Chapter III

Indeterminism and the Art of Survival in Weldon’s The Hearts and Lives of Men

‘Reader, I am going to tell you the story of Clifford, Helen and little Nell’— is how Fay Weldon begins her thirteenth work of fiction The Hearts and Lives of Men, and from thereon she never abandons the reader, leading the way through an intricate maze of marriage and divorce, remarriage and redivorce, with a full-blown commentary of delicious wit and wisdom on the follies of contemporary times. Though the story revolves primarily around Nell’s adventures, the narrative begins much before she appears on the scene. Set in the ever-so-swinging 60s, the novel introduces the readers to Nell’s parents, a love-at-first-sight couple who encounter each other in the days when miniskirts and healthfood restaurants are just beginning to catch on. At thirty-five, the dashing Clifford Wexford is on the verge of making the London art firm Leonardo’s a chic success on the order of Sothby’s or Christie’s; and we have Weldon’s trite comment,—

Now Clifford Wexford’s rise in the world was not so much meteoric— for surely meteors fall, rather than ascend?— but missilic, having all the force and energy of Polaris rising from the sea. ¹

The imagery here is apt, for at the heart of Clifford’s successes, phallic as well as professional, is an element of destruction. At a party he has organised to celebrate the opening of a Hieronymus Bosch exhibition, he abandons without the slightest qualms, his wealthy, unpleasant South African girlfriend, Angie Wellbrook, in order to go home with the stunningly beautiful Helen Lally, the 22-year old...
daughter of an impoverished and much-exploited painter and frame maker. But 'someone, somewhere, must be wicked,' says the narrator, 'or the world wouldn't be in the state it's in.' Shortly after Clifford and Helen marry, the wounded Angie begins her spiteful manipulations to win Clifford back, and the plot is set in motion. But with the arrival of Helen and Clifford's child, Nell, an otherworldly aspect reminiscent of fairy tales enters to give the novel its more fanciful strain. The perfect marriage however ends in divorce, due to Angie's machinations, and little Nell is lost due to her parents' fecklessness and avarice. Lost to them, that is, until years later, when they have learned enough to deserve her. In short, *The Hearts and Lives of Men* is a modern fable for grown-ups— where good triumphs over evil; true love outlasts lust and greed; and if some people are beyond redemption, the justice they are dealt is perfectly created and deeply satisfying.

Though somewhat Dickensian in flavour, the narrative is straightforward and assumes neither apology nor coy deference when presenting Little Nell, whose name immediately calls to mind her infamous Victorian predecessor. As Oscar Wilde once observed,— 'One would have to have a heart of stone to read the death of Little Nell without laughing.' How is it possible then, that Fay Weldon could create an adorable, golden-haired child who suffers, as did her namesake, extraordinary perils on the move from one temporary abode to another, and not have us rolling our eyes to the ceiling? It is because Weldon's deft use of irony leaves plenty of room for the heartfelt emotions— even the frank sentimentality— that more cautious writers might shy away from.

But what makes *The Hearts and Lives of Men* different from other Weldon novels? It is because, the central character is a child who grows into adolescence and then a woman, rather than being from the very start one of those 'full-grown'
women who dominate the other novels. Also, Fay is somewhat extra frank with
her narrative treatment as she openly advocates the 'willing suspension of
disbelief' in calling her narrative a 'story' though it may be reasonably argued
that 'make-believe' exists in almost all of Weldon's novels, especially Puffball,
The Life and Loves of a She-Devil, The Cloning of Joanna May, and Splitting; and
lastly, we will find Nell to be a 'female' character of singular nature evolving out
of unpredictable events as we will proceed in our analysis of the novel.

In Anthony Powell's The Acceptance World (1955), Nicholas Jenkins
remarks that 'No real tradition of how women behave exists in English writing'.
Jenkins however, is only partially accurate: though a particular interest of recent
women's fiction has been its necessary evolution of new narrative forms, these
have often been developed at least partly on the basis of an extant 'tradition of
how women behave', or at any rate upon some already available techniques
adapted to the representation of women's consciousness. These are present in
eighteenth and nineteenth century fiction of Jane Austen, Elizabeth Gaskell and
George Eliot: they are added to by modernists as Dorothy Richardson and
Virginia Woolf, creative in their sensitive registers of inner thoughts and feelings
what Richardson calls 'feminine prose'.

Such techniques are extended into later decades by writers as Elizabeth
Bowen and Rosamond Lehmann, not to mention of Jean Rhys, in whose fiction
we find the presence of close attention to inner consciousness sustained with
particular subtlety. Fay Weldon's heroines on the other hand, appear to be of the
picaresque type, rather like Defoe's Moll Flanders as they lurch fairly cheerfully
from one dispiriting misadventure to another, their lives warped and ruined not
only by men but by the malignancy of circumstance and the vagaries of their own
natures. Tumbled from one representative situation to the next, they are in another way victims of their author's urgency in showing social processes and problems, from the difficult days after the war until the more promising possibilities of women's liberation in the sixties.

With the Second World War, an era had ended in the history of Great Britain. The Labour Government that was voted to power in 1945 slowly but steadily dismantled the British Empire, and the Conservative Government that succeeded it in 1951 could not discontinue, let alone reverse the process. Shrunk to Little England, the nation had to make a painful adjustment to a more modest role in world affairs. The energy of the nation turned inward as the Attlee cabinet began building up a welfare society which guaranteed health care, subsidized housing, social insurance, old age pensions and so on. The process was however difficult, and the continued shortages and rationing in the late 1940s disenchanted many and the euphoria generated by the new society started waning at the turn of the decade, culminating in a change of government and the setting in of apathy and cynicism. On the international front, the most startling development was the growth of newer and more powerful nuclear weapons. Once the Soviet Union had manufactured the atom bomb and then the hydrogen bomb, ending the Western nuclear monopoly and triggering the arms race, the total annihilation of mankind in a future war appeared a distinct possibility. This led later in 1956 to the formation of the CND or the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament which in time became a widespread movement. Meanwhile, there was the economic recovery of the 1950s and the industries set up after 1945 began to yield results in increased production. This led to a demand for labour, and large-scale immigration in response to it. At the same time automation in industries led to a repetitive,
stereotyped and unhygienic work regime, cutting off workers from their traditional social moorings.

