Chapter – III

Love and Women as Instruments of De-Alienation

“Love is the only discipline.”

- A Phoenix Too Frequent

Fry regards the phenomenon of love as a primary, important and indispensable factor in the making of man and his life. Love has been defined as a feeling of warm personal attachment or deep affection. It is an enduring and profound emotional regard.

There are basically two types of love. They are divine love and human love. Divine love is the benevolent affection or charity which God has for His creatures. It is also the reverent affection due from these creatures to God. God’s love is in the nature of a gift and divine love is termed gift-love. This is the basis of Christianity and is seen in the words of the Bible, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (16). C. S. Lewis explains this mystic love:

The Father gave all He is and has to the Son. The Son gives Himself back to the Father and gives Himself to the world and for the world to the Father and thus gives the world (in Himself) back to the Father too.(7)

Christ, the Son, gave up His life for the love of mankind. Christianity thus sees God as the embodiment of love. John Bowker makes the observation: “Christ makes manifest not only the character of God as love, but also the reality of God in human form, and in the spirit of love which continues from him”(44).

Man’s love for God is basically need love. But it is possible for the human being to aspire to love in the fashion of God, despite human imperfections, by “nearness of
approach” (11). This involves man’s efforts to become as selfless as God in the giving of love. Man becomes closer to God when he loves, unwearyingly and expecting nothing in return. It holds good that this type of love must needs be creative and productive, moving towards good. Iris Murdoch maintains that “Good is the magnetic center towards which love naturally moves.” (102-103) If by loving, one moves towards false good than this is false love. Further if true good is loved impurely or by accident, the quality of love becomes refined. The process can be seen as a continuum at the start of which man is unlike God, and practices need love. Through effort he reaches as close as is humanly possible, to gift love. Love can thus be seen as “the tension between the imperfect soul and the magnetic perfection which is conceived of as lying beyond it.” (102-103) The soul being directed to good by love, is ennobled.

St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross have spoken of the need for love. This is the pivot of Christianity – the love that Christ had for man, and His crucifixion for man’s salvation. St. Teresa, describing the journey of the soul to God says that “true perfection consists in love of God and neighbour; the more perfectly we keep these two commandments, the more perfect we will be.” (351) In the second stage of the dark night of the soul, which is spiritual purgation St. John advocates the seeker to grow through self-knowledge, spiritual humility and love of one’s neighbour.

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Caught in the race for progress and mechanization, twentieth century man often forgets the significance of love. He is isolated, a mere cog in the wheel, and he searches in vain for true happiness. Erich Fromm notes that love is the redeeming factor which man must rely on, for it can break the walls of separation and isolation permitting individuality and integrity. The capacity to love requires a sense of commitment as well as a state of awareness and intensity. This sense of commitment is the result of the awareness that individual lives are closely bound to that of the community. Thomas Merton believes that man being a social creature, must transcend regional and national boundaries and think in terms of one human family. Explaining the meaning of love in this context Robert Kreyche observes.

The perfection of human life is a perfection of the art of loving and not of the art of perfecting ourselves and of being sufficient unto ourselves in our intelligence, our strength, or our virtue (169).

In his plays Fry advocates love as a vibrant force that can counter alienation. While love is God-given, Fry believes that man can strive for perfection by likeness of approach. This love consists in the enactment of the two Biblical commandments which are that man must die to himself while awakening in Christ and also love his brother as himself. This calls for a whole-hearted giving “through wonderment, compassion, understanding and thanking”. (84) A kenotic view of the world may treat love as an outmoded quality. This upholds man’s individuality and ultimate victory through his own actions. But increase in scientific knowledge and material wealth will not give man
enduring happiness. Man continues to face various crises most of which are man-made. But an answer to these crises can be found in love. As Michel Quoist says, “Man is in a crisis of growth. It is a crisis that will resolve itself if only we are able, not to condemn but to love.” (7) Quoist also warns twentieth century man that if he shuns love or fails to give it its due place in his life, he “runs the risk of becoming a nothing, a puppet on a string… a shadow of what man should be” (72). Love entails commitment which in turn demands humility and concern for others. Fry believes that twentieth century man can go beyond the meaninglessness of life through love. Fry agrees with Thomas Merton that the “whole problem of our time is not lack of knowledge but lack of love.” (194) Lack of love causes mistrust, fear and alienation. Erich Fromm sees love as the … Only one passion which satisfies man’s need to unite himself with the world, and to acquire at the same time a sense of integrity and individuality with somebody, or something, outside oneself, under the condition of retaining the separateness and integrity of one’s own self.

Love does not demand a sea-change from man. He remains himself and is irrevocably drawn towards good. From also attributes creativity to love, terming it a productive orientation in the realm of feeling which links man to his fellow men, to himself and nature. Love draws man out of himself and makes him grow. This view concurs with the Orient as well. Dr. Radhakrishnan observes that “Love is the health of the soul, its beauty and well being…” (132) Swami Chinmayananda defines the nature of Gift-love as Prema or the nobler love that revives and enlivens. He adds that to give love is to expand. Thereafter the lover functions from the two centres-one from within himself and another from the beloved, a centre outside himself. Love is a vital force, necessary to life and has a therapeutic quality. It is, … a life-giving force necessary for
physical, mental and moral health… Love is the most powerful antidote against criminal, morbid and suicidal tendencies, against hate, fear and psychoneurosis. It is an indispensable condition for deep and lasting happiness.(9)

Fry asserts through his plays that love can bring light into man’s life. In giving love, human nature retains its individuality and is enriched, by the encompassing of all things in love. Fry sees love as a creative force that originates from Divine Providence. This creative aspect is seen through the women characters in Fry’s plays. The women stand as embodiments of love, the creative energy which brings about changes. In this context ‘life-giving’ is the key-word to their nature. They sisters, wives and lovers. They typify love of different categories. These range from gift love in its most humanly perfect form to need love which can rise to higher planes. These categories aid in the study of the women as instruments of de-alienation. They are not mutually exclusive but show a tendency to overlap. Some of the women share certain characteristics and fall into more than one category.

An important feature in Fry’s plays is the characteristic found in the women, of being an ‘involved spectator’. The involved spectator may be defined as one who participates in events that affect herself and others, but who in spite of this involvement and its consequent effect on herself and her feelings, is able to stand apart and out side herself to view them with a balanced sense of detachment and distance. In some of these characters there is self-examination as well. The actions and thoughts of these characters generally bring out their compassion, concern and a strong sense of purpose and steadfastness. They reach out to others mainly through their compassion and concern. Jose Ortega Y Gasset notes that … the degree of closeness is equivalent to the degree of
feeling participation, the degree of remoteness, on the other hand, marks the degree to which we have freed ourselves from the real event through objectifying it and turning it into a theme of pure observation. (17)

The ‘involved spectator’ in Fry’s plays definitely has the sense of participation and the power of observation.

In the category of Divine Love, gift love or agape can be placed first Countess Rosmarin Ostenburg of The Dark is Light Enough. Through her, Fry depicts that man can aspire to perfection, through “nearness of approach”. (11) That she is God-like in her nature is evident. At the beginning of the play her friends Jakob and Belmann learn that she is away on a mysterious sleigh ride in the snow. They miss her benevolent presence at their Thursday soiree.

This Thursday world of ours is now More like the world than ever The Goddess of it, in her God-like way Is God knows where.

The Countess has qualities of “true divinity” for she is undemanding yet influences and changes people through her own virtue. Belmann observes that many lives would have gone astray had it not been paradoxically enough for her “divine non-interference”. The Christ like quality of the Countess’ compassion is further emphasized, when Belmann answers Kassel’s observation that she cannot help but move people, despite the fact the she would prefer death to changing a man against his will.

She can’t escape it, If she should die, her gravestone would play havoc With the life of the mason who carved it. She has a touching way Of backing a man up against eternity Until he hardly has the nerve to remain mortal.
The Christ-like love in her is reinforced when she renders help freely to Richard Gettner whom she could easily have condemned as her enemy for having caused sorrow to Gelda. When Rosmarin learns that Gettner has deserted the Hungarians and is pursued by them, she goes to him after a lonely ride in the snow and brings him to her home. Despite her knowledge of his nihilism and egoism, she offers him shelter, exposing Gelda to danger, in the process, Rosmarin’s friends who love her and fear that she will be hurt again, resent her action. To Belmann, Gettner is nothing but a “lying malingerer” (TDLE 70) and to Stefan, he is a man “with no infirmity except himself” (TDLE 82). In Gettner’s defence, she is able to say, “Poor Richard, he is hunted” (TDLE 81). Despite this she bears no ill-will nor anger towards those who grudge his return. She treats them with the same compassionate regard. Rosmarin concedes that human weakness makes everyone “Confused, incomprehensible/Dangerous, contemptible, corrupt” (TDLE 85). Yet she remains a valiant supporter of the brotherhood of man.

Derek Stanford commenting on Rosmarin’s attitude notes that her policy which seems to be more than infinite attentive courtesy contains the basic essentials which are “a respect for every person’s individual uniqueness, and springing from this, a belief in individual uniqueness, and springing from this, a belief in individual freedom of choice.” (30) Rosmarin is able to love in a spirit of non-appropriation. She refuses to look at Richard Gettner as a thing, for she realizes that he had needs of his own and is different from others. This attitude is important for the proper growth of love. Thus she avoids false love which seeks to inflate the one who loves. Her love being in the nature of Divine love is faultless and unwearied in giving.
In Gettner, whom the others consider no better than a worm, the Coutess sees the seed of goodness. Thus she refuses to surrender him to the Hungarians. In her eyes Gettner is what he is because he has chosen to be so. She does not force him to good, but shows him the good by her compassion. She waits patiently for that within him to reach out to good. While confessing to Geldathe questionability of her non-interference in allowing Gelda to marry the then-popular Gettner earlier, she says.

I knew Richard was no brute and no Pursuer of evil but more like one enraged Because he thought that good rejected him.

Rosmarin accepts Gettner with all his faults. This is similar to God’s acceptance of all His creatures when he loves them for what they are and does not shun them because they are unlike Him. The Countess’ love acquires this divine quality. In order to comprehend Rosmarin’s agape, an understanding of Gettner’s character is necessary. An in-depth study of Gettner’s alienation has been presented in Chapter II. The Countess displays compassion to an individual who is indifferent, egoistic, callous, cynical and inhuman. In a world of uncertainty, Gettner sees one steady rock. He has to grudgingly admit that the Countess is the only sign of stability in an otherwise disorderly and vengeful world. His change is effected due to the opposing force of agape which is as intense as his depth of alienation. In her loyalty to him, she expects nothing in return and he is aware of it. When news of her illness and suspected death reaches him, he returns. He misunderstands her attitude but she explains that one has to be “elected into love” (TDLE 163). Gettner’s sudden reversal at the end to a man of integrity is the result of her continuous and persevering compassion. Gettner takes the first steps to becoming a new man. This he does unconsciously because though he had not meant it to be, he is drawn
into the orbit of her compassion and led to good. Her love has a revitalizing effect making Gettner grow into “a healthier state of being” (47).

This expansion in Gettner is made possible only because of the Countess’ acceptance of Gettner as a man. Her love is productive love and her relationship with Gettner is from the centre of her being. She thus displays care, responsibility, respect and knowledge. She cares for Gettner, though he has brought her unhappiness, she believes staunchly that she is responsible for him, she respects him as a person despite his mockery, taunts and his wounding of Stefan and she has knowledge of his every little need. She is also objective, responding to his every demand, unshaken. The depth of her humanity is seen in her words to Janik, concerning Gettner. “Life has a hope of him/Or he would never have lived.” (TDLE 118). Yet she has no wish to go against the ways of God. As a person she “graciously personifies the force which forbearance persisted in with fearless courage may exert on violent events.” (372) Rosmarin demonstrates an “active concern for the life and growth” (22) of Gettner despite his cynicism and contempt for others. This agape enables her to love even one who is to naturally lovable.

