1973

I shall begin with what I want you to realise is a generalisation. I have tried to see these writers in perspective - in their aims and their achievements, and the following is a sort of composite picture of Thomas Hardy and Richard Jefferies in juxtaposition as novelists and creative artists.

It seems to me at the outset that each viewed the world of which he wrote from different aspects. Hardy's world was Wessex and he seems to have seen it as a sort of battleground whereon his men and women - mainly country folk - often struggled with, and in some cases mastered, their violent passions. Their own actions, extraordinarily small and apparently insignificant, triggered off events of appalling magnitude and inevitable disaster. Behind it all is the "President of the Immortals" a brooding and often menacing spectator of their sometimes gigantic, sometimes petty squabbles and friction. So it was with man as a magnificent individual and a pawn of an outside power that Hardy wrote. He was like one of those Greek tragedians whom he and Jefferies admired so much; he was an observer of mankind.

Jefferies on the other hand, though he had chosen a particular part of England for his fictitious world, is there in it himself. He does not regard it from an outside, detached point of view. He shares in an intimate way the trials and tribulations of his characters. He writes of the men and women whom he met as he wandered through the towns and villages of his beloved Wiltshire, and his creative genius was stirred by the actual sights and sounds of his native land. Sometimes he actually ventures into his own dwelling house and writes of the calamities which occurred in his own family? *Amaryllis At The Fair* is largely autobiographical. And whereas Hardy nearly always writes from what has been called the "God Almighty" angle, Jefferies though he does not write in the first person, very often describes events from the point of view of one of his characters. Nearly the whole of Chapter I of Book Two of *Dewy Morn* is written from the point of view of Rosa. Jefferies' attitude is not the impersonal ones indeed often indignation and righteous wrath kindles his genius and inflames his language just as it spurs his characters to quick and decisive action. He is also often writing of people very near and dear to him, as for instance in his autobiographical study of his father in *Amaryllis At The Fair*. So there is an intimacy in his treatment of his characters which we do not find in Hardy. The latter, though touched to compassion and sorrow by the vicissitudes of his men and women, remains always the impartial observer. His platform is the world - even the universe because his scope is often universal - as incorporated in his corner of it, Wessex, and like the men and women of Jacques' soliloquy in *As You Like It* they have their exits and their entrances - on Egdon Heath or among the trees in *The Woodlanders* or in the farming village of *Far From The Madding Crowd*. Moreover, as I have already implied, each of his characters might have said with Cassius:

"The fault, dear Brutus, lies not in our stars
But in ourselves that we are underlings."

Their conflict is invariably within and the enemy not predominantly a human political system - though such things as the Corn Laws do obviously influence events - but their Creator himself for whom they are merely puppets dangling on the end of strings they have themselves created. In Hardy's terrible ending of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* - "Justice was done and the President of the Immortals, in Aeschylean phrase, had led his sport with Tess."

Moreover, and this I think epitomises the intrinsic difference between the two writers, Jefferies is deeply and passionately concerned with his men and women in their struggles against an injustice in the very framework of their lives. For the period of which he writes is a transitional one in which there is a levelling process at work undermining the very basis of society as he knew it and involving the gradation and decay of an old and honoured aristocracy and the consequent humiliation of a splendid and self-respecting yeomanry. In the novels *Dewy Morn* and *Amaryllis at the Fair* he deals with this problem portraying two aristocratic families in the last stages of a fruitless and final battle for feudal domination. In *Amaryllis* he describes the struggle involving the exigencies and misfortunes of his own family and the still partially reigning Pamments, (Swindon Goddards) So Jefferies' is a very real world, and he himself is too involved in it to maintain the inscrutable and Socratic calm of the watcher. He is on the stage himself actually taking part in the drama, hence the many digressions and occasional outbursts of pure invective.

So as you will have seen I have begun this lecture with a contrast. I have tried to show that while both Hardy and Jefferies are describing a similar world of country folk and the rural ups and downs of two somewhat similar communities of people, their viewpoint is from different angles and so their impact upon their reading public is sharply divergent, though in both cases and for different reasons profoundly significant.