Other casualties of the new era were the Church of England, class distinctions and middle class morality. There was a loss of faith, and the support that the Bishops of the Church extended to nuclear weapons tangibly antagonized progressive opinion. There was also some ‘social levelling’ under the Labour dispensation and the disparity between the classes marginally diminished. Finally, as happened after the First World War, there was a liberalization of sexual mores, prudery decreased and sexuality became less of a taboo.

In literature, the plays of Kingsley Amis, John Osborne, Nigel Dennis, John Wain and Angus Wilson, produced the ‘Angry Young Man’— a provincial figure with a working class background portraying the angst of the individual trapped in a corrupt society.

This is perhaps why at times, Weldon seems to switch her sympathy between the sexes. One minute she’s saying, ‘Pity the poor man’, and next she’s talking about women’s burdens. But Fay disputes this saying— ‘I like to think I don’t take sides but that I have a clear vision of the wounds inflicted, as well as courage shown and the exhilaration of occasional victory.’ She was of course speaking of the victory of the wronged wife in the black comedy novel, *The Life and Loves of a She-Devil*, which catapulted Fay from a skilled, prolific author into a high-profile one.

Weldon is intensely aware of her surroundings, especially the crumbling of relationships as men and women get caught in the whirlwind of rapidly changing socio-political scenario— and thus we have *Darcy’s Utopia* (1990) in which two journalists are shacked up in a hotel room, each having escaped their
respective marriages, and are simultaneously interviewing a woman who is
spouting mad Utopian theories that have been invented by her jailed husband. In
fact, one finds that in the post-war world people are increasingly confronted with
psycho-neurotic problems— the outcome of the loss of faith— and the desperate
urge to cling onto individuals who profess to be visionaries or therapists:

... the therapists had an enormous, and I thought undeserved
respect, so that if somebody came into a room and described themselves as
a therapist, there would be a kind of hush, and people would watch what
they said, because the therapist could read your heart, which was taking
over from how the priest used to be treated. And that this wasn’t
necessarily a good idea, because that therapist had probably had a
weekend’s training, if that, and anybody can set themselves up as a
therapist and behave rather like the pardoners used to, and take money for
making you feel not guilty, for forgiving your sins, and it was the same
kind of principle, except that there wasn’t behind it necessarily, a kind of a
body of belief, any sacrifice.  

The passage is also reminiscent of Fay’s own marriage to antiques dealer and jazz
musician Ron Weldon in 1963, which broke up after 30 years when Ron was told
at a highly-publicised moment by a New Age therapist that he and Fay were
astrologically incompatible. In 1994, Ron died of a stroke eight hours before the
divorce papers came through, and the result was Fay’s novel Affliction, the story
of a psychiatrist stealing another woman’s husband. The comparison however,
went way too far for comfort when the book ‘sparked a public debate’ soon after
its release:

The vast Central Hall at Westminster was packed with indignant
therapists and their patients, all attesting to the value of their treatment,
and determined never to read a thing I wrote again. I was castigated in the
press, at literary festivals and in radio and TV programmes for moral and
social irresponsibility: everyone knew that therapy was a good thing. I was
blaming therapists for my failure to keep my own marriage together. They
understood my anger but if only I had sought treatment sooner! In vain to
say, ‘But look, I was only writing a novel.’

In The Female Eunuch, Germaine Greer sounds more focussed when speaking of
the snares awaiting women who are trying to be liberated:
The revolutionary woman must know her enemies, the doctors, psychiatrists, health visitors, priests, marriage counsellors, policemen, magistrates and genteel reformers, all the authoritarians and dogmatists who flock about her with warnings and advice. . . . The first exercise of the free woman is to devise her own mode of revolt, a mode which will reflect her own independence and originality. The more clearly the forms of oppression emerge in her understanding, the more clearly she can see the shape of future action. 

In fact, Fay's own story is as unpredictable and exciting as any of her fictional plots in that it reveals the adventures/ misadventures of a woman trying to get a foothold in a world which has gone all awry. With a novelist mother (writing under the rather splendid name, Pearl Bellair), a father who wrote and directed as well as being a doctor, and a grandfather and uncle being writers, Fay's career did seem at first rather preordained from the moment she was born in 1931. This was obviously not the age where Virginia Woolf's 'Angel' flitted in every English household, but women's education was still taken for granted. As Fay narrates in the essay entitled *Pity a Poor Government*:

My mother at the age of five, when first required to go to the little Montessori school around the corner, set up such a wail that my grandfather, a novelist, came down the stairs in his silk dressing gown, waving his ivory cigarette holder and said what can be the matter with little Margaret? To which the reply came she doesn't want to go to school. 'Do you want to go to school, Margaret?' he asked, and my mother replied no, though she knew even then, she told me, that it was a life decision and she'd made the wrong one. My grandfather said, 'Don't send her then,' and they didn't. She stayed at home and read books and by the age of twenty was writing novels with her father. 

However, both Fay and her mother along with Fay's sister Jane, underwent considerable economic hardship and social bigotry as English immigrants in New Zealand after Fay's father deserted them for another woman, and discrimination (especially of gender) seems to have hounded Fay all her life. Thus, even when Weldon on her part, went to the University of St Andrews, Scotland, to read economics and philosophy she faced resistance all the same.
It was my Professor in moral philosophy in St Andrews who, when obliged by new university directives to accept females into his class---there were three of us---declined to mark our essays or acknowledge our presence, other than from time to time to remark with a toss of the bald head, that females were not capable of moral decision or rational judgement. The only conclusion we could come to was that we were not female.  

But then, in the present day, a ‘young man might well find himself the solitary male in a Gender Studies Class expected to stay quiet when the female lecturer tells the class that all men are potential rapists.’ Thus, in *The Hearts and Lives of Men* we find ourselves in 1965 London where the Pill was made available to women on prescription through the National Health Service, and where Helen contemplates having an abortion. As one critic once remarked--- “It is doubtful whether the ‘Swinging Sixties’ would have been quite so swinging without the Pill”.

*The Hearts and Lives of Men* was originally written week by week as a serial over a period of almost a year. It appeared in *Woman*, a British magazine, between 1st February and 15th November, 1986. Weldon explains:

You made it up as you went along, confined by the structure of the story, which is going to go on for you don’t know how long--- but you have to be able to bring it to an end with three weeks’ warning. 

But on the other hand, the author claims that the book

... has inbuilt cliffhangers, which makes this a peculiar kind of read. You need to know what happens next. You can bring in far more characters than is normal in a novel. They can come in and go away again... having as many adventures as you want along the way. You know what will happen at the end. It’s what will happen on the way that’s fun.