She commits herself without guarantee, giving herself completely with hope of his change. She believes Gettner will respond though she uses no force. Gettner has already been given up for lost by Belmann, Jakob and Stefan. Rosmarin is convinced that this attitude will only increase his determined self-contempt and rejection of others. Her belief is that a man will become what one considers him to be but will act according to the call one makes to him. (108)

In her selfless giving, risking her own life and that of her family, she can be equated with the Christ-figure. Christ is seen as the “tremendous Lover” He is open,
available to people, not judging, not condemning but healing, opening and liberating. This non-judgement and desire to heal implies a great “interior poverty” Rosmarin’s attitude to Gettner makes her travel the narrow way, in giving up so much for a man who anyone would term, her enemy. She suffers by his callous treatment of her daughter, his shooting of her son and the complete confusion that is brought by his re-entry into her life. But she merely turns her other cheek to him and puts into practice Christ’s dictum of loving the enemy. Thus she travels along the way of the Cross and into fellowship with the Crucified, most certain of the victory of love over hatred. Her love triumphs ultimately. Even as she dies, Gettner takes the initial steps to become a new man. The greatest love of all, that of Christ’s death for mankind’s salvation is symbolized here. Christ suffered like man, was crucified for the sins of man and was then resurrected. A human crucified for the sins of man and was then resurrected. A human being walks in the shadow of Christ and becomes very like Him if he willingly suffers privations for the love of another. The crucifixion of Christ assumes great significance due to this hypostatic union. Love undefiled by death is the characteristic that identifies Rosmarin with Christ. With her death, the fruits of her love are seen in Gettner’s change. This agape thus “expresses itself by forsaking oneself, forgetting oneself, for the sake of someone else.” True happiness can only be got by this kind of selfless love, which increases even as it is given away. In striving for perfection through love Rosmarin disregards the evil in Gettner and gives him her good. (170)

When an individual transforms himself as much as possible into God’s likeness he is able to model his life on His. Countess Rosmarin clearly fulfils the double commandment of loving God and man. Here is thus a productive love as it gives
freedom to Gettner to be what he is. Her persevering love towards Gettner is similar to abiding Providential love. Pursued by her compassion, Gettner’s position is akin to that of the protagonist of The Hound of Heaven, who tries to run away from the Divine yet is inexorably drawn to Him by the “unhurrying chase/And unperturbed pace” of God. The Countess in her death is rewarded with the change in Gettner. She is similar to Christ in her patient and persistent relationship with man, her “grandiose retaliation.” While Gettner hates the world and believes that the world is against him, Rosmarin thinks that he must live and do what life expects him to do. Through her actions, the Countess shows that she is a true believer in Providence. She is able to meet Gettner’s bitter hatred with an infinite compassion, “a correspondingly extravagant and unreasonable love” which is the point of religion. Her whole life is a prayer and a life of commitment, which reaches out sideways and brings others to her. Her type of living is relevant to the twentieth century as is evident from the statement of Ray Turner to John Bowker, regarding faith: “Faith is something you do. To me now faith is a verb. It’s not a noun. It’s a verb” (107) For the Countess, compassion arises naturally from her faith and her belief in the inherent goodness of man. Faith is what she does.

The Countess is prepared to be broken in the service of others even as Christ was. Christ as man was broken willingly in the service of mankind when He gave up His life on the Cross.

This mystic tradition remains alive in the participation of the congregation in the offering of the host during the Mass. This profound observance is of great significance in the life of Christians, even in the twentieth century. John Callaghan’s response to John
Bowker with reference to service towards one’s fellow men, elicits a reply that rests on the fundamentals of Christianity as essential now as it was in its origin.

The breaking of bread is not just something that happens on the altar: it’s a commitment that I make that I will be prepared to be broken myself in the service of others because of my love of God. (153-154)

Rosmarin’s response to Gettner and to all those around her is similar to the sense of commitment seen in Christ’s selfless giving of Himself to mankind. The Countess’ conduct epitomizes the words of the Gospel: “You must love the Lord your God with your whole heart, your whole soul, your whole strength and your whole mind, and your neighbour as yourself”. (27)

As the matriarch who heads her household, the Countess can be contrasted with Amy Monchensey of T. S. Eliot’s Family Reunion. Rosmarin presides, a benevolent figure, over her circle of family and friends. She is a mother figure, guide and comforter and ‘human providence’ to them. Amy Monchensey at Wishwood exerts a different kind of power altogether. Even as she waits to welcome Harry home, she is secretly relieved that Harry’s wife is no more, believing that she would have never fitted into the family” “She never would have been one of the family. She only wanted to keep him to herself.” (75) There is self-projection in Amy’s words as she unconsciously wishes to keep her son to herself. Her false love sees Harry as a possession which she can shape to her needs. This quality results in Harry breaking away from her. Mary, Harry’s cousin perceptively suggests that Amy willed the death of Harry’s wife to keep her son to herself. Rosmarin, on the other hand, attracts people to herself. Gettner, no blood
relation but a one-time son-in-law with no right to her affection at all, is drawn towards her and she defends him despite others’ resentment.

Rosmarin changes and influences those associated with her. Her goodness in an example for Gelda who has yet to attain the equilibrium of her mother. When she is confronted by Richard Gettner many years after her separation from him and after her happy marriage to Peter, Count Zichy, she is not untowardly disturbed. She believes and has a sense of regret that she has failed him once, and she should be compassionate towards him. When Gettner does not acknowledge her, she feels the need for recognition. But she feels that no hostility should be shown him nor a judgement made. Her mother’s influence on her is deep. Inspite of being hurt in youth by Gettner she is genuinely anxious about his safety. She pleads that he should stay when Stefan declares that Gettner should be left to save himself. When Gettner that Gettner should be left to save himself. When Gettner declares that he would go dust-licking and belly-crawling before he would give up life, and incurs the contempt of Belmann, Stefan and Jakob, Gelda is pained as Gettner destroys every way of coming to him. Even when Peter is taken hostage Gettner’s surrender can save him, Even when Peter is taken hostage and Gettner’s surrender can save him, Gelda’s compassion is like Rosmarin’s You know Richard was my husband; though It was only in a word, but still a word Stays in the mind and has its children too. Concern gives her courage to tell Gettner what his sickness is. Reacting to Gettener’s distrust of Stefan, she remarks:

Why should you trust anyone? It’s unlikely you can draw from the world what you never paid into it. Some people doubt most what they lack most.
She understands implicitly that he suffers from narcissism and self-projection. To her question why she cares for his safety she says truthfully that though she failed him as a wife she would guard him against death. Her pride as a woman has been hurt to a certain extent and there lies in her an eagerness to rectify her failure. When Gettner leaves telling no one, Gelda regrets giving him the impression that she has loved him as a wife. Her aim had been to try and prove that she should not fail him as a human being. However she has the humility to admit to Peter whom she truly loves that:

It may have been right. That first instinct, to put out with a lifeboat For Richard, but on to it scrambled Such a crew of pirates, my curiosity My pride, my ambition to succeed Where I failed before, my longing to discover What conversions to be made by love, We all began to sink.

This confession shows her integrity of character. In the midst of her happiness at the reunion with Peter she can still be concerned about the welfare of the Hungarians. Her selfless love embraces all men. In this she bears a marked resemblance to Rosmarin. Gelda’s ties with her family are strong. She does not blame Rosmarin for her first marriage and its failure for she confesses that she herself wanted to marry Gettner. She has an enduring love for Stefan and plays a great part in helping him recover after being wounded by Gettner. Gelda’s love for Peter is a rare love that combines trust and complete understanding of his need. Gelda and Peter are successful because they love, “fidelity means strength of character, an interior force, even a certain discipline”. At the same time they are independent. Peter allows Gelda to be her true self to Gettner and her in turn other implicitly and reassure each other from time to time Gelda can thus say:
I am Peter’s wife, and everything is so well with us, our marriage vows go on like
dancers, with no thought in the world to carry only to be as easy and loving as we are.

Due to mutual trust and independence they “create the conditions that allow self-
discovery” (163) in their marriage. Gelda, by her gift love makes Peter a giver too,
sharing in the joy of giving. Gelda’s love reaches out from one person, Peter, to embrace
the rest of mankind, proving true Fromm’s observation,

If I can say to somebody else “I love you,” I Must be able to say “I love in you
everybody, I love through you the world, I love in you also myself”. Peter becomes
what he is because he has such an exemplary love in Gelda. He helps her to realize
herself and when she acknowledges that she has loved only him: “You and I are the
truth.” (TDLE 145) Peter is able to say: “If that contents you/It will always content me.”
(TDLE 146) In Gelda is seen the steady growth of an all-encompassing love.

In Anath Bithiah of the Firstborn can be seen a variation of gift love. Here is
motherly love touched with divine. She also fits into the category of the ‘involved
spectator’ a characteristic which is developed to its fullest in Ana-Clara of A Yard of
Sun. Anath, daughter of a lion like Pharaoh and sister to a headstrong one is a match for
Seti, her brother. Her love for Moses and the conflicting love and loyalty to her brother
cause her suffering. She had loved and nurtured Moses the Israelite. Her love is a
redeeming one to both Moses and Seti She dares conflict of her love for both men, she
suffers anguish for her beloved Egypt as well. Though exiled from Egypt, Moses is yet
she harbours hopes for his return and never ceases to love him. “They have blotted him
out of the records, but not out/Of my memory.” (TF 59) Her intuition tells her that
Moses’ return will wreak havoc in her life. Seti wishes to use Moses as a tool for his own
advancement but Moses returns to free his own people. With a true understanding of Moses; nature Anath tells Seti that he can never win Moses over to Egypt’s side. Her motherly love is marked by a sense of intense suffering at having to be separated from Moses. She tries to keep this overwhelming love in check knowing Moses will never return to her. She surrenders to the inevitable but does not nurture hatred towards the alien Israelites. Their continuous deaths at the pyramids cut her heart and she wishes their freedom. This is selfless love which gives life to others.

Her love for Moses is almost an obsession but it does not discount or ignore anything else. Her heart has enough room to include her family and country. In this process of selfless loving, she puts herself out for that which she loves, loving and changing her life for that which is loved.(170) Anath works despite her conflict, both for Seti and her people, as well as Moses, her foster son, thus giving herself to all of them in whatever way and by whatever means the circumstances requires. By doing so, Anath passes the test of love and comes nearer to the will of Providence than she knows. She does not avoid the sufferings inherent in all loves but accepts them in spite of the hurt.(112)

Anath’s love is neither idolatrous nor sentimental. What helps her love to be all-embracing is the quality of the ‘involved spectator’ in her. Anath loves Moses but fears his influence on Rameses. “I would rather infect him with something less dubious/Than the blood of Moses” (TF 90). When Rameses dies, she knows that she has nothing to call to her. She suffers anguish for ten years at being separated from Moses, but understands his sufferings. Yet she is objective enough to see how his moves will create havoc in Egypt. She argues.
What is this divinity Which is no more dexterity than a man Rips up good things to make a different kind Of good? For any God’s sake, if you come here To get Justice, also give justice.

But she does not hate Moses’ God or the Israelites. She loves Seti enough to will him to do good. His egoism, obstinacy and streak of cruelty do not prevent her from confronting him directly, with his deception of Moses seven times. She urges him to face reality.

You tricked Moses And what has come it I would bring back to you Until pity come out of you like blood to the knife

The land so precious to her is laid desolate
…naked To the bone, and men are naked beyond the bone, Down to the barest nakedness which until now Hope kept covered up.

She tells Seti that he must face the consequences of his action and … climb and sit On the throne of this reality and be A king That she is an ‘involved spectator’, a participant yet objective, suffering yet resigned is epitomized in her words of deep feeling at Egypt’s calamity I looked out I seemed to look within, into myself, When I stood there and looked out over Egypt.

Anath is the ‘involved spectator’ looking within and without, the voice of Egypt whose parting with Moses is inevitable. Her love is a magnificent obsession which nevertheless acknowledge that Moses will and must be free, that he cannot be chained either for herself or for Egypt. Though they are aliens, she has human concern for the Israelites’ desire for freedom. But she loves the Egyptians more and fears that Seti’s broken promises to Moses will harm them irrevocably. Her love for Seti does not blind her to his faults as a tyrannic Pharaoh and she courageously takes him to task. She is not,
mother and friend to Rameses and Teusret. The only time she falters is when she finds herself unable to give enough to save Rameses, and for which she says Moses is the cause. What is my life? It went to be your shadow. For fifteen years It has been nothing but a level of darkness Cast on the world by you. I made myself Your mother, and then loved you and desired you. Till you became the best and the worst of the world. The water that kept me alive to thirst.

In the Firstborn, as the will of the Divine works, Anath is seen losing both Rameses and Moses. Another variation of a woman capable of giving love selflessly is seen in Alizon Eliot of The Lady’s Not for Burning. Unlike Anath who has experienced pain, and yet loves, Alizong, a seventeen year old has learnt of Divine love from a convent. The love that she brings into Richard’s life is love given instinctively and whole-heartedly. Childlike and innocent, she is unaware that her youth and physical charm can bring out the best or the worst in men. Though she is engaged to Humphrey Devize, Nicholas Devize wants her for his wife. When she enters the Mayor’s residence, Richard sees her as a threat to him.