And now I mean, I think, to try to justify this divergence, and in is regard for the sake of my thesis, make another point - of contrast if I am to be fair to both. As has often been said, in all Hardy's novels e plot is the important pivot upon which the whole drama turns. So Hardy was the novelist par excellence before he turned to poetry in later life; it is as a novelist we are now studying him. Whereas Jefferies specifically stated that his novels were not novels at all! In a letter he wrote to George Bentley he said that he "intended 'Amaryllis at the Fair' to form a series of scenes from country life. The idea of calling it a novel was secondary and in fact it is quite immaterial to me whether you should publish it as 'scenes' or as a novel - just as you think best,"

In writing this lecture I have consistently borne this in mind when comparing and contrasting the two writers' works as Novelists. I think there is still another vital difference between them: their philosophy. Hardy's was, as I have said, not atheistic since he did postulate a sort Deity, albeit a malevolent one, the pagan god of Lear who said:

"As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods;
They kill us for their sport."

It is strange to think that it was the same Hardy who later wrote the moving poem about the oxen who knelt before the Christ Child on Christmas Eve! Hardy's religious scepticism is even exemplified in his dialogue between Poorgrass and Coggan in *Far From The Madding Crowd*:

> (Poorgrass) "I believe you be a Chapel member, Joseph. That I do."
> "Oh, no, no! I don't go as far as that. For my part," said Coggan, "I'm a staunch Church of England."
> "Ay, and faith so be I," said Mark Clark.
> "I won't say much for myself; I don't wish to," Coggan continued, with that tendency to talk on principles which is characteristic of the barleycorn, "But I've *never* changed a single doctrine: I've stuck like a plaster to the old faith I was born in. Yes, there's this to be said for the Church, a man can belong to his Church and live in his cheerful old inn and never trouble or worry his mind about doctrines at all..."
> Later Joseph said thoughtfully, "Chapel folk be more hand in glove with them above than we."
> "Yes," said Coggan,... "But I hate a fellow who'll change his old ancient doctrines for the sake of getting to heaven, I'd as soon turn King's evidence for the sake of the few pounds you get."

These country men are not the only cynics and realists: the Doctor in *The Woodlanders* in whom we see the modern scientist foreshadowed gives succinct expression to his materialistic philosophy when he says to Grammers "Let me tell you that Everything is Nothing. There's only Me and Not Me in the whole world."

Jefferies on the other hand had evolved a philosophy of his own which he worked out in ecstatic terms in *The Story Of My Heart* - in my opinion his masterpiece. As W.J. Keith says in his *Critical Study*:

> "It is as if Jefferies were anticipating Hardy's statement. 'Let every man make a philosophy for himself out of his own experience." And this is just what Jefferies did; like the Elizabethan sonneteer he followed the precept to 'look in your heart and write,' And the result was a kind of paean of praise for the things of the earth by which the reader is borne aloft to share in a sort of mystical awareness of the nature of the universe: his words make the spirit ascend like Shelley's skylark so that we seem to view a new Heaven and a new earth."

In Jefferies own words, "I was not more than eighteen when an inner and esoteric meaning began to come to me from all the visible universe and indefinable aspirations filled me. I found them in the grass fields, under the trees, on the hilltops at sunrise and in the night. There was deeper meaning everywhere...I was sensitive to all things, to the earth under and the star-hollow round about; to the least blade of grass, to the largest oak... I was aware that in reality the feeling and the thought were in me and not in the earth and sun, yet *I* was more conscious of it when in company with these." This is almost Wordsworthian prose poetry and there are certainly echoes of Wordsworth's sublime utterings in "The Prelude" and "Tintern Abbey". Again Jefferies describes his sense of the supernatural in nature: "I looked at the

hills, at the dewy grass and then up through the elm branches to the sky. In a moment all that was behind me, the house, the people, the sounds, seemed to disappear and to leave me alone... My thought or inner consciousness, went up through the illumined sky, and I was lost in the moment of exaltation."
Nothing Hardy wrote, even in his poetry or in "The Dynasts" describes such an experience. His feet were always planted firmly on the earth - there is a paradise here. For as we have seen, Hardy in his novels takes the universe for his setting, whereas Jefferies' characters move and suffer in their own small hamlets or country towns; they are cribbed, cabined, coffined and confined by circumstances outside their own control. Thugh Hardy does it is true, make us experience his sense of the universal in one passage; the opening chapter of *Far from the Madding Crowd*", Gabriel Oak is playing his flute on Norcombe Hill on the Eve of St. Thomas and the scene is described thus;

> Two persons standing alone on a hill during a clear midnight such as this, the roll of the world eastward is almost a palpable movement. The sensation may be caused by the panoramic glide of the stars past earthly objects, which is perceptible in a few minutes of stillness, or by the better outlook upon space that hill affords, or by the wind or by the solitude; but whatever be its origin, the impression of riding along is vivid and abiding. The poetry of motion is a phrase much in use, and to enjoy the epic form of that gratification it is necessary to stand on a hill at a small hour of the night and long and quietly watch your stately progress through the stars. After such a nocturnal reconnoitre it is hard to get back to earth and to believe that the consciousness of such majestic speeding is derived from a tiny human frame.