Therefore, while Weldon seems to pave the way for fantasy, the element of playful storytelling upsets a more down-to-earth presentation of events. We find how, due to Angie’s machinations and her parents’ emotional immaturity, little Nell finds herself the object of a bitter custody battle after Helen and
Clifford's short-lived marriage ends in divorce. The upshot is a kidnapping arranged by Clifford, who has moved to Geneva to open a branch of Leonardo's. Thus, in a lovely surrealistic episode that evokes the discarded image of Clifford's meteoric success, Nell escapes certain death—and is free to begin her storybook adventures. Renamed Brigitte and forgetting most of her English upbringing, Nell becomes the darling of an aristocratic French couple who have adopted her on the black market. The narrator reports:

... though she knew she was not allowed out of the chateau grounds, and would not have dreamed of disobeying, she would sometimes sit on the branch of a tree which overhung the lane which wound down to the village, and from which, hidden, she could watch the strange, vigorous, giant people of the outside world coming and going...11

With the adjective 'giant', fantasy seems to appear around the edges of a firmly established reality. And so, when the 74-year-old Marquise de Troite indulges in a bit of black magic to help restore youth, we realize that what we are seeing is only another version of Angie Wellbrook's vain attempts—with expensive cosmetics, lies and a disastrous facial peel—to trap the man she loves.

From the world of fairy tale, Nell is next catapulted by disaster into a Dickensian melodrama when she finds herself the ward of a children's institution back in England. In charge of the Eastlake Assessment Center is Annabel Lee, who is every bit as grim and stingy as Dickens's Pipchin, if not so temperate. Here the parody may seem a little too exuberant, as 'slavering, savage black dogs' and 'a drunken, equally slavering Annabel Lee' pursue Nell over a stretch of Hackney Marshes. However, Nell soon finds refuge among more credible hippie thieves and eventually, as an adolescent, enters into a living arrangement with a family who tends to the not quite agreeable business of boarding dogs. By this time, Nell has evolved from a creature of the imagination ('So enchanting a small
girl, with her delicate fairy limbs and wide haunting eyes, might well be some kind of phantom, and gone before you realized she was there!') into a sensible, admirable young woman with two feet firmly planted on the ground.

But the story is not merely about Nell’s journey. Rather, the narrative technique in the sections dealing with Nell’s parents reflects the author’s major themes. Early in the novel for instance, we learn that Clifford belongs ‘to the future’. He is a trendsetter, innovative in ways that are both disturbing and gratifying to his boss, Sir Larry Patt, whom he soon replaces as managing director of Leonardo’s, and while she is describing him as one who casts a ‘knowing eye to the future,’ Weldon herself makes use of the narrative future (the 1980’s), to assess Clifford in the 60’s and 70’s. She notes:

In these days, rugs such as the one then flung so casually over Clifford’s polished wood attic floor are rare and cost thousands of pounds at Liberty’s. Then they could be bought for a fiver or so at any junk shop. Clifford of course... had already managed to pick up a dozen or so very fine specimens.

Similarly, the house he buys in Primrose Hill ‘in the then-unfashionable North West London’ for $ 6,000 ends up being worth half a million pounds today. His biggest coup, though, is to see the potential worth of Helen’s father’s neglected paintings, which end up making both him and his father-in-law a fortune.

Also, The Hearts and Lives of Men stands out among Fay’s novels in its representation of the journey of the ‘woman’ from subjection to liberty. Thus, we have Helen’s mother Evelyn Lally, as the typical Angel in the House, and Weldon does not flinch from telling us exactly how Evelyn, the docile, all-suffering wife, is almost as much at fault as her over-bearing husband. The moralizing is as plain and outspoken as anything encountered in a three-volume novel, but yet again, because she makes so much good sense, Weldon gets away with it:
... Over the years she had grown to take John Lally's view of what the world was like, and who within it was good or bad. She was in the habit, in fact--- never a good one--- of looking at the world through her husband's eyes.

... This is what living with a genius can do to a woman. Evelyn is dead now. I do not think she lived her life to the full. She should have faced up to John Lally more often. He would have accepted it, and even been the happier for it. ... Evelyn should have had more courage. She would have lived longer.  

But it is precisely to escape a home tyrannized by an ill-tempered genius of a father, that Helen tries to find refuge in a man of the future:

Well now, what it added up was that Helen now just wanted to forget the past and love Clifford and prepare for a glittering future...  

Therefore, not unexpectedly, this becomes a recipe for disaster as the narrator predicts at the very beginning of the novel:

'Oh really Dad,' she said, slipping out from under his grasp, on her feet, readjusting her slip, and then to the waking startled Clifford, 'I'm sorry, it's my father.' She had caught her mother's habit of apologising. She was never to lose it.  

By trying to forget the past, Helen winds up reliving it in a way, repeating the dynamics of her own mother's cringing, apologetic relationship with her husband.

As Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards remark:

Many daughters are scared of falling prey to the indignities we witnessed our mothers suffer. This fear is a challenge to younger feminists. Young women should understand where that fear comes from, rather than simply avoiding it. Unwrapping motherhood from the swaddles of patriarchy means that we will no longer have to work so hard to be different from our mothers.  

Evelyn Lally perishes as all domestic angels who came before her, and Helen, on her part, is made to come to terms with her father and mother (as well as her mother's ghost). Deserted by a whimsical and egotistical husband, she learns to look within herself only to find that artistic streak (which she presumably inherited from her father) and becomes a fashion designer of some importance:
... the very style of Helen’s beauty changed, as did her life. She no longer seemed fragile and just a little mournful—now she gleamed with energy. Clifford, seeing his former wife one day on a television programme, was quite put out. What had happened to her? Why was she not pining away for loss of him? From here, her fortune and glamour are slowly on the rise, in contrast to her opponent Angie who fails to improve her looks and to prevent Clifford slipping from her grasp. Meanwhile, Nell, who once represented Clifford’s future, is now his past, and she eventually catches up with him in a walloping finale that lets out all the stops.

But why call a novel that’s mainly about women *The Hearts and Lives of Men*? The author replies:

It’s about Helen, who I observed had power over the hearts and lives of men. In a way, it’s about this rather foolish woman who by being totally passive exercises control... There’s no way I think anyone should admire her for one minute. On the other hand, you don’t have to dislike her. You don’t have friends because you admire them---you like them, for all their faults and probably because of them...