O God, God, God, God, God. I can see such trouble! Is life sending a flame to nest in my flax? For pity’s sake. Even Thomas Mendip objectively comments that she is a sweet and pretty noose to get caught in.

Alizon is to the three men- Humphrey, Nicholas and Richard-an “April anarchy” in different ways. Unwittingly Alizong calls forth in Humphrey and Nicholas only the assertive seducer quality, so that they fight each other to win her. They see only the Eve
Her, filled as they are with lust and covetous designs. Her attitude on the contrary is one of innocent wonder at first, followed by instinctive knowledge. Initially when Nicholas says that he has destroyed Humphrey, her sense of fairness makes her say that she has to be Humphrey’s wife, as promised. She allows that Nicholas is mixed up and must be dealt with patiently. Later she understands that she can never love Humphrey. But she does not voice his despicability. Her knowledge of Humphrey’s true nature brings forth her comment.

I think I have never met Humphrey. I have met him less and less the more I have seen him. She is quite convinced that she has to run away from a place where laws do not live in the heart. In contrast, her love for Richard is true.

But whenever my thoughts are cold and I lay them against Richard’s name, they seem to rest on the warm ground where summer sits as golden as a humble bee.

She is drawn instinctively towards Richard’s goodness. In the sudden turmoil brought into her till-then well-ordered world, Richard is her anchor. Her warm creative love is aroused giving him confidence in himself. When Richard wonders if she can love him for what he is, with his faults, her answer overwhelms him.

I have become a woman Richard, because I love you. I know I was a child three hours ago. And yet I love you as deeply as many years could make me. And less deeply than many years will make me.

In the midst of a world of heartless laws, Alizon finds true love. Her love makes her more independent because it makes her stronger and happier yet one with the loved person to the extent that individuality seems to be extinguished for the moment and in this experience of love lies sanity.
In Richard’s case, the poor orphan found in the charity box, finds that the homing pigeon has come home to roost in his nest, setting him on joyous fire. The lost child finds himself being loved for what he is. Filled with humility and happiness, Alizon’s revelation of her love fills him with wonder: “What have I done or said to make it possible/That you should love me?” (TLNEB 193) He describes his condition as a new birth: “Happiness seems to be weeping in me a/I suppose it should, being newly born”. (TLNEB 193) Alizon’s love is seen as being akin to creative love which brings out the best in man. In its creativity it resembles Divine love. Through it, Richard realizes his own worth, and all that he wishes is to give Alizon a good world such as she has given him. Love thus is the life force which not only cures and revitalizes his mind and organism but proves itself to be the decisive factor of vital, mental, moral and social well-being. (93)

Even as they grow, united in thought and deed, they ermain individuals working with a perfect understanding of each other’s needs. Their love flourishes as its foundation is divine and self-less gift love in the most perfect human form. This asks nothing, for out of a true concern and understanding the lovers help each other as no one else can because “to love a person means to want that person to become more of that person.” (169) Alizon’s gift love is evidence that the Mary in her dominates the Eve. (107) She acknowledges God’s kindness in their coming together. Though she remarks, with a touching faith that evokes humour that she must consult St. Teresa and St. Christopher on what is to be done, it depicts her implicit faith in Divine providence. Like St. Teresa, Alizon values all life, especially innocent life. She has a sense of solidarity with others while being anchored in God. (112)
Though Alizon and Richard run away together, concern for others’ lives and for truth brings them back to save Jennet Jourdemayne and Thomas Mendip. This is at a risk to their own happiness. In their happiness, in their love they still reach out with this compassion to the helpless thus showing that Divine love or gift love is a source of creativity, concern and caring. Alizon’s belief in Providential will guiding her love is clear.

Our father God moved many lives to show you to me I think that is the way it must have happened It was complicated, but very kind.

Her words are reminiscent of Monica Claverton-Ferry’s confession to her fiancé Charles in the Elder Statesman. I’ve loved you from the beginning of the world Before you and I were born, the love was always there That brought us together.(107)

There is selflessness in Alison’s and Monica’s love and both commit themselves to a life of gift love. In both instances gift love dominates need love. Fry asserts through Alizon that the love of husband and wife will be steadfast when based on the foundation of selfless giving which comes as near as possible in approach to the gift love of God.

Through Perpetua in Venus Observed Fry depicts that love is a vital force that changes life for the better. Perpetua is “fresh and eager, too young still to know her own mind” (28) She confesses after having shot at the apple offered to her by the Duke of Altair, that she had been actively involved in the movements of the Society for the Desecration of Ancient and Modern Monumental Errors and also that she had lately been released from prison. “We destroyed or tried to destroy, whatever we loathed/ as bad.” (VO 179) But she admits truthfully that it was only exasperation and not achievement that resulted. She now decides to discover herself. Her arrival coincides with the end of
the eclipse. This is symbolic as she bring light and self-realization to others as well as to herself. To the Duke, who desires a wife in the autumn of his life, she seems to be a God-send, symbolic of his craving for perpetual love. His need love with its destructive potential comes into conflict with the life force in Perpetua which can be satisfied only by true love. Perpetua belongs to the category of women for whom love is a creative force, as seen in her relationship with others. Her love for her father is so great that she aggress to Dominic’s suggestion that she marry the Duke to silence questions of her father’s iniquities. She decides to do so with great difficulty. Though she is selfless, the conflict is evident when she finds it painful to lose her independence. “I’m not to be myself I see/I’m sad to see myself go.” (VO 186).

In spite of her father’s faults, she loves him enough to save him in this rather impetuous way. Like all women she finds the Duke attractive but is uncertain of him. Though she partners him in archery, she is doubtful of the consequences. Uncertainty marks her agreement to accompany him to the observatory and a sense of shame forbids her from disclosing her decision to Edgar. But truth and courage come uppermost to rescue Perpetua in the crisis. Even as the Duke moves to cause him image to be reflected in the mirror, Perpetua says: “It seemed to be your son.” (VO 214) When she realizes that the Duke wants to marry her despite Reedbeck’s iniquity, she observes: This isn’t how I mean to lose my way, by force of circumstantial Evidence. When I lose my way I shall lose it in my own time, and by my own misguided Sense of direction.

She declares bravely that she made no presence of loving him and shows her gladness that it was Edgar’s reflection she saw in the mirror.
In a moment of panic during the fire, fear for her life forces her to say that she loves the Duke, while it is actually life that she loves. After the rescue she confesses that it was fear that made her declare so. Even as the Duke realizes his mistake she has no hatred for him. She does not intend to hurt him. The experience disturbs her into uncertainty which makes her admit at Edgar’s confession of love, don’t say this now. I’m still remembering I can give pain, and that in itself is loss of liberty.

She accepts his love and understands that her life is irrevocably bound to those around her. No one is separate from another; how difficult That is. I move and the movement goes from life To life all round me. And yet I have to be myself. And what is my freedom becomes another person’s compulsion.

It is this mystery of life, love that comes to her as a motive power wherein she knows Edgar is a part. Perpetua’s entry into their lives is important to the Duke as well as to Edgar. In spite of his capacity for charitable love towards his employees, the Duke is lost in the search for true love which he defines as that which “will never, can never, know what it was” (VO 209). He is lost in self-love and narcissistically inclined. This blinds him to the hurt that he causes women, especially Rosabel Fleming. It is Perpetua’s love for Edgar that removes the scales from his eyes. The experience of the fire further reveals to him that he must forgive Rosabel. With forgiveness, his desire for love is mellowed and he wants a reassuring placid love in the ebb of his life. The Duck has the potential to change his selfish need love to a gift love. He worships eros to such a degree that it present the danger of destroying others. But knowledge of the need to forgive and realization of Rosabel’s suffering for love saves him from destroying himself and others.(101)
Edgar blossoms forth into an individual due to Perpetua’s inspiring youth and love. Till her arrival, he is eclipsed by his father and forced to choose a wife for him. When he begins to love Perpetua, he acquires a healthy jealousy towards his father, devoid of hatred, but with a wish that he would curb his romantic inclinations. Edgar confesses his love to Perpetua as he is inspired to assert himself. He whole-heartedly overlooks Perpetua’s visit to the observatory. He also acknowledges that love made him assertive and thus rewarded him with Perpetua’s love. Perpetua’s love has the latent powers to develop into an all-embracing force. She is willing to surrender her independence to save her father. She loves Dominic in spite of his prudish nature and is repentant for misleading the Duke. Fry presents love as a force that is productive, bringing self-realization and inherent goodness in its wake, notwithstanding the sacrifices it entails.

In the category of women motivated by love, belong a second group in whom eros is capable of ascending to agape. This love is life-giving. This distinctive feature is seen in Jennet Jourdemayne of The lady’s Not for Burning and Dynamene of a Phoenix Too Frequent. An interesting characteristic of both these women is that they undergo alienation themselves, move out of it and become instruments of de-alienation for others. Jennet glimpses the absurd when confronted by the irrationality of the world. But love is a stronger force in her and hence she is able to come out of this sense of meaninglessness to help Thomas Mendip to face a senseless world. Dynamene’s death wish alienates her from life but her newly discovered love for Tegues triumphs to save her and Tegeus himself from death.
A detailed analysis of Jennet’s movement into alienation has been made in Chapter II. It is at the depths of fragmentation that Jennet is drawn towards Mendip. Mendip attempts to draw all the attention to his demand to be hanged, reiterating that he killed Skipps. It is evident that Mendip begins to be affected by the irrationality of the possible burning of Jennet. His desire for death increases due to inability to tolerate the world as well as fear of love for Jennet. This is hinted at.” Why not hang me/Before it’s too late?” (TLNFB 149). Jennet pleads for life but to no avail. This elicits Mendip’s demand, “Mr. Mayor, hang me for pity’s sake/For God’s sake hang me, before I love that woman.” (TLNFB 150) After their arrest Jennet feels the horror of her world increasing and cannot reconcile her ideal of the factual world with the actual irrational one. Thomas Mendip with his paradoxical cynical existential outlook, yet appreciation of the mystery of life, condemns her factual attitude. This adds to her perplexity. At her threatened tears, Mendip can take no more. He tries to impress on her that life is not worth living. Mendip seeks to protect Jennet from more pain because he has unwillingly enough fallen in love with her. He employs the ruse of cynicism and sarcasm to save himself from a fall as well, that is, the fall from his desire to be hanged. Mendip has had and still has a complete awareness of and admiration for the mysterious complexity of the universe. But his experience of life has brought home to him that man does not measure up to the world. Mendip is alienated from man but not from God. Since in his eyes man does not meet his ideal, he experiences a sense of fragmentation and nurtures the death wish. He believes that in his voluntary death the ultimate perfection of heroism will be achieved and he can reach the ideal. Thus Jennet’s entry at this crucial moment has all the dangers of a deterrent as Mendip knows only too well that the “mantrap of
love” is life-giving and can be strong enough to prevent him from dying. In his advice to Jennet to rest in the mystery of the universe and its creations he reveals that she too is a very attractive mystery, thus disclosing the disturbed state of his emotions: “And you have your own damnable mystery too. Which at this moment I could do well without” (TLNFB 171). Just as he fears, Jennet reveals her feelings for him: You’ve cast your fishing-net Of eccentricity, Caught me when I was already lost And landed me with despairing gills on your own strange beach.

Both of them thus accuse each other of having disturbed their respective states of mind, Mendip of his fixed intention to die and Jennet of her demand for rationalism. But this shows that they have been drawn towards each other by a mutual attraction which is not sexual. They have discovered that each is different from the ordinary man and woman. Mendip is aware of the danger of loving Jennet and that it will clash with his firmly held pessimism. Jennet is drawn irrevocably into the wonder world of his ideals and his determination to achieve heroism through chosen death. The love that grows between them is therefore not physical. This is in contrast to the manner in which Nicholas regards her as attractive evil and Humphrey later offers her freedom if she is willing to give him her body. Fry thus brings forth the concept that love goes deeper than sex and it is different from lust or sexual attraction. (76) The elements of care and concern are evident in Jennet’s response to Mendip. “It means I care whether you live or die.” (TLNFB172) Mendip still wishes to die and so fights back with the weapon of his existential outlook presenting as ugly a picture as he possibly can of humanity and emotions (TLNFB 172). This vision is the result of his harrowing experience as a soldier leaving him with the existential outlook of the absurdity and meaninglessness of man’s
existence and his alienation from the universe. But Jennet’s budding compassion and concern which is love, tide over this projected image. The fact that he can feel so much and desire death brings forth her forthright remark:

If you’re afraid of your shadow falling across Another life, shine less brightly upon yourself, Step back into the rank and file of men, Instead of preserving the magnetism of mystery And your curious passion for death. You are making yourself A breeding-ground for love and must take the consequences.