But, and, herein lies, the difference, Gabriel Oak does 'get back to earth' whereas Jefferies remained, in a state of suspended animation knowing as he said, "the supernatural to be more real than the sun. I touched the supernatural, the immortal, there that moment."

That Jefferies was, as Evelyn Underhill the great Christian mystic said, "at and upon the verge of transcendental life" must be apparent from the above quotations. But it is doubtful whether he ever passed through what Rolles called, the 'heavenly door.' In the first chapter of his book Jefferies prayed that he 'might touch to the unutterable existence infinitely higher than deity.' But those last words really explain his failure. For the 'higher than deity' would be the 'Neti-Neti'- not this, not this of the Eastern philosophy: a negative, or non-existence. So Jefferies really remains a mystic manqué; his consciousness was never raised to union with the Divine as described by St. Theresa of Avila, and by St. Paul as "I live now not I but Christ Jesus lives in me." His mysticism is really animism, akin to the Pantheism of Wordsworth, "the sense of the supernatural in natural things." But there was one important aspect of this philosophy: it did include what the Christian calls "The Sacrement of the Present Moment", the Eternal Now. In *The Story of My Heart* Jefferies wrote:

> I cannot understand Time, It is eternity now. I am in the midst of it. It is about me in the sunshine. I am in it, as the butterfly floats in the light-laden air. Nothing has to come; it is now. Now is eternity: now is the immortal life. Here this moment, by this tumulus; on earth now; I exist in it. The years, the centuries, the cycles are absolutely nothing: it is only a moment since this

> tumulus was raised; in a thousand years more it will only be a moment. To the soul there is no past and no future; all is and will be even, in now.

W. J. Keith insists that in Jefferies' last and greatest novel *Amaryllis At The Fair* he applied this Platonic conception of Time and Consciousness and has "fixed in a permanent record the whole ethos of his childhood, of a vanished age and way of life, condensing it into four or five days chosen apparently at random but in fact designed to present a significant cross-section of experience." The opening of the book is consistent with this theory: "There had been daffodils in that spot at least a century, opening every March to the dry winds that shrivel up the brown dead leaves of winter, and carry them out from the bushes under the trees, sending them across the meadow. Every spring for a century at least the daffodils had bloomed there." Later when Amaryllis meets the cold east wind round the corner, Jefferies adds,"The wind had blown thus round that corner every March for a century." So at the outset the novel describes events in the whirligig of time so that the past becomes emerged in the present, and the present/future in the Eternal Now.
Sometimes there is tragedy in this linking of past and present as in the description of the panel of the wainscot against which Iden's head rested as "a cross on which a heart had been tortured for the third of a century" and "represented the unhappiness, the Nemesis of two hundred years..." Moreover, the first description is repeated; "a cross upon which a human heart had been tortured - and thought can indeed torture - for a third of a century. For Iden had learned to know himself and despaired."

In this respect, in his application of his philosophy, Jefferies remains unique; he is writing the story of his heart in narrative form and so he must depart from the traditional novel, and not confine himself to what in his diary he called "A silly novelists plot,"

Now while in this somewhat lengthy introduction I have emphasised the differences between the two writers, it must have been apparent these differences only underline the great link between them: both depict the way of life of ordinary country people during a period in history when great changes were taking place in town and country. The town was beginning to impinge upon the country, subtly and sometimes insidiously revolutionizing the modes and morals of both. The writings of Jefferies and Hardy are redolent of the soil; both loved the countryside, hated to see it despoiled and revered its ancient monuments and relics of the past. Both viewed with distrust that other change in country life which had incidentally affected the lives of both. At that time enclosures were destroying the small farmer whose roots were in the land and were creating a new type of nouveau riche landowners whose aims were largely mercenary and, though beneficial to the farming industry as a whole, were disastrous for many individual farmers of small and hereditary holdings. Thus Gabriel Oak in *Far from The Madding Crowd* lost his farm in one fell swoop and had to become a shepherd on the heroine, Bathsheba's homestead; thus the fortunes of Amaryllis' father gradually declined until he was faced with the coming of the new tenant-farmer on the land which had belonged to his forbears through the centuries.