Still, the reader may find Helen more passive and unimaginative and therefore less prone to disintegration than Weldon’s other heroines. In fact, the disintegration and modification of the concept of ‘character’ which had taken place in certain modernist novels is attributable, more to the psychoanalytic interest in the concept of the ‘fractured self’. Feminist theorists as Nancy Chodorow have, of course, elaborated on these ideas, using them as the basis for formulating textual strategies whereby women writers can subvert and disrupt the dominant phallocentric culture---(as found in Weldon’s novel *Splitting*). Conversely, what Helen undergoes is transformation/education through experience:

The fact was, Helen had changed. Remember, she had married young; she’d had very little time to develop her own nature or discover her likes and dislikes. She’d grown up with a wilful and difficult father and a
put-upon mother, and had learnt early the childish and painful art of conciliation; ... Then, married to Clifford, her opinions perforce, had been his; he'd turned her from an artless... girl into a cool and knowledgeable woman who could read a wine list and tell a real Jacobean chest from a fake without even trying, but had no choice but to like what he liked, despise what he despised. Then when Simon took Clifford's place in the marital bed, she'd adopted her new husband's political views, his kindly, worldly, international cynicism.

Well, now she was determined to be free of Clifford. 20

But while Helen is fickle and takes time to learn her lesson, Nell's resilience even as a child is reflected in her psychological maturity, something which Fay cannot help foretelling once again:

Those years when the world lurched out of earnestness and into frivolity were fun indeed for Clifford and Helen, but not when it came to it, for little Nell. Angels of gravity and resolution need to stand around the newborn's crib, the more so if the latter happens to be draped in brilliant psychedelic satin, not sensible white, washable, ironable cotton. 21

Thus, even at the age of three, when her parents are foolishly squabbling over her, '[her] little lower lip quivered a lot, in those early days, but even a baby can be brave and proud; she would make an effort to smile and perform,...' 22 After her parents' divorce, and Helen's marriage to Simon Cornbrook and the ensuing struggle for Nell's custody, the child begins to learn the art of survival. Therefore, she very soon realises

...that though she could be as boisterous as she wished to be in her mother's house, in her father's she had to move sedately; otherwise something precious might get broken. If she spilt her milk in Primrose Hill it would be on to some pristine embroidered tablecloth, and though no one would exactly get cross, there would be a great palavar as the cloth was removed and replaced. In Muswell Hill a sponge would be just produced— or she'd fetch it herself— and the scrubbed wooden table wiped. 23

However, as Nell spends her formative years through adventures (or rather misadventures), readers wonder what the author is really aiming at. Those, to whom Nell's experiences may occur as conforming to the 'picaresque', may argue along the lines of the French feminists that through Nell, Weldon is actually
attempting to write in the ‘sublime mode’, to create a new architectonics of empowerment—i.e. not through the old-fashioned sublime of domination, the vertical sublime which insists on aggrandizing the masculine self over others, but instead through a horizontal sublime that moves towards sovereignty or expenditure, that refuses an oedipal, phallic fight to the death with the father, and expands towards others, spreads itself out into multiplicity. Its structure, as Thomas Weiskel says in *The Romantic Sublime* (1976), is that of joining the great, of enacting a moment when ‘the burden of the past is lifted and there is an influx of power’.

But let us first examine what Simone de Beauvoir has to say about ‘the independent woman’ in *The Second Sex*:

> It is through gainful employment that woman has traversed most of the distance that separated her from the male; and nothing else can guarantee her liberty in practice. Once she ceases to be a parasite, the system based on her dependence crumbles; between her and the universe there is no longer any need for a masculine mediator.  

Therefore, what Beauvoir emphasizes on is ‘gainful employment’ which will make a ‘masculine mediator’ redundant; and Helen does finally engage herself in ‘gainful employment’ and acquires a position from where she can dictate her own terms to Clifford. But freedom has to be acquired at a price, and it is inevitably Evelyn Lally who must pay for it:

> ‘I had such a dream last night,’ is all Evelyn says,... ‘I dreamed you were standing hand in hand with Clifford. I dreamed I was dying; I had to die to set you free.’ ‘What do you mean?’ Helen is distressed.  
> ‘You’re too much my daughter, not enough yourself. If you’re to be happy with Clifford, you have to be your father’s daughter, not mine.’

—a sacrifice which becomes necessary because the author shows that the very characteristics that are praised and rewarded in women—viz. timidity,
plumpness, languor, delicacy and preciosity— of which Evelyn has a generous helping, are not really ingredients of an individual’s ‘happiness’.

Particularly at this point, appears the second phase of psychoanalytic debate of the nineteen-seventies and eighties— centred on the issues of whether the family, and in particular, motherhood and marriage within it, was responsible for women’s subordinate position in society; the construction of gendered identity; the relationship between identity and sexuality, as well as the relationship between the unconscious and language— a debate initiated by Lacan and Derrida, and later taken up by Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray. In fact, many French feminists have been particularly interested in Lacan’s insistence that ‘masculinity’ is a bogus cultural construction and that meanings and identities, including those of ‘man’ and ‘woman’, are never fixed and change is always possible. Interestingly, Lacan speaks of a pre-Oedipal realm of the Imaginary which might be thought of as a pre-patriarchal realm— an idea supported by Cixous, Kristeva and Irigaray, in that they too acknowledge the existence of a position which, because it lies in the unconscious, allows a way of thinking and speaking to women and men beyond the reach of phallic control, in a domain which potentially offers meanings based on openness, plurality, diversity and genuine difference. In other words, this position may offer women and men the opportunity to become themselves.

It is interesting to consider in this context Julia Kristeva’s standpoint, for though she sees Lacan’s work (The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, 1977) as potentially liberating, unlike her contemporary Hélène Cixous, she takes an emphatically anti-essentialist view of ‘femininity’. Kristeva takes the view that the pre-Oedipal mother actually encompasses both
‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’. By this she means that the mother in the Imaginary is ‘masculine’ in the sense that the baby sees her as all-powerful before the intervention of the father/phallus, and ‘feminine’ because she lies outside the phallic imposition of meaning which asserts itself during the Oedipal crisis. But this phantasizing of the mother as all-powerful comes to an end with the child’s seduction by its own desirability of having not just what she (the mother) is but what she apparently wants—the father, which metamorphoses into the desire for a child of its own in the case of females. Kristeva argues that in order to achieve a viable, independent self, women should employ a double discourse, both ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ and therefore, should be active and assertive (which must inevitably incorporate them into the patriarchal domain of the phallus) but at the same time should relentlessly challenge, question and refuse these assertions which must never rigidify into oppressive patriarchal certainties. This is perhaps why Weldon opines that Evelyn Lally ‘should have had more courage’ to stand up to her husband and Helen should not have perhaps tried to simply seek protection in Clifford the dictator but spelt out her own terms from the very start.