She shows courage in confronting Mendip and to her, man is a redeemable creature. His image of man as a decomposing vegetable only increases her love for him, as it affects her deeply. She asserts that man is desirable. Love is inevitable in a man. It is part of his life and Fry shows that in the case of a woman it is even more strong, making her determined not to lose it.

You may be decay and a platitude of flesh, but I have no other such memory of life. You may be corrupt as ancient apples, well then Corruption is what I most willingly harvest.

That she is willing to give up her all for his sake and to convince him of the need to live is evident when she continues.

You are Evil, Hell, the father of Lies, if so Hell is my home and my days of good were a holiday: Hell is my hill and the world slopes away from it into insignificance. I have come suddenly upon my heart and where it is I see no help for.

This marks the turning point in Jennet’s life when she is stirred out of the factual complacency and self-sufficiency of her independent existence awakened to an inherent
compassion for another being who she knows is above the ordinary, due to his extreme sensitivity and awareness of the vagaries of the world.

Her confession of love to Mendip is mistaken for admission of guilt by Tappercoom. When the sentence is given, Mendip demands fair play and the gallows for him. When Jennet faints at his violence towards the chaplain, Mendip has to once again acknowledge her growing power over him. “Oh, the delicate mistiming of women; (TLNFB 176) Love thus shatters his resolution. When Mendip is given a sentence that he should answer for his pessimism by an evening of socializing, he insists on Jennet being a guest as well. His decision is to face the inevitable by using himself up before vanishing the next day. He still thinks that life is not worth living and declares that he will no longer have any further interest in the world after the forced socializing. On the night of the party, Humphrey’s lascivious offer of freedom to Jennet only strengthens Mendip’s conviction that man is merely a lug-worm. His concern that Jennet should not give herself to Humphrey only rubs her the wrong way. She reminds him of his indifference to her fate and his advice that she should look as though she liked dying. At this point Mendip is forced to reveal his love for her.

All right! You’ve done your worst. You force me to tell you the disastrous truth. I love you. A misadventure so intolerable, hell could not do more

The depth to which her concern has aroused him to love, despite his defence is seen when he says,

Don’t say again That this doesn’t concern me, or I shall say, That you needn’t concern yourself with to-morrow’s burning (TLNFB 2002). Thus Thomas is drawn out
of the circle that he has drawn for himself. Yet he is aware that Jennet is part of the world which he is trying hard to leave.

I love you, perfectly knowing You’re nothing but a world out of the mouth Of that same planet of almighty blemish Which I long to leave.

The strong conflict which he undergoes is clear as his increasing awareness of his desire to love and save Jennet battles with his obstinate wish to be hanged. He is unwilling to accept this new love and still associates the emotions with nauseating images.

I shall lie in my grave With my hands clapped over my ears, to stop your music From riddling me as much as the meddling worm.

The entrance of Skipps and Richard and Alizon solve the puzzle and bring relief to the city authorities who are thankful that they do not have to hang Thomas or burn Jennet. Jennet is convinced that she can help Mendip to live. Love is more powerful than the sense of alienation. She merely asks him to put up with her for fifty years. Though Mendip says that she will not change the world.

Perhaps I could draw you over my eyes for a time But the world sickens me still.

Jennet wisely assures him that his death cannot change the world, and it may affect only her. Though they have to leave the town to start anew, fortified with their love for and belief in each other, they are willing to face the world. Ultimately a forsworn misanthrope who ironically enough believes in the beauty of creation, learns that love can indeed make a world of intolerable men, an endurable place. It is thus love selflessly given that brings about a change in his attitude. Though the world will continue to sicken Mendip, love will help him to endure. This is clear in that he no
longer harbours the death wish. What Fry seeks to put forward here is that love can
effect great changes in the minds and hearts of men who have faced the “boundary
situation” (116) and who can be brought back to endure and hope. It can be expected that
the lovers will be changed by each other through their love and Mendip, more so. What
they feel towards each other is reminiscent of Eliot’s play the Elder Statesman where
Charles expresses his love for Monica Claverton Ferry: “You are changing me/And I am
changing you.” (13) What Monica tells her father with compassion, is also applicable to
Jennet’s feeling towards Mendip.

Monica: I think I should only love you the better Father The more I know about
you, I should understand you better.(84)

Jennet shows her deep understanding of Mendip’s existential struggle and desire
to be hanged for the sake of proving to the world that man must change. Fry also
demonstrates the healing and positive qualities of love. Mendip is saved from a needless
death by the stronger urge to love a fellow being who is a manifestation of the Creator’s
mystery even as the universe is. Through Jennet, Mendip is able to look on other men as
faulty beings yet appreciable, each in his own way. Thus love effects a change in Mendip
whose mental outlook has been reduced to an existential one. The vivifying power of
love with its healing of mental and spiritual disturbances cannot be underestimated. Fry
demonstrates that existential anguish can be redeemed by the power of love. Love
triumphs over the collective emotionalism of an irrational mob, the superstition of law-
bound town authorities and resuscitates true humanity and brotherhood. Fry also points
out that love between man and woman is the path that leads to a better, more fulfilling
love of the Absolute. This reasserts that the true love of partners in a marriage can be the path or pointer to perfect union with God. (64)

The triumph of love over despair and desolation is once again dealt with in A Phoenix Too Frequent. If the play is misunderstood one may condemn Dynamene for so easily letting new love triumph over old. The possibility of progression from eros to agape is seen here. Dynamene’s resolve to mourn at Virilius’ tomb and her fidelity astounds Tegeus who falls in love with her. Dynamene obstinately rejects light and life and resolves that Tegeus should leave her to mourning and death. But her natural instinct being for life, she accepts Tegeus. Offer of wine. Realizing that he is not a shade from Hades, she begins to be attracted by his practicality and charm. His confession that she has made the world a better place for him elicits from Dynamene an invitation to remain. He is willing to accompany her to Hades but admits he cannot leave her. It strike him that he loves her too much to lose her. Further conversation leads to the discovery that they might have met at Pyxa as children. This strengthens Tegeus’ conviction that she is meant for him and he born to love her. Dynamene names him Chromis for its crisp bread-like sound. This confirms the symbolism of the life giving nature of Tegeus’ love. Though she longs to look her best for him, she is perplexed by her emotions. His pleas arouse a conflict in her which seems to tear her apart. Yet her instinct is not averse to this new – found love. It becomes a stronger force which triumphs over her death wish and makes her confess that her entire being covets him, and she longs to be “creation”. (APTF 38). Dynamene waits for Tegeus to return from checking the bodies. She realizes her mistake in keeping Doto with her and tells her to live on. Dynamene realizes the crime of extending her grief to include another. When Gegeus comes back with the horrifying
news that one of the bodies has been taken away and he must die, Dynamene urges him to life. This she does with an even greater spirit than Tegeus did to vivify her. Tegeus’ despair is total, Dynamene uses all her power to lift him out of it. When she learns that one body is lost she retorts that this cannot be an obstacle to their love: “Are we going to allow a body that isn’t there to come between us?” (APTF 45) Her response to him is fired with the desire to live and to make him live, a reversal of their positions before the dawning of love for each other. When Tegeus says that he will be hanged, she declares. “No,. it’s monstrous! Your life is yours, Chromis.” (APTF 45) Tegeus declares that his life has never been his, and this is antithetical to his claim that he had been born to love Dynamene.

And I was never born To have life. Then for what? To be had by it And so are we all. This for Tegeus is the boundary situation (116) and he decides to take his own life, to avoid dishonour. Dynamene cries out, Am I supposed to love the corporal or you? It’s you I love from head to foot and out to the ends of your spirit. What shall I do if you die?

Despite her pleas he declares that he has no option but death. Dynamene now uses all her strength to convince him that he is not to die.

Give my blessing to your desertion of me? Never, Chromis, never. Kiss you and then Let you go? Love you, for death to have you? Am I to be made the fool of courts martial? Who are they who think they can discipline souls Right off the earth? What discipline is that? Chromis, love is the only discipline And we’re the disciples of love. I hold you to that.

But Tegeus can think only of the regulations that will give him death. Then Dynamene comes out with the astounding declaration that Virilius’ body can replace the
lost one. Tegeus is initially horrified, but Dynamene asserts, How little you can understand. I loved His life not his death. And now we can give his death the power of life. It is now that Dynamene truly loves Virilius and Tegeus.

It is the revitalizing power of love that brings back both Tegeus and Dynamene from the brink of the dark force of self-destruction. Love effects a change in both of them. In the initial stages Dynamene is consumed by the desire for death, which is to a degree self-love. She loves herself so much that she cannot bear being left alone, in a chaotic world. The death instinct is thus terribly powerful and generated by frustrated self love. (19) Love in the shape of the sensitive but practical Tegeus comes to Dynamene and wins her over to life. Love becomes the life force within her. Some of the practical good sense of Tegeus is transferred to Dynamene in her attitude to the world. Thus her emergence from out of the depths of melancholy, into love gives her a new and broader insight to life.

His love redeems her from death, and she replaces her idealism with some of his more practical aspects of personality. This exchange is exemplified in her scheme to utilize the body of Virilius to save Tegeus in a final “sacrifice” which gives “death/The power of life.”

In both the lovers can be seen this ability to forget oneself in giving selflessly to the other. This reciprocity serves to strengthen their love. In the true union of a man and woman, each must be “illumined by loving awareness of the unique freedom of the other.” (60) Tegeus realizes this, that true love means freedom for the beloved. He therefore does not bind Dynamene to constancy after his death. Fry does not deal merely with sexual love. Sexual love or eros is part of a more fulfilling love or Absoluet Love
seen in Christianity. Christianity decrees that love in marriage ought to be physical and spiritual at the same time. (110) Fry suggests that love is a cosmic force and through it one can reach greater heights of humanity in the progression towards Divine Love. As James Woodfield says:

Through the suggestion that love is a cosmic force, Fry links the eros of sexual love with the agape of brotherly or divine love. Similarly, an appreciation of the world of the senses is not opposed to an appreciation of the spiritual world—rather it is an essential step towards it. (13)

This theme is repeated in many of Fry’s plays. Thomas Mendip of The Lady’s Not for Burning is brought towards the first steps of brotherly love through love for one individual, Jennet.

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Embedded in A Phoenix Too Frequent are the words of Christ, “If any man would save his life, he must lose it.” (35) Paradoxically enough Christ does not ask man to die in the physical body but to die to himself in the sense of awakening to selflessness and the desire to give. It can thus be seen as a death to oneself and a resurrection in Christ.
The individual becomes aware of the need to live for others. This according to Thomas Merton is not escapism or flight form ourselves, for the best way to love ourselves is to love others not forgetting to love ourselves in the right way. (16)

Thus Dynamane who loves herself in the wrong way to want to kill herself, is drawn out of this by Tegeus’ love and in turn learns to love him end give herself to him so as to reaffirm in him the need to live. Her love for Virilius too takes on a new aspect. She no longer mourns his death but sees his life as one well lived and his death as that which give life to her and Tegeus. The Christian context is made complete when through the body of the dead Virilius, life and hope are given to the union of Dynamene and Tegeus. Even as Christ gives life through His death, Virilius becomes the agent of life and he earns Dynamene’s gratitude and true emotional love. Through the play Fry also confirms that love is the instrument that will end irrational self-destruction and killing, not ancient Greece alone but in any age. James Wood field notes that “The assertion of Phoenix is that in any era, love can transcend senseless killing.” (15) Thus Fry puts forth the answer to man’s problem of endless strife and misunderstanding in the redeeming force of love which has to move from one individual to include the many. He calls for the greatest love of all, agape, for without this nothing can be done for man’s betterment. Fry believes that nothing makes sense unless man admits that “No man is an island, entire of itself, every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.” (21) Love is thus, a force that can effect unity.

Another type of woman found in Fry’s plays may be termed the all-embracing woman. The characteristic quality of this woman is her all-seeing nature. Generally attractive physically, she attracts others to herself, and is ready to give love of an
ennobling kind, mainly because she herself has understood life through an evolution of experience. Her love is philia, love for others which displays the capacity to rise to agape. The ‘involved spectator’ feature can be attributed to this particular type. In Fry’s plays three such women can be seen. They are Ana-Clara of A Yard of Sun and Hilda Taylor-Snell and Jessie Dill of Venus Observed. The character of Anath Bithiah who also fits into the ‘involved spectator’ category has already been discussed.