Many other similarities will be found between our two writers since both shared a love of humanity and a compassion for those who fell by the wayside, either through their own mistakes and the tension created, or who were the victims of "the stings and arrows of outrageous fortune".
Some links may be found also in the lives of the writers themselves. Thomas Hardy was of course the elder of the two. He was born in 1840, the son of a builder. He was educated at a private school in Dorchester, a few miles from his home. Upper Bockhamhurst in Dorset; the Wessex of his books. Delicate and precocious, he was always studious and he studied French, Latin and later, German and Greek. Greek philosophy and mythology always fascinated him. From 1856 to 1861 he was apprenticed to an ecclesiastic architect in Dorchester whom he assisted in his restoration work. In 1862 he moved to London where for five years he studied Gothic architecture under Sir Arthur Blomfield. In 1863 he was awarded the medal of the Institute of British Architects for an article on "Coloured Brick and Terra Cotta Architecture." Then in the evolution of circumstances and his own spirit he quitted architecture for the greater risks of literature. Like Wordsworth the poet, and Charles Dickens the novelist, his life became bound up in the craft of the written word: he forsook the creative path of the builder of houses to become the chronicler of the deeds of men. After his first novel *Desperate Remedies* he wrote novels in orderly succession, and for the first three, at the rate of one a year. Two slight and delightful rural romances *Under The Greenwood Tree* and *A Pair of Blue Eyes* were followed by his first great novel *Far From The Madding Crowd. The Mayor of Casterbridge* in 1886 marked a turning point in his life, for at this time he moved into Max Gate, the house in Dorchester which he built to his own plans and where he spent the rest of his life. He had married in 1874 Emma Lavinia Gifford and on her death, much later in 1914, at the age of 74, Florence Emily Dugdale. His two novels "*Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* (1898) both of which challenged Victorian canons of respectability, aroused so much hostility and criticism that he gave up novel writing and turned to poetry. In 1904-1908 he wrote his epic drama "The Dynasts" in blank verse. He received many distinctions: in 1910 the Order of Merit, in 1912 the gold medal of the Royal Society of Literature. His ashes were buried in the Poet's Corner at Westminster Abbey. One wonders what he would have thought of this - he who mourned in *Far From The Madding Crowd* with Joseph Poorgrass that poor little Fanny Robin "was nailed up in parish boards after all, and nobody to pay the bell shilling and the grave half-crown."

Richard Jefferies was also born in what was then country, at Coate Farm in the Worth Wiltshire hamlet of Coate and the parish of Chisledon, on November 6th 1848. So he was eight years younger than Thomas Hardy. For the first thirty years of his life he remained there where his ancestors had dwelt for many generations. This is the first link between the two writers, who were both, as W.J. Keith in his *Critical Study* points out, descended from independent, yeoman stock. Hardy's ancestors had lived for centuries in Wessex and he centred his fictitious world in that region which really comprised Wiltshire, Dorset, Hampshire, Somersetshire and. Oxfordshire. Jefferies forbears on the other hand had farmed in this'Jefferies-land' for