On the other hand, of Nell’s adaptation to the horizontal sublime, the nearest association may be established with Donald Winnicott’s paper entitled “Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena”. Presumably, Nell’s birth would never be without its adventures/or misadventures, as is made clear by Angie Wellbrook’s malicious intentions to make Helen abort her baby without Clifford’s knowledge. Therefore, when the child is born the author sagely predicts her future by noting the position of the stars at the time of her birth:

... Nell was a fine, healthy baby, and arrived safely, if on her own, at 3.10 a.m. Nell’s sun had left Sagittarius and was just into Capricorn, making her both lively and effective; she had the moon in Aquarius rising, which made her kind, charming, generous and good; Venus stood strong
in mid-heaven, in its own house, Libra, and that made her full of desires, and capable of giving and receiving love. But Mercury was too close to Mars, and Neptune was in opposition to both, and her sun opposed her moon, and so Nell was to be prone to strange events through her life, and to great misfortunes, alternating with great good fortune. Saturn in conjunction with the sun, and powerful, and also opposed in the twelfth house, suggested that prisons and institutions would loom large in her life: there would be times when she would look out at the world from behind bars. Or that’s one way of looking at it all. It will do. How better are we to account for the events that fate, and not our natures cause? 27

Helen too, experiences a new kind of love, a love which is selfless and runs counter to her narcissism which, (according to Freudian theory), had led to her wanting to be loved (by Clifford) rather than to love--- a feeling which, in Kristeva’s words, becomes the source of ‘the slow, difficult and delightful apprenticeship in attentiveness, gentleness, forgetting oneself’. Nell, on her part has a more or less normal childhood for the first few years of her life, but is eventually driven by insecurity as she is scuttled between her father’s house and her mother’s, to attach herself to a trinket (a tiny emerald heart suspended from a gold chain), which had been given to Helen by Clifford on the night of their marriage--- a talisman which incidentally belonged to Clifford’s mother, and therefore, infinitely more precious than any other monetarily expensive ornament. It is this heirloom which acts, in Winnicott’s words, as the ‘transitional object’ when put inside the tin teddy which not only paves the way for the infant Nell’s recognition of ‘external reality’ but eventually acts as the agent which will link up all the scattered members of Nell’s family, including Nell herself. As Winnicott says:

...there may emerge some thing or some phenomenon--- perhaps a bundle of wool or the corner of a blanket or eiderdown, or a word or tune, or a mannerism--- that becomes vitally important to the infant for use at the time of going to sleep, and is a defence against anxiety, especially anxiety of a depressive type. Perhaps some soft object or other type of object has been found and used by the infant, and this then what I [am] call a transitional object. 28
Consequently, the more threatened Nell feels with the rapid change of events around her, the more she clings to the tin teddy bear, and even the eccentric Milady de Troite gets to know its value by seeing Nell love it so, and gets it hung by a chain which the child could easily wear. But again, Winnicott opines that such an attachment for the ‘transitional object’ eventually wanes when under healthy circumstances, there is a gradual extension of range of interest. In Nell’s case however, despite her possessing a positive bent of mind, the patterns set in infancy persists into childhood, and the teddy continues to be absolutely necessary at times of loneliness or when she is threatened by depression. As Winnicott says, the ‘transitional object’ becomes in a way symbolic of some ‘part-object’ such as the breast (or mother) and the tiny pendant which Nell had taken without Helen’s knowledge becomes a surrogate of Helen herself.

But again, according to Winnicott, ‘[T]here is no possibility whatever for an infant to proceed from the pleasure principle to the reality principle or towards and beyond primary identification..., unless there is a good-enough mother’, and continues by explaining that:

The good-enough ‘mother’ (not necessarily the infant’s own mother) is one who makes active adaptation to the infant’s needs, an active adaptation that gradually lessens, according to the infant’s growing ability to account for failure of adaptation and to tolerate the results of frustration.

Naturally, the infant’s own mother is more likely to be good enough than some other person, as Helen is to Nell despite all her failings as her love is self-denying and has none of the egotism of Clifford’s preoccupation with his daughter. The fact, that success in infant care depends on the element of devotion, not on cleverness or intellectual enlightenment becomes more evident when Angie fails to be the ‘good-enough’ mother to her own daughter. Nevertheless, as
time flies, Nell grows up to realise the limitations of her 'good-enough' mother, and as mentioned earlier, learns to deal with her failures. But all doesn't go well with Nell and Weldon, cleverly aware that the child may not survive in an altogether hostile world, or may not emerge as the kind of person the novelist wished her to be, cunningly introduces 'mother' figures, who in some ways substitute Helen, the 'good-enough' mother at strategic junctures of the plot. Thus, we have the young prostitute who cries over Nell and gives her the tin teddy, Mama Milady who despite her queer ways, loves little Nell, and Polly who even gets Nell admitted to the village school as her own child, and the circle is completed with the reappearance of Helen as Nell's employer and benefactress. But by now, Nell, the foster-child of experience has acquired enough sense to get swayed by Helen's vulnerable charm:

As for Nell, watching Helen on the phone to Clifford that night, she thought she'd never seen a woman so beautiful, so clearly destined to affect the hearts and lives of men. 'If only I could be like that,' Nell thought. 'If only she was my mother.' And then thought, 'No, I never can be like that, I am too spiky and blunt, and glad of it. I don't want to live my life through men. Beside them, of course, but not because of them.'

Therefore, the 'good-enough' mother Helen, who had begun by providing the 'illusion' of security to Nell with all the glitter and artifice of elite society, now becomes the cause of Nell's 'disillusionment' which incidentally is also one of the tasks of a well-meaning parent or educator. Though Winnicott's theory is often derided by critics as demeaning to the mothering 'experts' who regard his concept of this 'mirroring' role of the mother as one which denies subjectivity to women, it is attractive to feminists as Carol Gilligan, Nancy Chodorow and Jessica Benjamin who seek to ameliorate the social sources of women's distress and oppression, in his consistent attention to social reality beyond the self--- both in the mother-child dyad and in surrounding relationships.
But it is also assumed that the task of reality-acceptance is never completed, that no human being is free from the strain of relating inner and outer reality, and that relief from this strain is provided by an intermediate area of experience which is not challenged--- arts, religion, etc. This is what Winnicott refers to as the ‘intermediate area’ of experience, unchallenged in respect to its belonging to inner or external (strenuous and fragmentary) reality, which helps in sustaining the growing child, as art does in the case of Nell (though once again Weldon, doesn’t forget to mention with a twinkle in her eye, that this is very like John Lally!). Likewise, the transitional object (the tin teddy) gets somewhat decathected especially as Nell’s artistic interests develop, thus making her more self-dependent and refined, and the final dramatic scene where she desires to give up the emerald pendant to a tottering, gun-wielding Erich Blotton to save her family, becomes a ceremonial end of the insecurity Nell suffered as a child.