In Ana-Clara the role of the ‘involved spectator’ is seen at its fullest. The name ‘Ana-Clara’ is symbolic and depicts one of Fry’s most objective yet involved characters. ‘Ana-Clara’ is derived from the word “anaclastic” which means “to send back.” It pertains to refraction. This is in keeping with her role which is to bring back to others and especially to the alienated Roberto, a sense of realization of himself and of others. Ana Clara’s entrance is like stillness in the storm. She enters unannounced, when Roberto and Luigo are having a fight. They learn that she is to be the new occupant of the Palazzo del Traguardo. Though her appearance discloses that she is from the upper class, her charm and understanding endear her immediately to Angelino and Luigi. Only Roberto with his bitter cynicism against the rich is hostile towards her, caught at a disadvantage by her quick perception of his inimical mood. Faithful to Edmonodo, she does not give him away when Luigi asks about him. With Edmondo’s arrival, the astonishment is replaced by a welcome, and then by a feeling of resentment that Edmondo had never bothered to know the torture of the spirit that they have experienced during war. Ana-Clara is quick to spring to Edmondo’s defence and confesses his relentless affection for the family, making them live in her mind. Thus she says:
From the day I first met him his guiding thought has been to come home with his arms crowded with blessings it became my purpose, too.

She senses instinctively that Roberto resents Edmondo’s return and attributes it to jealousy and anger. She answers frankly his question as to how Edmondo has gained so much wealth.

Why ask me? What he wants you to know he will certainly tell you. It’s not very generous to let a brother’s success fill you with spleen.

She is moreover willing to reserve her judgement on him, convinced that only time can tell. Her honesty sets her apart and so does her direct manner, which often takes Roberto unawares. She says very realistically.

You could suspend judgement on him, and perhaps on me till you know me better - as I do on you, in spite of all provocation.

All she asks for is to give a man a chance. Her ability not to condemn even when provoked is one of her characteristic qualities. But she is no saint, only a very human and perceptive woman, who loves to build a house like any ordinary woman. This makes her approachable and life-like. She says:

Women prefer to spin a home, out of the belly like a spider, not to be laid in it like a cuckoo’s egg. Her relationship with Roberto is a precarious one and she is careful as she knows he wants to hurt her and is himself highly sensitive. In spite of his hostility, she is quick to praise his genial way with his poor patients.

You made them laugh. You somehow changed each room into a little ark bobbing on the flood. That certainly opened my eyes. I wasn’t to know you kept a sense of humour curled up in your black bag.
With great intuition she tells him that he has meant her to see him involved in his work with the poor largely because she is rich. She does not hesitate to be truthful.

What touched me was that you wanted me to see the work you were doing, wanted me to see it. And not as one of the unconverted being offered salvation; As a woman welcome to share it.

Her complete understanding and keen perception of his character renders Roberto ashamed of himself. But he baits her again when Cambriccio the rider employed by Edmondo to win the Palio becomes sick and Edmondo is forced to seek some other means. Roberto retorts that only Edmondo’s vanity is hurt and he does not care for the victims. He adds, “I should like to haul you by that elegant neck/Up and down the land, till you saw the truth.” (AYOS 65) Taxed to her uttermost she reveals what she never intended to, that she had been born in a slum. She relates a graphic account of her experience.

At five I was a better beggar than all the nuns Of Portugal, and as sharp as an adult rat.(AYOS 65)

She adds that she loved acting the part of a rich woman, but his nagging had made her confess the truth. With acute insight she tells Roberto that his weakness lies in suspecting others: “You don’t believe in people who find their own way. /You suspect them” (AYOS 65). She pins down his suspiciousness and curiosity. “You don’t trust what they are now/Unless you know how they came to be what they are.” (AYOS 65). She discloses quite dispassionately her experiences as dissatisfied actress, ditched pupil-mistress and finally a teacher of Portuguese to foreign businessman. That she values acceptance is clear from her description of Edmondo’s love for her.
This time I could love from a level start, He and I were climbing the same pitch, Though Edmondo had the impressive male advantage Of being ruthless. Bless him, he could have bought a real duchess, but he settled for silve-gilt. And no matter how far I stretched my arms No walls were there, nothing to frown on me.

She is cautious when Roberto says quite frankly that they are attracted to each other. Later when Grazia admits that she has been partly the cause for Cesare’s betrayal, and Roberto regrets that Grazia had not had the courage to tell him nor he the insight to help, Ana-Clara helps them both by explaining to Grazia that remorse had made her wounded and guilt conscious. When Cesare returns it is again the perceptive Ana-Clara who understands Edmondo’s reluctance to face him. She knows that Edmondo is Terrified of losing The self – confidence that worked his wonders Afraid of seeing himself in the old mirror, And now, I can see, afraid of Cesare’s shadow And the war he hasn’t experienced. Afraid Of losing the person he has worked so hard to making a reality.

At the same time she only loves him the more for it. His fear increases her love and humanity for she tells Roberto that she will remain faithful to Edmondo. He gives me the patience I need to make my mistakes, which you would never give me And the leisure I need to realize myself, How far my mind, unhounded, and my free senses Will take me, which you, would never give me.

This shows that she is indeed an ‘involved spectator’ experiencing and later reflecting in tranquility on the experience, assimilating her learning and in the process becoming truly human, loving and caring. Her true conception of marriage has not been easily arrived at, having had experience with men who were not human or understanding,
who treated her as a mere thing. Her attitude to her marriage is that of a mature individual and one that believes in the sacredness of wedlock in Christianity, which sees that Edmondo is to her an individual, who is a free and creative source of a gift of love and meaning, and whose love has to be reciprocated. This knowledge is not selfishly stored by Ana-Clara. She uses it to understand the deep love between Roberto and Grazia. She acts as the eye opener who tells Roberto that his attempt to seduce her died with the knowledge of her humble beginnings. Roberto does not try to deny the truth and Ana-Clara forgivingly says, “None of this has any significance/ Beside the plain fact that you love Grazia.” (AYOS 95) When Roberto has to acknowledge silently this too, Ana-Clara wisely remarks.

I know. I saw it take you by surprise When you turned and rent Edmondo. You hadn’t bothered To mark its gradual height on the kitchen door.

It’s much taller than you imagined, isn’t it?  
It is with compassion and a wealth of understanding that she helps the confused and cynical Roberto to find himself and to confess to a love that has been growing unawares steadily in him. She is also totally alive to the mental agonies of others. Alfio is faced with the alternative of saving his mother’s life or riding the race and losing her. When he was to decide and is tormented, she declares, even as the others eager for a win for the parish try to persuade him not to take it too hard.

It is hard, It’s impossibly hard. It’s ethically, emotionality, I’m on Alfio’s side. I don’t care about the race, which was going to be all love and excitement for me, not any more. What does it matter who wins? (AYOS 88)

Though Edmondo with his emphasis on money asks her when she has taken on the role of a suffering mother-goddess, the answer she gives him, though apparently
flippant shows the extent to which she has understood her husband. “I might teach you to
play it when you have the time.” (AYOS 89) She hints that he is too materialistic,
complacent and unaware that compassion is vital to understand people. She knows that
he uses other people to convince himself of his power. Her compassion includes
Angelino and his family, Giosetta, Grazia and Cesare Scapare as well as Alfio. She too
learns that people cannot be made to change be made to change their way of life
overnight. The Palio and its colour, tradition and excitement convince her however that
people will change with time.

All though the afternoon I felt as though the barriers were breaking between our
world and another.

Ana-Clara is thus the ‘involved spectator; part of each experience, learning from
it, contributing to others’ realization and later understanding herself from her action.
Hers is an impartial love and the capacity to do what is best for those whom she loves.
She succeeds in opening out a new vista for the alienated Roberto who I s caught in the
conflict of loving his family, wanting the best for them and fearing sudden intrusion. Her
kind of love is agape; a giving of herself freely to others to increases their happiness.
Through her fry shows how the love of Christ is present among men. Fry emphasizes the
ties of brotherhood, the need to regard all men as brothers and communicate with them in
a spirit of love. Through Ana- Clara, Fry accentuates the importance of family
relationships. This again is one of the significant teachings of Christianity, for the family
offers the first step beyond self–love (27) Ana – Clara understands the need for love to
bind members of the family. She can be contrasted to Ruth of Pinter’s Homecoming. In
the Homecoming there is a clear antagonism between the father Max and his sons Joey
and Lenny. It is Fred’s wife Ruth who comes into this family and instead of uniting them in familial love, seeks to satisfy herself with no thought given to the sanctity of marriage. With incredible nonchalance Ruth covets and accepts the position of a prostitute in the family as she says: “All aspects of the agreement and conditions of employment would have to be clarified to our mutual satisfaction before we finalized the contract.” She also callously rejects Ted her husband.

Ana-Clara is presented as a lovable and loving daughter-in-law. She has started loving the family from Edmondo’s description of them. Unlike Ruth she has no self-love or vanity and harbours no suspicions about the family. She dispenses love and good humour as naturally as the sun gives warmth and light. Fry uses her as the embodiment of compassion and enveloping love by which she becomes the mirror which reflects to the others what they are. She herself tells Roberto, “As for me, I reflected the light behind your head/and made you turn to look.” (AYOS 96). Ana-Clara reflects the optimism of love. Love does not seek to bring out the evil in others, only the good and beautiful. Ana-Clara’s love is one that thinks constructively as it senses the grand possibilities in other people. Here is true love for she gives love whole-heartedly, content to learn of life as its fullest as it always gives. Ana-Clara’s role as a compassionate woman and ‘involved spectator’ may be best described in her own words—Fry’ words: “Like the poet’s blind/ Tiresias, I have seen it all.” (AYOS 32).

Fry also stresses on the need for compassion through Jessie Dill in Venus Observed. Jessie Dill arrives at the Duke’s home to observe the eclipses. Jessie shows her kind and warm nature even at her entrance. She believes that she should not give anyone trouble and saves the attendant the trouble of announcing her arrival by coming
up herself. Her knowledge that Rosabel is another of the Duke’s women does not prevent her being polite and commending: “I saw you, once upon a time,/Being very sweet in a play about Ophelia.” (VO 159). Her attitude towards the Duke is one of mild admiration and compassion not marked by ill-feeling. When she meets him she can frankly say. Here he is, himself, He’s the same boy, God bless him, not a day older, Even if he does have to use a telescope. (VO 159)

Concerned about his comfort she advises him to have a fire for warmth. Edgar warms to her as she puts him at ease. Her perceptive nature enables her to identify with him and she senses that Edgar is struggling in the shadow of his father. When Edgar remarks that a prayer should be said for all small birds moment to explain that she too has experienced the diffidence of a child who had been told to watch something in the sky and never really seen it. Her inherent concern is evident when she is greatly troubled by the distraught Rosabel’s tears after her accusation of the Duke for his lack of feeling. Jessie endears herself to others as she has no inhibitions at being herself with them. Her welcome of Perpetua shows that she understands the depths of affection between Reedbeck and Perpetua, “I’m very pleased to meet you. Your father loves you/with every word in the language.” (VO 174). Making others happy is Jessie Dill’s spontaneous quality. This is even clearer in the joy she derives in writing a letter to her eighty-seven year old father, though he is unable to read. He can’t read a word Of my handwriting, and doesn’t try, but he likes the postman.

Fry points out that the simple things in life matter a great deal. It is Jessie’s knowledge and acceptance of people that makes her say that the Duck and Perpetua will
inevitably be together. Yet she has a touching concern for Perpetua. “I should let them
be, because be they will” (VO 193). Jessie is warm to any living being. When Hildia
wonders at the monotony and predictability of Roderic, her husband Jessie wisely says
that he has his virtue. “Keep him warm and fed. They bloom/Once in seven years.”
(VO 194). Her ability for compassionate concern towards others brings out her fellow
feeling for Hilda when Roderic meets with an accident on horseback. She does not take,
only gives. Her sincerity is demonstrated in her fervent prayer that Roderic should not be
badly injured. Her sense of objectivity and natural concern make Edgar give her the
apple choosing her as the Duke’s wife. It is her motherly nature that brings him to admit
that he wants to shoot an arrow at his father. Jessie’s encouragement, spurs him on, “If
you think you can, then do.” (VO 197) Perceiving the boy’s new-found confidence and
sympathizing with his isolation she adds brightly.