generations. As Edward Thomas says in his biography, "This country and its people was the subject of half his work, and the background, the source or the inspiration of all but the rest. He in turn was the genius, the human expression of this country, emerging from it not to be detached from it any more than the curves of some statues from their material stone." So our two writers are alike in this: each took a corner of England and made it the centre of a world of the imagination based on real human beings and yet transcending them in the mystery of their creation.
As a small boy Richard had an intense feeling for Nature and all the elements of country and wildlife. In the book *Bevis* he draws on his childish memories and reveals a passion for magic and a sort of insight into the nature of birds and beasts which surrounded him. His first writings, from the age of eighteen, were for the most part journalistic. In 1866 he was writing for the *North Wilts Herald*: such subjects as "To a Fashionable Bonnet" and for the *Swindon Advertiser*, "Topographical and Other Articles on Swindon and the Neighbourhood." In 1875 he compiled a *Memoir of the Goddards of North Wilts from Ancient Records, Registers arid family Papers*. Later he wrote a series of articles for the *Pall Mall Gazette*. One of these called "The Gamekeeper At Home" has been described by one critic as his best. Indeed many critics maintain that journalism was Jefferies' true forté and that even his novels consist of isolated episodes in the lives of his characters interspersed with articles and essays on current topics of the day. There is certainly an element of truth in this for at an exciting moment in *Dewy Morn*, when the hero and heroine have reached an ecstatic climax in their courtship, Jefferies digresses for the space of five pages on an operatic performance by the singer Patti and takes the reader into his confidence with the reflection that a singer like Patti is worshipped because of herself and, says Jefferies, "I came to these conclusions while I was endeavouring to construct this book in such a manner that the reader should see the events and the people, one after the other, without any wearisome explanations as to how it came to be so and it occurred to me how happy the dramatist must be, since he places his hero and his heroine in living shape at once before you." Then the story is continued with, "We left Felise and Martial in a very loving attitude, which, however, was not observable because of the shadow of the beech tree."

Hardy could never have written thus since the plots of his novels evolve as his men and women set in train by their actions the wheel of circumstance upon which their lives will turn. Jefferies first three novels: *The Scarlet Shawl*, *Restless Human Hearts* and *World's End* were Victorian pot-boilers of little intrinsic merit. It is interesting to note that the publishers, Tinsley Brothers, also published Hardy's early works.

In 1874 Jefferies first novel in the truly rural tradition, *Greene Ferne Farm*, was published just two years after Hardy's *Under The Greenwood Tree.* W. J. Keith says that "in many respects it is reminiscent of Hardy's novels." Though, the latter are not listed in the books which comprised Jefferies' library I think there is little doubt he must have read and admired these two charming and idyllic novels of country life; *Greene Ferne Farm* may even have been based upon Hardy's *Under The Greenwood Tree*, for as Dr. J. W. Blench has written: "Both these books are short, both follow the revolutions of the seasons as the story progresses, both touch on passing rustic customs, and both end with a

country marriage feast." Two quotations show even a similarity in style and matter. Thus Hardy: "Five country dances, including 'Haste to the Wedding', two reels and three fragments of hornpipes, brought them to the time for supper which, on account of the dampness of the grass from the immaturity of the summer season was spread indoors," And later: "Amid a, medley of laughter, old shoes and elder wine, Dick and his bride took their departure side by side in the excellent spring-cart which the young tranter now possessed. The moon was just over the full, rendering any Light from lamps on their own beauties quite unnecessary to the pair." And Jefferiess: "Had it rained there would still have been dancing room in the barn; but it was warm and dry, so they footed it on the sward. Mrs.Eistcourt, a little shrinking and nervous, had to open it with the squire, and instead, of finishing they commenced with "Sir Roger de Coverley", that fine old country dance. After a short time she left it but the rest grew wilder and wilder... So lustily did the village band blow and fiddle that the cart-horses in the meadows, who always cock up their ears to the sound of a drum or a trumpet, galloped to and fro with excitement." And later: "So the beautiful moonlight streamed down calmly upon the white ricks, the white loaded waggon and. the white stubble on the slightly rising ground." In some ways I think Jefferies' picture is more vivid and life-like than that of Hardy but both are redolent of the joys of spring and the promise of the future. W. J. Keith has pointed out also an organizing resemblance to *Far From The Madding Crowd* which had actually been abolished the same year. Both novels have chapter headings showing the importance of plot and background. So Hardy has chapters on "The Sheep Washing" , "The Great Barn" and "Hiving The Bees" while *Greene Ferne Farm* has "The Nether Millstone", "A Nutting", "Gleaning". *Greene Ferne Farm* opens with the country sounds of:

"Fine growing naming, ya!"
"Ay, casualty weather, though ."
"Ding-ding-dill! "Ding-ding-dill!"

Under The Greenwood Tree closes with a country sound:

"From a neighbouring thicket was heard suddenly to issue in a loud, musical and liquid voice,
"Tippint! swe-et! ki-ki-ki. Come hither, cone hither, come hither!"
"O, tis the nightingale," murmured she, and thought of a secret she would never tell."

So, for both, country sounds sweetly blend with the hopes and joys of the country people.