What emerges as the outcome is the relevance of Helen’s abandonment of (as Kristeva says), the ‘fight-to-the-death’ response to Clifford’s flamboyant assaults. In fact one may easily conform to Kristeva’s theory by saying that Helen, by recognising her own capacity for creativity, gives way to a more ‘intransigent struggle’ which is not between herself (the victim) and Clifford (the oppressor), but between the victim and oppressor internalised within her own ‘personal and sexual identity’--- in other words the difference, the ‘other’ in herself (and thank goodness she doesn’t have one of Fay’s therapists to guide her). The process of ‘creativity’ had however, begun much earlier with Nell’s birth--- (signifying physically ‘child-birth’ as well as the birth of a ‘daughter’)--- though initially unrecognised by Helen herself.
This is that 'powerful creativity' according to Kristeva, which lies at the heart of what is specific to women's experience, and becomes the motivation behind, as for example, women's concern with writing literature. This is because writing enables women to reveal what is an 'otherwise, repressed, nocturnal, secret and unconscious universe', that is their own denied experience. But as substantiated earlier by Winnicott, 'creativity' may also be encouraged by taking recourse to other forms of art--- for example, designing apparel in Helen's case. In fact, one may argue that artistic practices actually help to demystify the increasingly technologically dominated, patriarchal Symbolic which totalises and equalises, denying the difference between people, the multiplicity of their identification, the variability of their capacity for expressing themselves--- as well as their biological variation. It is this urge for creativity that leads to the recognition of symbolic castration, which in turn may lead to the abolition of the oppression of women (and that of other groups perceived as different). This would mean individual or collective acknowledgement within oneself, of the unconscious painful Oedipal feelings of loss, anger and humiliation which are the outcome of women being the victims of symbolic castration and, at the same time, their perception of sexual difference (which presumably has been imposed by patriarchy). If these are not resolved adequately, they remain repressed and potentially destructive, as in the case of Evelyn Lally who became dangerously fatalistic. Helen, on the other hand, learns to rid herself of the destructive impulse to establish her identity on the basis of an open attack on her (male) adversary Clifford, by her painful recognition of guilt and finds adequate compensation in the pleasure of 'creativity'.

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Both Kristeva and Cixous suggest that women should experiment with new ways of structuring experience which have more in common with certain forms of artistic expression than prevailing rationalistic norms. Without the need for mastery and control, these new forms and directions (unlike Angie's superfluous facial-peel), can make available a space for a freer play of the unconscious in the form of insight, intuition and pleasure (jouissance) and the expression of those multiple emotions and desires which patriarchal societies have compelled women to disown and repress.

On the other hand, Irigaray suggests that the main reason why women have been buried alive in culture, is because women have been allotted everything in culture that men have to deny in themselves--- nature, biology, the body--- to protect them from knowing about their continued unconscious dependence on the mother and women generally. Male lack, has been unconsciously projected onto women (who, as partners and wives, function symbolically as mirrors, as their substitute mothers), thus making them the symbolic representation of what men cannot bear to acknowledge in themselves,--- their symbolic castration or lack of identity which is normally hidden under a garb of snobbish patronising--- (something which Beauvoir speaks of with biting sarcasm):

...the most mediocre of males feels himself a demigod as compared with women...And in September 1948, in one of his articles in the *Figaro littéraire*, Claude Mauriac--- whose great originality is admired by all--- could write regarding woman: 'We listen on a tone [sic!] of polite indifference... to the most brilliant among them, well knowing that her wit reflects more or less luminously ideas that come from us.' Evidently the speaker referred to is not reflecting the ideas of Mauriac himself, for no one knows of his having any. 

Therefore, we have John Lally giving vent to his own frustration as an unrecognised genius by abusing his docile wife, and even the high-flying Clifford becomes all the more desperate to subjugate Helen with his own increasing
feeling of insecurity. Though Evelyn has no other way out than to die to escape her husband’s tyranny, Helen’s independence and new-found vocation symbolically castrates Clifford, who can only watch her increasing eminence from a distance with the disagreeable Angie by his side.

Thus, the illusion of ‘Truth’ (which Kristeva defines as formed in a moment of history when identity was constructed on the basis of making victims of those perceived as different), the phallus, becomes an endless way of blocking women’s subjectivity in order to maintain a fragile barrier against unthinkable psychical disintegration and collapse. This state of affairs means that men, in a literal sense, cannot hear women. To hear would mean facing their own anxiety, fragility and mortality, the psychical as well as symbolic death of the subject.

What remains therefore, is the significant role of the child in bringing about a healthy reconciliation of the binary opposites (male and female) and establishing a neutral ground where art and intellect may constructively flourish. Like Winnicott, Kristeva too confronts the inevitable question: how can the child separate from the mother and make the transition from phantasy to reality, without inflicting damage on itself or others (through masochistic or sadistic behaviour)? In her provocative essay “Women’s Time”, Kristeva, while recognising the transformative nature of art and writing, does not discuss directly (as Winnicott does), how the problem of difference might be tackled at source—how parents can ensure that their children can be emotionally supported and helped to bear the separation and loss of their identification with the mother.

Alice Miller, writing from the perspective of humanist therapy rather than psychoanalysis, attempts to provide an answer to why so many children emerge from childhood in a damaged state. Arguing from a position much closer to
Winnicott's than that of Freud and Lacan, Miller opines that many individuals have suffered from an emotional form of abuse which is no less damaging than sexual abuse—the result of the socially sanctioned emphasis on 'firmness' and discipline in child-rearing in order to impose definite, determined goals, at a time when they are struggling desperately to negotiate their multiple losses. Miller argues that this kind of 'normal' child-rearing has been never seriously questioned and is the legacy of parents who were themselves abused in this way. For example, in *The Cloning of Joanna May* (1989), Carl May's cruelty towards others is explained by his childhood upbringing; he was raised in a kennel, was suckled on a dog for sustenance, and found kinship with the other pups. Carl's cruel, absurd upbringing shows the effects of parenting on adult behaviour. When married to Joanna, he kills her dogs out of jealousy and later has his chauffeur run over her lover, Isaac, killing him. Carl has no remorse for these pathological acts, and his insanity grows as the novel progresses.