And as you didn’t kill anybody, I may say I think it was splendid, and I think
perhaps you should do it more of ten (VO 198)

She thus lays the first steps for the young son to prove his mettle and aim for a
love which is due to him and not to his father. But in encouraging Edgar to assert himself
she has no malice towards the Duke. She is the agent of love who works among them so
that the others interact and come to a realization. Thus, when Rosable is obsessed with
the need to take revenge on the Duke for his callousness, Jessie’s advice to her can be
seen as an attitude of mind which she herself has gained through experience.

Listen love, You” ll be sending yourself silly, I always think When someone
knocks you down, it doesn’t improve things To knock yourself up. The way a thing is, is
often the way you happen to look at it. He’s as kind as anybody living, if you take a running jump. (VO 205)

She works psychologically to bring Rosabel’s mind to the level of the mundane, and ends, with the suggestion that they could go out together to post Jessie’s letter. After hearing of the ordeal of the fire at the Duck’s observatory, she is one of the first to return and genuine concern marks her query: “Is everybody safe?” (VO 238). Her compassionate nature is a result of her deep understanding of life. Thus as she watches the eclips, she wonders how real each one is: “Are we really. As bright as a moon, from the Moon’s side of the question?” (VO 167). This is pertinent to the dramatist’s view that each individual can only search within and find how true we are to ourselves and to others. The desire to be helpful to others can be part of our nature, even as Jessie remarks whimsically: “I like to think I’m being/ A ray of light to some nice young couple out there”. (VO 168).

She is indeed a “ray of light” in the play who brightens what she touches, spreading cheer and optimism, encouraging and advising and involving herself in the lives of others solely because she cares. Though not so obviously an ‘involved spectator’ as Ana-Clara, her participation in and comments on life define her as a loving woman, compassionate and optimistic who gives herself willingly asking nothing in return and accepting life as it comes. She believes in healing through love.

Hilda Taylor-Snell also arrives to observe the eclipse. through her Fry depicts a physically attractive woman who is yet uncertain whether she should bow gracefully to her oncoming age and marred life or give some freedom to the passions of her youth.
Ultimately Hilda learns what is variable to her through the precipitation of certain events and gains self-realization.

At heart Hilda is a generous woman who has genuine concern for others. Her initial uncertainty regarding her relationship with the duke makes her formal. Later she thaws and is her natural self. At the Duke’s she is unsure of herself. She does not expect company as she had believed that she was summoned to be alone with the Duke. She is not very open with Edgar, the Duke’s son and she wonders if the future can be left for him to decide.

But will you find that easy? I couldn’t help overhearing The future has the most uncertain temper, After all you’ve said, Heereward, do you teach Your child to tamper with time? (VO 165)

She is more concerned with the physical and her comments have a relevance to her relationship with the duke. Remarking on the deteriorating state of the house she comments. You mustn’t Drift into Gothic, when your physique is so Stubbornly Norman. (VO 164)

When Rosable is angered by the Duke’s heartlessness and admits her hurt, Hilda does take her side and this could be attributed to her chagrin at not being chosen by Edgar as the Duck’s wife. Her conversation here almost borders on retaliation when she says.

But if what I gather to be true is true, Though it’s no business of mine, I must say, Hereward, you certainly seem to have been Coruscating on thin ice. I think she has cause to be angry. I do think so; You’ve behaved a great deal less than well. (VO 170)

But her reason and sense assert themselves when she is filled with genuine concern for Rosabel in her disturbed frame of mind. : Can she take care of herself, that
woman?” (VO 173) Hilda learns that Rosabel has loved the Duck and has suffered more than she herself has done. This makes her reflect, and when the duke takes up with Perpetua she is disturbed not for herself but for Perpetua. As she confesses to Jessie.

I see Hereward has made another backward Flight into his heyday. It’s a handsome thing To see him so happy, but are we so happy for the girl? (VO192)

Here Hilda realizes that Rosabel has no one to lean on, and that Perpetua is too young to be hurt. Simultaneously she wonders but cannot believe that the duke would have invited them there to watch their faces fall. She reveals her nature openly in her confidence to Jessie.

I’ve always hidden more than was good for me, hoping in that way to make my life seem pleasant to everyone, But who should care? So I’ve lost the habit of daring to ask myself what I do, or why.(VO 192)

She also confesses. There was still something in me to be hurt which a little surprised me.(VO 193)

Perpetua’s youth does not arouse jealousy in her but a gentle sympathy and regret to think that this young girl should be touched by the lightness of the Duck’s so-called love even as she had been. She comes to terms with herself and with the fact that her meeting with the duck marked a sparkling change from the monotony of the daily round of the roundabout life (VO 193) that she led. Claiming that she herself is not above the average woman she despairs at the “level depth of dullness” of her husband Roderic. But her preoccupation with herself does not blind Hilda to Edgar’s need for support and encouragement. She tries to lift him out his mood of envy for his father, and depression, “Now take heart. You have those virtues, too. There’s room for both of you.” (VO 195). She further emphasizes
I think at the moment it’s greatly important. There should be room for both of you. Suppose you make a bid for it. Why not? Nothing hinders you except weakness of hope, and that’s ridiculous. We’ll go together. (VO 195)

Even as Jessie does, Hilda recognizes that Edgar needs a friendly push, and guidance away from the shadow of diffidence to make him an assertive young man. At that moment when Bates enters with news that her husband Roderic has fallen off his horse and hurt himself she is totally concerned about him. This reveals her true love for Roderic. She does not wish the others to spoil their afternoon and in the first moments of her move towards realization tells only Jessie to forget that she had laughed at Roderic. At her moment of trial she has concern enough to strengthen Edgar. “If you want to do something for me, put your shoulders/ To your father, and make yourself your own success,” (VO 196). Her concern is clear when she says that the fire had caused her to telephone though with no result. Her concer is clear when she says that the fire had caused her to telephone though with no result. Her belief in providence is manifest in her gratitude that nothing had happened to the Duke or Perpetua. When the Duke questions her on Roderic’s condition, the true Hilda complete in her self-realization speaks with deep love for Roderic. She has learnt.

How bad it is to see Roderic hurt, but how Intolerable it would be to see Roderic Maimed, or dying day by day; and I sat Beside him and marveled, and wondered how so much could be there in a human shell, the long succession of life that led to him, Uninterrupted from the time of time’s aching infancy.

She acknowledges the gift of Roderic a unique individual to her and she is unashamed to announce her true love for him: “He is Roderic- Phenomenon, / Roderic
only, and at present Roderic in pain.” (VO 240). She understands that no two men can be alike and deep within her it is Roderic she cares for. She is thus led from darkness to light and this change is effected in her by love.

Her self-realization comes because of her acknowledgement of love. Love is thus the force that puts things right. Hilda thus helps to change others through her natural concern, making them see themselves in a correct perspective and through the experience is herself changed when love in its true and deep form tells her what life and her priorities are. Fry seeks to show that love is a marvelous instrument when it is used to show that love is a marvelous instrument when it is used to help others; it is also the means of appreciation of other people. Only through love can human beings learn to accept one another. Hilda’s love had been a need love but with Roderic’s accident comes the striking acknowledgement that gift love is greater. She has so far not dared to question what she does or why, but now she confirms that she lives for a purpose. She realizes the importance of each instant, each event and that the drama of is being directed by a greater love. (12) For some, this realization comes late or never at all. For Hilda it comes at a time when she needs to know the meaning of life and this dawn on her when she realizes the importance of gift love.

In Fry’s plays can be seen another type of woman who is motherly, loving and forgiving. The suffering undergone by the character may be great or small but experience of life makes a better person of her. Among them can be grouped Giosetta Scapare of A Yard of Sun, Margaret Devize of The Lady’s Not for Burning and Clodesuida of Thor, with Angels. At the end of the play Giosetta’s feelings move
towards agape, Clodesuida’s towards eusebia, reverence that all life is lived in God’s presence and Margaret’s towards philia or love for others.

Giosetta Scapare has great forbearance. That she is basically a strong believer is evident when she tells Angelino Bruno that there is a sense of guilt in her prayer to god, as she is not married to Cesare and is yet unfaithful to him when she regards their relationship as a sin.

In the early years whenever I went to confession And had to call our love a sin I felt I was being unfaithful, to him with Go.(AYOS 56).

As a woman she has withstood the sufferings of the war and her selflessness is clear in her acceptance of Cesare having a wife at Naples. Her strong love convinces Angelino that Cesare will hope in it till he returns home. Despite Cesare’s failings she understands perfectly his self-dislike due to inability to love and serve his wife. Her comprehension of his mental agony is deep.

Question would come rolling over him Like tanks every now and then: was he sure She was better off without him? Was a mad Father better than none for Alfio? Had he run from what God wanted of him?

This same love reaches out to Alfio when he comes to the Palazzo in search of his father. While the others eye him with distrust she welcomes him with open arms as Cesare’s son. Her love for Grazia is mingled with easy companionability. When Grazia reveals the guilt and remorse under which she had been living so far, that she had betrayed Cesare, Giosetta in true forgiveness and understanding says:

Why didn’t you tell me, silly girl? How could you Make yourself so miserable? Is that all You think of me- someone you can’t confide in? (AYOS 84).
Giosetta is part of the Bruno family. Hers is a warm bond of friendship with Angelino, with no malice even when she berates him for his faults as a father. She discloses her true love for Cesare to Angelino and Angelino’s respect and admiration of her are evident in that he believes that it is only Giosetta who can revive Cesare. With courage and a perception which is unmathed, Giosetta speaks honestly of the Brunos. She knows each son’s character like the back of her hand. Of Roberto, she remarks.

… I suppose he is a doctor. But his real ambition is to see us all Peppered with bullets at the barricades And carried off on stretchers to the casualty station (AYOS 19)

She comments truthfully that Luigi exaggerates everything and Edmondo had left the family with none too good a reputation. That has absolutely no grievances against the family is seen when she makes up with all of them in a motherly way. She gauges the Brunos well and honestly admits to Alfio. ‘The Brunos can make an ant-hill erupt” (AYOS 26). Thus her love notices the faults in others but speaks of them only to correct. She seeks to bring out goodness, not evil. Her acceptance and love for her neighbours is admirable and can be termed agape. When she gets a barrel of water, she generously gives the whole barrel to the Brunos as the new tenants are about to arrive at the Palazzo. Her love is genuine, and asks nothing in return. It is truly gift love, serving God and the neighbour in the same act. She sees God in the neighbour and the neighbour in the heart of God. Giosetta’s compassion extends to the helpless, the frail and the insecure (41). Despite privation during the war, its end makes her look of a future with hope, for her optimistic nature says, “After a time/You have to want to look at people, again.”  (AYOS 27). Her capacity to hope arises from her ability to love. By giving love she moves towards divinity by her “nearness of approach” (11) Unconsciously she accepts the
suffering as God-given. Giosetta is thus presented as a truly forgiving woman who lovers with motherly love, practicing unconsciously the Christian virtue of brotherly love or *agape*.

In *Thor, with Angels*, Fry depicts the need for compassion mercy and love in human lives. This theme is worked out through in England in 597 A.D. One of the characters upon whom love works is Clodesuida. Love changes Cymen’s life and Clodesuida undergoes stage of change. These may be seen to be the stages on the journey of faith. As a woman, Clodesuida is more open to love though she is afraid to break away from the bonds of tradition and devotion to the gods.

She is at first afraid that things have changed with the return of the warriors. She fears offending the gods. She cannot bear heathens have been done away with. Clodesuida, it the true tradition of a chief’s wife, is ashamed that Cymen can say he is defeated and more than a little shocked when he expresses humility; “Guilt, forgiveness, humility? what next? /Are you mad?” (TNA 63). She needs assurance of security and fears the wrath of the gods when she says: “A sacrifice Cymen,/This one sacrifice for our peace of mind.” (TNA 68). Fry means to show that a sacrifice made in fear to the heathen gods to appease their anger is meaningless. Fear and anger are all she has seen and thus Clodesuida attributes the latter to the gods. Her obsession is the pleasing of the gods. When she understands that her daughter Martina has been helping Merlin her thoughts wing their way to fear of displeasing the gods (TWA 77). Coldesuida fails to see that this fear arises out of a man-made image of the heathen gods. She fears even talking to Hoel and Merlin as she believes, The gods will strike at them and everyone knows how carelessly they aim. the blow may fall on us. (TW 82)
It is when Hoel forgets that he is a prisoner and rushes to kill the wolves, that Clodesuida is touched. His selflessness sends the first gleams of light to her darkened mind and she is susceptible as she is a woman. She even wishes to reward him. The change is evident in her having to force herself not to sicken at the prospect of sacrificing Hoel. She tries to stabilize herself by owning her duty to the gods.