Though it is not clear that Hardy and Jefferies had met when this book was written, we do know that they did meet in 1880 on February 2nd. In *The Early Days Of Thomas Hardy* by his widow, Florence Hardy, it is recorded that "Hardy met Matthew Arnold, probably for the first time, at a dinner party given by Mr. G. Murray Smith, the publisher at the Continental Hotel, where also were present Henry James and Richard Jefferies, the latter a modest young man then getting into notice as a writer, through having a year or so earlier published his first successful book entitled *The Gamekeeper At Home.*"

In 1867 Jefferies became very ill of a fistula and he never really regained his full health; he was a very sick man for the last six years of his

life. In 1883 he wrote his spiritual autobiography *The Story Of My Heart* from which I have already quoted extensively and which has, I think, no connecting link with Hardy - except in its unlikeness to any work of his. In *Dewy Morn* on the other hand, published in 1884, we see in Felise, the heroine, a development in the character which, marks her off from the chocolate box stereotype maidens of his first heroines. He had written in his notebook, "Felise, a strong character - follow her line, work her out and there is the book at once without anything else." Here Jefferies is obviously intent on basing his story on a character, as Hardy's *Far from The Madding Crowd*, The *Mayor Of Casterbridge*, *Tess Of The D'Urbervilles* and *The Return Of The Native* make Gabriel Oak, Bathsheba, Henchard, Susan, Tess and Eustacia Vye tower above their fellows as some of the most unforgettable characters in late nineteenth century fiction. And here an interesting connection between our two writers appears: the main themes of their novels do centre round relationships between the actors; their novels are love stories. Both writers concentrate upon a sort of warfare between their heroes and heroines. Bathsheba in *Far From The Madding Crowd* is a flesh and blood creature shocked at her own impulses and the dire results of so many of them. At the end of the book there is a most penetrating and moving description of the relationship now existing between Gabriel Oak and Bathsheba:

> "There's was that substantial affection which arises (if any arises at **all)** when the two who are thrown together begin first by knowing the rougher sides of each other's character, and not the best till further on, the romance growing up in the instices of a mass of hard prosaic reality. This good fellowship - camaraderie - usually occurring through similarity of pursuits, is unfortunately seldom superadded to love between the sexes, because men and women associate, not in their labours, but in their pleasures merely. Where, however, happy circumstance permits its development, the compounded feeling proves itself to be the only love which is strong as death - that love which many waters cannot quench, nor the floods drown, beside which the passion usually called by the name is evanescent as steam."

And so their love was the fruit of their experiences, searing and demanding as these had been.

While all Jefferies' heroines are idealized like that "not impossible she" of the Metaphysical writers, Hardy's heroines, on the other hand, are passionate and powerful creatures. In many of them we see a prototype Mary Magdelen. His women often err because they love too much; they are more, sinned against than sinning. Tess is of course the stock example of this type of heroine, but Susan of *The Mayor Of Casterbridge* is not behind with her simple moral code of life. In their self-abnegation we them both as sinner and saint. Jefferies only has near-saints for his heroines though some of his lesser characters are interesting and full of vitality, as for instance Rosa in *Dewy Morn* and Amaryllis' sorely tried mother. But both Felise and Amaryllis do come to life and though near saints, do have endearing weaknesses which rather enhance than detract from their attraction for us. Felise's brave defence of Old Abner who being turned out of his tied cottage, and on the other hand the naiveté of her attempts to gain the love of Barnard, reveal her to be a real woman so that she fulfils her function within the novel of linking in one person the human and the ideal. And while Amaryllis is the personification of Heavenly Beauty as portrayed by Jefferies - his alpha and omega

of womanhood - yet as W.J. Keith points out, “her behaviour towards Raleigh Pamment is uncalled for and rude,” while he “on the contrary had been singularly pleasant, respectfully pleasant.” Here she is defeating her own ostensibly Republican ends, since she is betraying the good breed of her courteous yeoman father and. failing in her purpose to expose the iniquity of the aristocrat Raleigh. We forgive Amaryllis though because her revolutionary impulses are unselfish and. noble, both now and later when she is equally angry with her grandfather because “her mother has no shoes”. In this novel we see that strong relation between father and daughter which is a recurring motive in many Hardy novels. Just as Amaryllis has almost a worshipful affection for her father; “he never did anything wrong in her eyes” so in *The Woodlanders* there is a. very close bond between Grace and her father. It is he who engineers the disastrous marriage with the Doctor Fitztpiers, and it is through her father’s drastic mismanagement of the divorce that a dubious compromise is reached at the end of the book. Melbury had prevented the marriage with her true love, Winterbourne, because of the latter’s humble origins (moreover, he had broken a vow in so doing) and the result is total disaster; but it was love for his daughter that spurred, him on. Similarly in *The Mayor Of Casterbridge*” much of the tragedy is centred round. Henchard’s relations with Elizabeth, the child of the wife he had sold in a drunken moment his youth.