Miller suggests the need, in parents and all those who care for children, for the kind of creative parenting practices characteristic of Winnicott's 'good enough mother'. This makes it easier for us to assume that Nell could learn all the survival skills because her psychological growth was not impaired by parental pressures. This also means that, Miller's attention to the real circumstances of our childhood which become enmeshed with our phantasies, perhaps offers us a line of action at a societal level which might go a considerable way to achieving a fundamental change in our unconscious response to difference (especially for those for whom 'writing the feminine' is not a realistic option).

Herein, enters the role of 'indeterminism' in establishing Nell's autonomy and her exercise of 'free will'. The concept of 'indeterminism' itself, according to
the Epicurean philosophers, may enable an individual to escape patterns of living which have brought him misery. Thus, a wise man will aim at living the most pleasant life possible and consider it important for each person to know and believe that he could indeed aspire to such a life:

The happy and blessed state belongs not to abundance of riches or dignity of position or any office or power, but to freedom from pain and moderation in feelings and an attitude of mind which imposes the limits ordained by nature. 

Such idea of indeterminism runs counter to 'determinism' which professes that every action may be *deterministically explained*, i.e. displayed as inevitable in the light of laws of nature and prior events. In this context therefore, libertarians hold autonomy valuable for a number of reasons. In some conceptions of the world and the place of human beings in it, autonomy is believed to confer a certain dignity or other special status. More prosaically, it may simply be thought a good thing to be captain of one's soul and master of one's fate.

Thus, we can deduce, that an agent in control of his actions is an autonomous agent based on the seminal idea of the tradition that freedom is essentially *doing what one wants*. Finally, there are cases where the agent neither judges as what he ought to do nor has formed any particular intention. Nell's autonomy and exercise of 'free will' therefore, becomes easier to interpret insofar as her autonomy presupposes the capacity to judge concerning 'ought' and 'best', and may be possessed in virtue of satisfying the open-mindedness criterion. On the other hand, it is also obvious that other aspects of Nell's freedom--- e.g., the possession of a certain ability (for instance, to overcome odds), or being free from coercion on a certain occasion--- are all to a great extent compatible with determinism. This is because, though the events which confront Nell are weird and mostly accidental, they are also in a way 'causal'. Thus, the plane accident
becomes a natural consequence of Clifford's abortive efforts to acquire Nell for himself and his plan to get her kidnapped by the ruthless Erich Blotton. Conversely, the sympathy of the prostitute for the child is an example of indeterminism, as is Blotton's sudden change of mind from selling Nell to a 'friend' who ran a child porno network, together with the Marquis and Milady de Troite's fruitless but dangerous dabbling with black magic which results in the fire in the château.

On the other hand, whether or not an agent 'rises to duty', and whether or not he starts on the road to bodily and mental well-being, the simple fact based on indeterministic conceptions is that a person's 'character as so far formed' is never fully formed. A point is never reached after which all that follows are the mere reactions of a set psyche to its current circumstances; persons are always developing, never developed and thus, the narrator ends the story with Nell as a teenaged girl with immense possibilities.

But life is after all finite; however undetermined the events making up a life may be, there is still only one overall pattern that will be exhibited by the total record after they are all past. Again, even if determinism is true, it by no means follows that there can be no surprises, no sudden starts in new directions in the course of a lifetime, as well as continuing and gradual refinement of a pattern established early on. Thus, in the chapter entitled "Fire", Weldon asserts that:

When we are small, things happen to us; far more than we make happen. We are in no position to control our fate. Events crowd in upon us... We will love and be loved or fail in love: live with extremes of fortune, or a steady flow of predictable income: save all our lives or spend all our lives... Live plagued by accidents, disasters, or almost wholly free of them. Some of us lightning seeks out--- so we'd better not play golf in a storm: others can stride the course with impunity. If we want to know our fate we need only look back to our childhood, for as we get older events seem to string themselves out; the pattern is too wide, almost too familiar to be seen:...
Years later, Weldon reminisces how her own son Dan was similarly ‘event prone’, and narrates a strange incident of an air crash which very much resembled Nell’s experience:

I wrote a passage in a novel, *The Hearts and Lives of Men*, in which a three-year-old survives an air crash, because she is sitting in the tail and it floats rather than falls. Soon after in real life a three-year-old survives just such a crash over Chicago. The writer invents, real life follows suit. The world is so crowded with people that if you can think of it, someone, somewhere, is doing it. 36

This reliance on fatalism was similarly referred to by Steven M. Cahn in *Fate, Logic, and Time* (1967):

Fatalism is the thesis that the laws of logic alone suffice to prove that no man has free will, suffice to prove that the only actions which a man can perform are the actions which he does, in fact, perform, and suffice to prove that a man can bring about only those events which do, in fact, occur and can prevent only those events which do not, in fact, occur. 37

But again, Weldon slyly leaves room for ‘free will’: ‘...Accept your fate,’ she says, ‘*make most of the cards you are dealt.* That’s all you can do...’ 38 (emphasis mine) — and Fay’s vacillating comments allow Nell scope to refuse the dominance of men, to pursue her past (rather than be pursued by it) and move towards the ‘horizontal sublime’ despite adversities (as already discussed) --- ultimately celebrating the ‘victory of the spirit’.

In fact, both indeterminism and determinism are intricately woven into postmodern discourses which assert both autonomy and worldliness. Likewise, (postmodern discourses) participate in both theory and praxis and thus offer a collective, historicized context for individual action. In other words, they do not deny the individual by imposing upon her/him the trappings of radicalism or collectivity, rather they ‘*situate*’ her/him within the framework of both history and
ideology despite the conflicts between truth and lies, differing perceptions of truth, facts and beliefs, and truth and illusion. As Derrida insists: 'The subject is absolutely indispensable. I don’t destroy the subject; I situate it' — and to situate it, as postmodernism teaches, is to recognize differences — of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and so on. To situate is also both to acknowledge the ideology of the subject and to suggest alternative notions of subjectivity.