What the gods want we’ll give them even though our blood Freezes. (TWA 92) She has reached the stage where she is able to recognise the horror of a meaningless sacrifice. The presence of an overwhelming fear in her presents an obstacle to love, and its achievement. Clodesuida is also aware that even if she wants to change, her position as a woman prevents her. Thus her comment, Women are only camp followers they take our obedience for granted. If we blasphemed they would pinch our cheeks and resume the course of As though nothing had happened.(TWA 98).

She believes that they can live only by obedience to the heathen gods. Fry envisions her change. She is a woman capable of compassion. By her desire to reward Hoel, and her natural inclination to good she will learn of the compassion of the new faith. If anything prevents Clodesuida from seeing the light, it is the desire for no ripples on the placid pool of life and in this she resembles to a certain degree Margaret Davize of *The Lady’s Not for Burning*. Fundamentally a loving and forgiving woman, fear makes her chary of loving whole-heartedly to a greater degree. Superstition prevents Margaret Devize from being totally human. Fry declares that fear is one of the greatest barriers to the practice of brotherly love. But if one allows the faintest element of love to penetrate through a chink in one’s armour of ignorance and fear, there is hope for the growth of love which as it increases, will add to man’s happiness. The initial stages of this
evolution are presented in the character of Clodesuida who moves from darkness to
eusebia.

Margaret Devize is presented as one who is awakened to the power of brotherly love. At the beginning of the play Margaret is only interested in life not being disturbed. Her attitude towards love is that it is common commodity amid part of the mechanical routine of life. Love for her is merely the duty of loving superficially her sons, her brother and herself without has to love others does not occur to her. Her understanding of love does not extend beyond the confines of her home. But a change is brought into her life with the unexpected arrival of Jennet Jourdemayne and Thomas Mendip, the first condemned without foundation as a witch and the second demanding to be hanged for what he claims is murder. Margaret believes that her sons Nicholas and Humphrey love each other. She is blind to the fact of each other. When they quarrel, all she can say to Nicholas is “Haven’t you any love for him” (TLNFB 127). Her query is marked by her distaste for disorder not comprehension of true love. Mendip’s presence is an irregularity for her. Mendip asks for kindness towards what he believes is a poor old woman suspected of witchcraft. Margaret’s answer is a proof that she has not yet understood that Christian love does not go out in two different directions or braches, labeled love for one’s own and love for others. “You really mustn’t expect me to be Christian/In two directions at once” (TLNFB 127). Love or compassion as Christ taught it is love for oneself and one’s own and an extension of this to include the world, which is the nearest one can get to divinity. In Margaret’s case superstition and conformity are hindrances to perception and objectivity. She is caught in the spell of the mob mentality and at Jennet’s presence in her house asks.
What do we do? I can almost feel the rustling in of some Kind of enchantment already. (TLNFB 138). The sedate movement of life is disturbed and she wishes that the two strangers had never come to upset the routine of daily living. But as she is a woman the tender emotions in her are moved by the inherent goodness of Jennet, for she says.

How am I to prevent This girl, condemned as a heretic, from charming us with gentieness, consideration and gaiety? It makes orthodoxy seem almost irrelevant. (TLNFB 194).

It is thus orthodox and blind belief in the irrational that prevents love from flourishing. In this manner Margaret resembles Clodesuida of Thor, with Angels. But there is enough sympathy and feeling in her to respond to love even as seen in her attitude towards Alizon who she realizes has gone away with Richard, the clerk. Fry- re-asserts the theme worked upon in Thor, with Angels in the character of Margaret Devize. Change and mellowness and the ability to waive from strict orthodoxy and superstition are brought about when one allows love and acceptance to enter one’s life. Love thus helps growth of personality in the right direction.

Love is also the weapon with which guilt and remorse can be fought against. Love cures one of the belief in fate, and is a force that effects good, in the lives of Grazia of A Yard of Sun and Martina of Thor, with Angels. When Cesare is betrayed as cesare’s return. She suspects that she is wholly to blame. she undergoes self- inflicted isolation, as has been discussed in Chapter II. Inwardly she fears that the family will condemn her is she reveals the truth. Her sense of remorse lives within her, preventing her from being herself. Being young, she is unsure if love can triumph over guilt. Thus she does not disclose it either to her mother or Roberto. Her fear is that of a little child. The
uncertainty of life in the war has rubbed off on her relationships with people. She lacks faith in other’s love and is uncertain of other’s reliability and unchangeability. Grazia’s confusion reveals that she not yet confession of what she believes is betrayal of her father: “I had done it, I betrayed him. Now you all know’ (AYOS 84). When Giosetta asks why she had not confided in her, Grazia’s feelings of insecurity surface: “If I had told you, whenever we were together/I should all the time have known it was in you mind.” (AYOS 84). Roberto explains her mistake and her fear to be the result of her giving substance to her fear and allowing it to become an ogre of certainty, which was never there. He observes that ij a way all of them had to help him by not concealing things, realization dawns on her. “No more secrets, I promist/ You are like this. I didn’t know that.” (AYOS 86) Grazia becomes free, more spontaneous and loving as a result of realizing the true nature of love. She understandsthat love implies fidelity in joy and sorrow. Grazia is presented as a woman who is drawn away from fear and a guilt complex due to the presence of love in the form of her family and neighbours who understand her. Through her, Fry explains that love is a dynamic force which can hanged lives and cause men to move, grow and work together. (86-87)

In Martina of Thor, with Angels can be seen helplessness in the face of superstition and an indifference to life caused by belief in fate and the heathen gods. As she waits for the return of her father, brothers and uncles, she believes that the crows that fly are not harbingers of good news as she says later, when Cymen shows himself to be strongly affected. This darkness caused by superstition and fear that the gods will punish if they are not pleased, nurtures in Marina the belief, “we” re not very favoured. The gods/ Mean us to know they rule.” (TWA 74). Her initial attitude to Hoel is that he is “a
godless Christian” but her innate compassion makes her look after him. But Martina differs from her mother in that she has cultivated a sense of indifference, a feeling of detachment, as if she would have the gods not understand her position as well as the nature of her family and explains to Hoel.

They hate you., and that’s easy to understand we have existence on such hard terms as though birth into the world had been a favour To spare for strangers.

(TWA 100)

Yet, that she is not totally detached and callous in the attitude to Hoel is shown by the care she gives him, especially after he struggles with the wolves: :I hope the claw marks heal/I’ve done my best for them.” (TN 100). Her attitude towards the gods and sacrifice can be comprehended in her words to Hoel.

I’ll not worry about my father; Nor my mother, nor my uncles nor between ourselves, and large. I am very careful about small Things, such as wearing green in the third month Or bringing blackthorn under the riif; But the big things such as gods, must look after themselves.(TWA 100 ).

She is naturally compassionate and has to force herself to dislike Hoel, whose condition arouses her sympathy and forbearance, “You look too tired to be hated/ and that won’t do at all.” (TWA 76). When Hoel speaks of affections she is wary and tries to be disinterested. But his helplessness stirs her feelings. “Now sleep and look malignant when/you wake” (TWA 101). There is tenderness in her when she remarks as he sleeps. “You’re even less of an enemy when you sleep”.(TWA 103) Martina understands the nature of men and when Hoel declares that he would be her servant she chides him for being “a poor- spirit’d Briton” if he is willing to become her shadow.
That she is not disinclined towards his affections and that he has won her esteem in
evident when she says: “But a Briton who, if he were a Jute. would be brave and
agreeable” (TWA 104). Martina’s motherly instincts as well as her inherent sense of
concern for others is awakened when her brothers try to kill Hoel. Courageously she
leaps forward. “Cowards, Cowards, sneak thieves, only dare with father gone.” (TWA
106) Martina practices the Christian virtue of love and Christ’s dictum of loving one’s
enemy, though she is a pagan. Her ministrations to Merlin and Hoel prove that she is a
woman who is compassionate and selfless. It cannot be doubted that becoming a
follower of the God of Mercy and Justice will be easy for her. Fry shows a character who
has love and uses it to overcome fear and belief in fate. In giving and serving, one
practices the second commandment to love one’s neighbours. For Martina “Love is the
surest guide”(89) and she practices it unconsciously.

The destructive power of love due to narcissism has already been described with
reference to Rosabel Fleming in Chapter II. Both Rosabe and the Duke move away from
self-love to self-awareness and perception of another’s needs. At the end of Venus
Observed the creative aspect of love is envisaged through these two reformed characters.

Fry stresses that acceptance is necessary for love to grow. When acceptance and
approval are absent, love is replaced by indifference. A woman has to be accepted as a
person, and freedom is a necessary part of the marriage vows. Fry shows how love can
fade into indifference, as in Eleanor of Aquitaine who prefers solitude rather than be
Henry’s possession. Eleanor’s alienation from Henry is a contrast to her former love for
him. This has been discussed in Chapter II.
In the Firstborn Fry shows how belief in love and its creativity is prevented from working, due to selfishness. The plagues that light upon Egypt are due to the selfishness and pride of the Pharaoh. When the final plague of death to the firstborn takes its course and even Moses in unable to save Rameses teusret believes that Phipa of Syria who has come as Rameses’ bride will reassert life. Thus as the danger approaches Teusret anxiously calls Rameses to meet Phipa.

Come Away, Rameses, Rameses, come now, You must meet and love her. Isn’t it in love that life is strongest. I want you to love her. Already we’re late.(TF 138)

Desperately she runs, even as Rameses is struck by the hand of God, towards Phipa. “I’II meet her alone, then. When she comes she’ll reach you. / She must, she must. She come so far. “(TF 139) she cannot believe that Rameses will not awaken to this love which has come laden with gifts. Though love does not world to save Rameses’ life, Fry does assert that it is in love that life is strongest. Though Teusret is depicted as too young to actively involve herself in Egypt’s fortunes, she clings on to this belief, which is a most basic and important one. Fry’s belief that faith is necessary for surmounting obstacles is aptly shown through Cuthman’s mother in The Boy with a Cart, a play written in honour of St. Cuthman of Sussex. Cuthman undergoes various privations and obstacles in life but his abiding faith in God brings him rich reward of a Divine visitation. In this play, Cuthman’s faith never diminishes. His mother is portrayed as a woman who moves from initial fear and lack of faith to faith and acceptance.
Cuthman’s mother does not believe that Cuthman can really lead them to happiness. She faces the difficulties of moving to a new place with the characteristic despair and complaints of an ordinary woman. She thinks Cuthman is not practical and when he is making a cart she exclaims. “Oh what a disaster; what a wealth of affliction” (BWAC 20). She can only think of the basic comforts and necessities for existence. On their move to Steyning she lies awake at night “chasing fears”. This is in contrast to Cuthman’s implicit faith in God. There is gradual growth of belief in Cuthman’s mother. This is clear when she starts believing in Cuthman and his fixed purpose.

I saw you standing quiet. I said to myself. He has something in his heart, he has something that occupies him. (BWAC 28).

As the fears pass and she sees him building the church she is assured that Cuthman is right. Fry’s portrayal of the saint’s mother appeals to the not-so-faithful as it assures them that it is not only saints who grow in faith. The ordinary man can grow steadily in faith and love for God.

Through the minor women characters like domestics, Fry imparts certain philosophies of life. A characteristic feature is that these figures are generally aware of the mystery of life and have learnt to accept life with its joys and sorrows. Two such characters are Anna the maid at Cymen’s farm in *Thor, with Angels* and Doto, Dynamene’s maid in *A Phoenix Too Frequent*.

Anna, the maid, is Colgrin’s wife. Unlike the indolent steward, she is always at work, seeing to the little things that matter in the running of the farm. She is aware that the men, farm. She chides her husband for his laziness when Colgrin remarks that its wrong of her to hang wet linen over his sword and make it rust. She retorts. “And a man
is, too; and you’re/ So thick with rust you’d choke if you blew on yourself” (TWA 73).
When she announces in terror that wolves are attacking their sheep she is irritated by the
fact that Colgrin does not do his duty of saving the sheep. Being a woman, the gentler
emotions rise to the fore in her. She is not ill-disposed towards Hoel the Briton, though
he is a prisoner and an enemy. She notes: “I shall probably get to be fond of him; but I’ll
never/ Like him.” (TWA 74). Here the woman and the Jute in her both not watch the
struggle. But she has seen the sheep Anna does the sheep and this has left her weak.
Later she asks in surprise if Hoel had really fought the wolves. She considers him a hero
and contrasts her husband who she knows is a coward and lazy as well.

Anna’s reaction at the attack of the wolves on the sheep shows her to be a woman
who is afraid of ferocity and unwarranted strength. She has the capacity of feeling one
with the dumb terror-stricken creatures. As she trembles she says.