Incidentally, another point of similarity may be noted in these novels, not unconnected with the father-daughter theme. In *Amaryllis at the Fair*” Iden irritates his wife by the deterioration in his speech:

> “There’s a lot to be learned, bless ye! before you can grow a potato for all it looks such a simple thing. Farty-folds –“
> “Farty-folds!” said Mrs. Iden, imitating his provincial pronunciation with extreme disgust in her tone.

Later she mimics his use of the word ‘axed’ for asked. Earlier in the book, Iden had suddenly altered his pronunciation from that of the country folk and labourers amongst whom he dwelt, to the correct accent of education in his conversation with Amaryllis. Then she had wondered why “he be so rough sometimes, and why he talked like the labourers and wore a ragged coat, he who was so full of wisdom in his other moods, and spoke and thought and indeed acted as a perfect gentleman.”

In *The Woodlanders* as we have seen, the tables are turned. It the father , Melbury, who reflects that “his daughter’s suitor was descended from a long line he had heard of in his grandfather’s time as being once among the greatest, a family which had conferred its name upon a neighbouring village.” Elsewhere he had said that it was “that he had educated his daughter for.”

These instances from the books of our two writers, both stressing pride in family inheritance, seem to bear out W. J. Keith‘s statement that “Jefferies’ family, like Hardy’s, had declined in recent generations.” It is interesting to note that the first influences the course of events through the father imposing his will on the daughter, and in the other case the daughter mourning the deterioration of her father’s speech. In comparing *Amaryllis At The Fair* with *The Mayor Of Casterbridge*, a more detailed study of Iden, Amaryllis’ father whom David Garnett considers ‘the greatest portrait of a country man in English literature”, and of Henchard, the Mayor of Casterbridge , to whom that title is usually awarded, seems to follow naturally. The subtle difference between then is, I think, that Iden remains essentially the same throughout the book; “ever since she could remember she had seen him like this”, whereas Henchard is a drunken hay-trusser

whose whole life becomes one of reparation for his unforgivable sin at the beginning of the book. Iden is of course a fascinating creation, though this is not really the right word since both he and his individualist father, Old Iden, are based on Jefferies own father and grandfather. In both cases there is no development of character: the same at the end of the book as he was at the beginnings. While Henchard, a broken and contrite man of indomitsble will throughout the book (did he not make a vow to abstain from alcoholic liquor for a period of twenty five years?) is a completely different man at the end from the young, aggressive hay-trusser in the first scene. He suffers and grows through suffering. In one sense, Henchard, as the title of the book suggests, is the book.

This cannot be said of *Amaryllisat the Fair*. It is Jefferies last and I think finest novel, and what adds a poignancy to our study of it, is the fact that it was dictated to his wife on what was really his death-bed. It is not a spiritual biography like *The Story Of my Heart*", but in it Jefferies does recall the events of his youth and re-assemble at Coate Farm with loving precision the characters who were then living there, or at any rate , close at hand. Amaryllis is his sister; Amadis obviously himself and the Goddard family at the Big House are represented by the Pamments. It is surely the story of his human heart. That he lived to finish it is almost a miracle, for apparently his spine had completely given way and he must have been in great and. constant pain. He died in the year of its publication, on August 14th, 1887 at the **comparatively y**outhful age of thirty-eight„

Comparing and. contrasting their lives then, we note that Hardy first became an **established** author at the age of thirty-four with the novel *Far from The Madding Crowd*, Jefferies at the age of thirty with *The Gamekeeper at At Home*- not a novel. Whereas Hardy lived on to make his name as a poet and died at the age of eighty-eight, Jefferies became a best-seller with *The Story Of My Heart* at the age of thiry-five, and died four years later while writing that other vital life-story or chronicle of his family life.