On the other hand, Kaja Silverman in *The Subject of Semiotics* (1983), opines that neither man nor woman is an autonomous, coherent, free agent; neither can be separated from cultural systems or what Silverman calls 'historically circumscribed signifying operations' which prove to have priority over the subject. Human reality, for both sexes, is a construct. Obviously such a view is bound to pose problems for traditional notions of the stability of the self and of the equation of the self with consciousness. Nevertheless, to reinsert the subject into the framework of its parole and its signifying activities (both conscious and unconscious) within an historical and social context is to begin a force, a redefinition not only of the subject but of history as well.

It is true that in most of her novels, Weldon’s prime concern is to present certain stereotypical female situations and occupations (pregnancy, childcare, housework, exploitative encounters with men) and certain drab locations associated with women (the home, the hospital ward, the park), in order to emphasize the monotony and dreariness in the characters’ lives in a world which has gone all awry. Thus, in *Down Among the Women* (1971), the author’s use of the pronoun ‘we’, has the effect of mischievously undermining the female reader’s pretensions to superiority and pulls her down to the ignominious level of the characters, forcing her to identify with their subordinate state:
Down among the women, we don’t like chaos. We will crawl from our sickbeds to tidy and define. We live at floor level, washing and wiping. ... We have only ourselves to blame.

--- and the deliberate sarcasm on the women’s attempt to derive order from ‘chaos’ is difficult to miss. Again and again ironically, we find Fay’s women trying to assert their uniqueness despite the unexpected sequence of unfavourable events, and under pressure ‘fragmentation’ of the self is always a distinct possibility.

In contrast, Helen’s emergence as an entrepreneur in *The Hearts and Lives of Men*, may be said to pave the way for future stereotypes for acceptable roles for all women and also to expose the contradictions which career women as Helen, who are normally expected to behave like dumb blondes, undergo--- i.e. living in a ‘true chaos of contradicting authorities’--- in the words of Germaine Greer (see Chapter I, excerpt no. 21). The solution offered for the time being is the ‘boyish’ Nell,--- the ‘subversion’ of the ‘feminine stereotype’,--- who appears to hold promise of an ideal individual who will devise a morality which will not disqualify her from excellence, and a psychology which will not condemn her to the status of a spiritual cripple. But to achieve all this, she has a long way to go and must explore the dark without any guide, other than her desire not to be her mother or her grandmother. We do not know if Nell will finally emerge as the bullying female boss of the 21st century as Meredith Johnson in *Disclosure*, or be the wayward, ambitious wife as in Bani Basu’s short story *Promita and I*, or will remain single like Elinor in Anna Wilson’s *Cactus* (1980). But the real test of her achievement will lie in the potential her example will unleash in the other women in the workforce and at home. Her formula for womanhood--- ‘I don’t want to live my life through men. Beside them, of course, but not because of them’---
which seems to echo what the heroine says at the end of Rabindranath Tagore’s *Chitrangada* (1892)— could empower all women to make choices on their own account about their future role by making men redundant in the process of decision-making (‘*A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle*’— Greer), which could be a prelude to real gender balance.

Also, the story in a way, reworks the myth of Persephone in that, like Rhea, Demeter and Persephone, the Evelyn-Helen-Nell connection marks a powerful matriarchal lineage— an *intergenerational gendered bonding*. But on the other hand, there is also a positive tendency to break away from the oppressive strictures such bonding may entail, through Evelyn’s death, Helen’s personal development and Nell’s autonomous spirit.

To sum up, the novel is thus, not merely about Nell’s growth physically and mentally, but of the development of Helen’s personality. The book is in a way Weldon’s ‘Bildungsroman’ or ‘novel of education’ as it charts the evolution of Helen’s mind and character through crisis and varied experience into maturity and recognition of her identity and role in the world. In this however, the author is simply carrying forward a tradition begun by K.P. Moritz’s *Anton Reiser* (1785-90) and Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship* (1795-96), and including George Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), Charles Dickens’ *Great Expectations* (1861), Somerset Maugham’s *Of Human Bondage* (1915), and Thomas Mann’s *The Magic Mountain* (1924).

Moreover, behind Helen’s success as entrepreneur, lies the oldest feminist conviction: that an equal place in the labour market is the way to hand self-respect and financial security to women. This is because money in itself is far more than lifeless coinage; its power goes well beyond simple buying and selling. Therefore,
women who earn a lot by their own success at work challenge the traditional balance of power between men and women. High-earning young women’s attitudes to having money of their own and being self-sufficient are changing. Jane McLoughlin cites the example of a young woman named Lisa, who says:

'I am good at what I do. I work hard. I earn the money. If people have a problem with that, it’s their problem. There’s some sort of convention among a lot of older women that we should be ashamed of earning large amounts of money. I think it’s envy – not necessarily of the money, but the things money represents, like freedom and independence and not having to give a damn if other people like you or not.' 41

Lisa sounds as assertive and confident as Nell who, we can rightly expect, will not only inherit her mother’s fashion empire but also her father’s acumen of turning chances into opportunities. Moreover, her level-headedness would enable her to use her power to inspire and co-operate, rather than to bully the way men at the helm of affairs traditionally do in a naked show of authority. All in all, Nell has the makings of the true entrepreneur and ideal individual with her confidence, her wisdom, and her ability to overcome crisis --- and we will not be surprised if Weldon writes a sequel in which Nell will be the New Woman, --- poised, determined, ready to take over a confused, indeterminate world.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


7. Ibid., p.5.

8. Ibid., p.5.


10. Ibid., p.13.


12. Ibid., p.146.


15. Ibid., p. 46.

16. Ibid., p. 23.


21. Ibid., p. 2.

22. Ibid., p. 83.

23. Ibid., p. 93.


26. This paper is one of Winnicott’s most important. It was published first in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* in 1953 and later in Winnicott’s *Collected Papers: Through Paediatrics to Psychoanalysis* (1958). Like all those published in his later book *Playing and Reality* (1971), the paper focuses on the effect of the baby’s experiences with the mother and on its eventual capacity to separate from her successfully.


29. Ibid., p. 263.

30. Ibid., p. 263.

32. See Cynthia Burack, *The Problem of the Passions: Feminism, Psychoanalysis and Social Theory*, New York UP, NY, 1994, p.118 (The following quote addressed directly to mothers, is an example: ‘If you do handle your baby well I want you to be able to know that you are doing something of importance.’ Winnicott, *Babies and Their Mothers*, pp. 18-19).