I’m fit for nothing now But whisking eggs, I’m trembling so, why should such
things be? Such fangs, I have Sharp pains in the back just to have seen them Gnashing in
the light.(TWA 87)

She has the ability to identify with the weak, a negative capability that shows that
compassion is inherent in her. Fry does not depict her reaction to the attack merely for
narration. Deep within is a message that a human beings caught in the clutches of
relentless men who think that only human sacrifice can placate the gods. Though her role
is that of a minor domestic her response to the attack is a foretaste of what man has to
feel at needless hate and murder as seen in the attack on Hoel by Cymen’s sons which is
correlated to the wolves’ attack on the sheep.
Doto, Dynamee’s maid, has an instinctive love for life which is as basic as her nature. Fry makes her his mouthpiece for the utterance of his views on life and love. She is presented as a lovable, good-humoured domestic whose love for the world is as good-natured as herself. She thrives on seeing others happy. In her intense affection for Dynamene and her fidelity to her, Doto resembles the nurse in Romeo and Juoiet. She thrills to think that her mistress has found a new love in the corporal who had come to the tomb at night.

Doto’s observations on life are part of her and come naturally. Through her open comment, “Nothing but the harmless day gone into black/ Is all the dark is…” (APTF 7), Fry seeks to show that evil is nothing but the absence of good. The darkness that descends on the mind is nothing but the absence of rationality and optimism. It is reminiscent of St. John of the Cross’ statement.

Just as night is nothing but the privation of light and consequently of all objects visible by means of the of sight the mortification of the appetites can be called a night for the soul.(76)

Doto comments on the fact that life and death are irrevocably tied together when she says, “But life and death/Is cat and dog in this double bed of a world” (APTF 7). She is alive to the mystery of life and especially of love. A woman who has had a number of love affairs she frankly wonders at the ‘miracle’ of “One man made for one woman”(APTF 10). Her mistress’ idea of dying for love is something new to her and her interest in life is only revived for it, unlike Dynamene. Thus she tells Tegeus” Death’s new interest in life” (APTF 10). Her response to life is too strong for her to
reject Tegeus’s offer of wine and bread. Yet she is aware of death for she remarks matter-of-factly.

Be careful of the crumbs. We don’t want a lot of squeaking mice Just when we’re dying.(APTF 14)

Her fidelity is commendable for when Dynamene asks her to go, Doto is aware at first that this is because of Dynamene’s new interest in life. She says: “I shouldn’t know another night of sleep, wondering/ How you got on or what I was missing, come to that.” (APTF 42). Her refusal to go changes when she instinctively understands that new love has shown the way to life and so decides. “I’II leave death to some other occasion.” (APTF 44). Through Doto Fry seeks to show that life is for living and man’s instinct is to respond to life with humour and courage, be it in light or in dark which is as Doto remarks “Northing but the harmless day gone into black”. It is a significant fact that in Fry’s plays the women characters do not undergo alienation or fragmentation to the extent that the men do. Even among the women characters who do face isolation, the ability to reach out in hope to life is more manifest. In the process some of them act as agents of de-alienation for the men.

In Dynamene the extent of alienation from life is intense. Her situation is akin to Antigone’s. Life is a torment, a meaningless existence: “Living in daily torment/ As I do, who would not be glad to die?” (139) With Virilius’ death, life becomes a meaningless existence. Her intense desire for death is changed into an urgent need for life because of her love for Tegeus. In turn tegeus’ decision that death is the only way to fight dishonour is reversed when life is offered in the form of Virilius’ dead body, by Dynamene. In the process of fragmentation, Tegeus’ sense of desolation and belief that ll
is lost is greater than Dynamene’s. His despair is reminiscent of Andromache who prefers death to life.

To be dead is the same as never to have been born, and better far than living on in wretchedness. The dead feel nothing. Evil then can cause no pain. Dynamene’s intense love draws him back to life. Jennet Jourdemayne glimpses the absurdity of existence when threatened with death. But her will to live is strong. So strong is it that Mendip who is obsessed with death, limps back to the belief that life can be lived provided love is present to sustain him.

In Rosabel Fleming’s burning of the observatory, intended to assuage her own feelings of inadequacy and hurt and to jolt the Duck to reality, a two-fold result appears. Rosabel realizes herself and so does the Duke. In promising to each other a maturer love they free themselves from the cocoon of self and live for each other.

Grazia isolates herself from family and friends due to guilt. She does not understand the true depths of their love as her conscience is not clear. She fears to confess as this will certainly bring blame on her. But when she does confess her belief that she betrayed Cesare her father, those who love her are quick to defend her and rid her of her fears. In confessing, Grazia allows Roberto to know how each person suffers. This realization helps Roberto, the suspicious, angry young man to help others and to himself recover from the isolation and anger that have embittered him.

Women like Rosmarin, Gelda, Ana- Clara, Anath, and Jessive are shown as naturally tender and compassionate, able to give love without expectation of anything in return. Theirs is a love which is agape. Perpetua, Clodesuida, Martina and Hilda move from one stage of love to a higher stage, due to realization.
Giosetta too moves from ignorance to understanding through love and her love in turn is one that is giving and not demanding.

Fry stresses the importance of love in all his plays. He shows how this cosmic force revitalises and rebuilds relationships and people. He also demonstrates that its absence can be destructive.

*A Sleep of Prisoners* associates itself with the destruction caused by war and how man is psychologically affected by it. The play does not present any woman character. The four characters are four men who are prisoners-of-war and captives of the Germans in a church. However the essence of the play is the need for love. Fry reiterates in stronger terms than in the previous plays of the need for compassion and *agape*. Together with this is brought home the necessity to love and trust providence. He believes that in war man fights his own kind. Thus David says: “I’ve got to know which side I’m on/I’ve got to be on a side” (ASOP 48). This is the rule of war, but Fry says that man has got to be on the side of mankind and stop war with the weapon of love and faith in God. The theme of the play lies in the statements that life is an “exploration into God” as well as.

Each man is the world. There’s no loosening, since man with men Are like the knotted sea. Fry emphasizes that love, faith and acceptance are necessary. Only an acceptance of the divine will and love can direct man. He has to turn to God for happiness, else he is miserable.(42) Man can no longer question. “Am I my brother’s keeper”(10). Fry enjoins man to live a life of love, where one feels responsible for others and where life is ready to surrender itself in obedience to the needs of others’ lives.
Love has to be nurtured to the subjugation of self. With love will come goodness which has no fear?

Good is itself, whatever comes It grows, and makes, and bravely Persuades beyond all tilt of wrong. Stronger than anger, wiser than strategy Enough to subdue cities and men. If we believe it with a long courage of truth.(ASOP 54)

Fry has been impressed by his father’s words regarding the creative nature of love. All things are religious that have to do with human conduct. Building of cities, steamboats, roads, housing and clothing, education, invention, culture are all part of the working out of the kingdom of god upon earth. (8)

Fry also believes that freedom is absolutely necessary for progress. This progress can be attained only through love practiced in freedom, for the absence of freedom cripples man and is unhealthy.(269) In asserting that life is an “exploration into God” Fry does not mean that God is an invisible being but that man has to love God in man.

God is.

not an invisible being with whom we can have direct communication as it were on the end of a telephone, but that by which he is represented, his surrogate the power of a love that lives and suffers for others. . .(218-219).

By surrogate is meant that god has provided for man a representative of himself as love and this is another of man’s own kind. It is man’s responsibility to love his brother with the highest of all love – *agape*.

Fry always particularizes love as a warm and vibrant force. He associates it with fire and with life or the sustenance for life. In plays such as *The Dark is Light Enough*, *A Phoenix Too Frequent*, *Thor, with Angels* and *A Yard of Sun* the image of life is used for
love. Human love is equated with divine love in *The Dark is Light Enough*. Love at its height, as evident in Christ’s love for the world when He was crucified, is seem in both *The Dark is Light Enough* and *A Phoenix Too Frequent*. In the latter, the giving of life to the lovers by the use of the dead body of a man is a symbol of Divine Love being necessary for the earthly or physical. *Thor, with Angles* again stresses the need for divine love or *agape*. In *A Yard of Sun*, love as life and giving is reiterated.

Love as a flame that creates or consumes is seen in two plays, *The Lady’s Not for Burning* and *Venus Observed*. In the former, the creative flame of love is contrasted with the destroying flame of irrationality. For Richard, the orphaned clerk, love is a flame which life sends to rest in his flax. Alizon’s love for him helps him to find himself. Jennet Jourdemayne’s love is a creative, sustaining flame and Thomas Mendip is caught in, a “sweet noose”. Love is again the creative force that prevents Jennet from being burnt to death in the flames of irrationality.

In *Venus Observed* Rosabel’s love changes to a destructive flame when she is rejected. Love is also seen as light or realization when both the Duke and Rosabel understand the need for mature love.

It is important to understand why Fry brings into his plays the theme of love in its different manifestations. Fry believes in the mystery of life. Life is a gift to be lived and this idea is asserted through all his plays. Thus love is a mystery as well. This is also the Christian belief. … “… love is a mystery no one can ever define, just like the mystery of God.” (46) Love is thus presented as a cosmic force, the hinge on which the universe revolves. The dramatist also believes that God’s love is infinite and unmatched, an explosive love which cannot be contained. Fry holds a firm opinion that love must came
from within the individual and spread out to others. He therefore states that the earthly and physical are necessary part of the steps up the ladder to Absolute love. In his plays he shows the love between man and woman and the love of man for his brother as stages to the final love for god.

In this context it is relevant to ask why Fry uses women characters to convey his message of love. Women characters portray love in the best way as they are most compassionate. Loving and giving come naturally to them. Writers of different ages have depicted the redemptive nature of a woman’s love, and specially so in the case of the alienated individual. Fry believes in the redemptive love of women. He also believes in the Christian idea of mutual completion of man and woman through love, making them better, more charitable and transforming them. This earthly love is also seen as a ladder to another love, the perfect union with God. Eros has to be accepted as necessary for creation and life, but should go beyond to admit into the circle *agape* or brotherly love. Fry’s plays establish that agape is indeed the most necessary love which makes sense out of the others and brings stature and glory to *eros* and *philia*.

In the present state of man’s condition in the twentieth century wherein security of life has replaced God’s gift of life, for love. Religious men observe that the roots of man’s heart have grown deep into things and no longer for the Giver of things. Man’s loss of awareness regarding god and love, has made him selfish, jealous and unaware of the true needs of others as well as of himself. If man will come out of darkness into light and accord to love its right place there is promise of peace and happiness. Fry only reaffirms what many philosophers and psychologists state. Erich Fromm says that love is
the only sane and satisfactory answer to the problem of human existence. He further
states that to speak of love in the twentieth century is highly relevant.

Indeed, to speak of love is not “preaching” for the simple reason that it means to
speak of the legitimate and real need in every human being… To have faith in the
possibility of love as a social and not only exceptional individual phenomenon is a
rational faith based on the insight into the very nature of man.(112)

It cannot be denied that man has reached a crisis in modern times. The solution is
not condemnation but love. Fry believes that in order to love one must believe in the
love of God. Only then can man live and marvel at the mystery of life. This idea I s part
of Christian theology. If one considers himself loved, he loves sincerely and is therefore
sincere with oneself, God and with others.(197) There is nothing that matches divine
love. But human love can aspire to become like divine love. This can be done only if
man believes in god’s love which is infinite. God’s love is Gift love which is
plenteousness that desires to give.(116) In all his plays Fry strongly upholds that the best
way to love. God is to love one’s neighbours. This is reinforced in A Sleep of Prisoners
which is microcosm of the present world. Love is the greatest healer. The world of man,
wounded by war, strife and political jealousies, can be filled by love. It is no wonder that
farseeing thinkers and religious leaders have advocated this view. Fry has always been
greatly influenced by the words of his father. Fry says:

In the sermons he preached at Marwood he often spoke of the need for
compassion. ‘Without love a man has no moral worth’ he said, and certainly he was
ungrudging in his concern for people.(97)
Love can triumph over armies and navies and by imperceptible methods achieve redemption from ills for man. The doing of evil can never bring happiness whereas every act of love brings happiness, peace and blessedness. It is not surprising therefore that Fry emphasizes on the adherence to the law of love for man’s growth in the right direction. He keeps as the foundation the Biblical reference to love.(4-7) Through his plays, and especially through the women characters he establishes that love is a necessary and relevant factor for the progress of the human soul towards the Divine as well as for the extension of the individual’s ken to include his brethren.