

SINCLAIR LEWIS: SOCIAL CRITICISM  
PERTAINING TO WOMAN'S ROLE IN SOCIETY

A Thesis

by

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## CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is written as part of the University Undergraduate Fellows Program, an honors program designed for undergraduate seniors who wish to pursue independent research.

The purpose of this study is to examine the women in selected novels by Sinclair Lewis in order to determine his attitudes toward his female characters. The novels to be examined are Main Street, Arrowsmith, Dodsworth, and Ann Vickers. Each of these books constitute a separate chapter in this thesis. It is believed that these four books furnish a variety of women characters.

The first chapter, the introduction, explains the purpose of this study and presents an outline that will be followed. This outline names the characters to be studied.

The second chapter concerns the novel Main Street. Carol Kennicott, the principal woman character of the novel, will be closely analyzed to determine what kind of a person she is--what she is like.

The third chapter is about the novel Arrowsmith. Three women will be studied in this novel. Leora Tozer is the main woman character, so the emphasis will be placed on her. The other two characters are Madeline Fox and Joyce Lanyon.

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PMLA is the model for format and style used in this thesis.

The fourth chapter is a study of two women in the novel Dodsworth. The emphasis will fall on Fran. A short study of Edith Cortright will follow.

The fifth chapter is about the novel Ann Vickers. The character Ann Vickers will be the single subject of this chapter.

The sixth chapter, the conclusion, will be a summary of the results of this study.

## CHAPTER II

MAIN STREET

Carol is first introduced to the reader as a young woman, approximately twenty years of age, who is enrolled in Blodgett College, a small school on the outskirts of Minneapolis. The small size of the school allowed her to pursue her many interests and encouraged her versatility: "She played tennis, gave chafing-dish parties, took a graduate seminar in drama, went 'twosing,' and joined half a dozen societies for the practice of the arts or the tense stalking of a thing called General Culture."<sup>1</sup>

She had few rivals among the three hundred students at Blodgett. Her vitality, energy, and eagerness made her noticeable both in the classroom and at social functions. She was constantly active: "Every cell of her body was alive--thin wrists, quince-blossom skin, ingenue eyes, black hair. The other girls in her dormitory marveled at the slightness of her body . . . Yet so radioactive were her nerves . . . that she was more energetic than any of the hulking young women . . . in practice for the Blodgett Ladies Basket-Ball Team" (p. 8).

Then she became interested in sociology. She visited prisons, charity bureaus, and employment agencies with her sociology class. Always trailing behind her classmates, "Carol was indignant at the prodigious curiosity of the others, their manner of staring at the poor as at a zoo. She felt herself a great liberator . . . and enjoyed being aloof" (p. 10).

While browsing through the supplementary reading in sociology, she discovered a book on village-improvement which contained pictures of gardens and greens in France, New England, and Pennsylvania. She thought: "That's what I'll do after college! I'll get my hands on one of these prairie towns and make it beautiful. Be an inspiration ... I'll make 'em put in a village green, and darling cottages, and a quaint Main Street !" (p. 11).

She formulated no plan of action to accomplish this miracle. Somehow, it would just happen, and she could pride herself upon being the influence behind it. She abandoned her dream of transforming a village into an ideal town until an opportunity presented itself. In the meantime, on the advice of an English professor, she decided to study professional library work at a school in Chicago:

Her imagination carved and colored the new plan. She saw herself persuading children to read charming fairy tales, helping young men to find books on mechanics, being ever so courteous to old men who were hunting for newspapers--the light of the library, an authority on books, invited to dinners with poets and explorers, reading a paper to an association of distinguished scholars. (p. 13)

She worked in a library in St. Paul for three years, but became disillusioned with her dream of being the "light of the library." She discovered that her advice and literary tastes were not eagerly accepted by those who came to check out books or read newspapers. She decided to give up library work and, "by a miracle whose nature was not very clearly revealed to her, turn a prairie town into Georgian houses and Japanese bungalows" (p. 16).

Then, at the Marburys' home, she met Dr. Will Kennicott of Gopher Prairie. Lewis gives the reader few details of their love affair:

They were biology and mystery; their speech was slang phrases and flares of poetry; their silences were contentment, of shaky cries when his arm took her shoulder. All the common placeness of a well-to-do unmarried man encountering a pretty girl at the time when she is slightly weary of her employment and sees no glory ahead nor any man she is glad to serve. (p. 20)

Will convinced Carol that Gopher Prairie desperately needed her reforming zeal: "Come on! We're ready for you to boss us!" (p. 22). He roused her sympathy and her desire to be an inspiration to reform. Carol arrived in Gopher Prairie in the summer of 1912, the new bride of Doc Kennicott. If Carol was not in love, she was at least enthusiastic.

She begins to find fault with Gopher Prairie before she even gets off the train. She surveys the dust-caked doors, the unkempt passengers, and the bleak country-side with distasteful eyes. She surveyed the entire town in less than an hour, overwhelmed at the squalor and drabness she found.

To Carol: "It was not only the unsparing unapologetic ugliness and the rigid straightness which overwhelmed her. It was the planlessness, the flimsy temporariness of the buildings, their jaded, unpleasant colors" (p. 41). She returned to her new home in a quiet mood.

Carol soon regained her enthusiasm and her dreams of reform.



She gave an impromptu supper for Vida Sherwin, a high school teacher, and Guy Pollock, a lawyer: "She felt triumphant and rather literary. She already had a group. It would be only a while now before she provided the town with fanlights and a knowledge of Galsworthy" (pp. 69-70).

Having regained her enthusiasm, she surveyed Gopher Prairie and decided what it lacked. She visualized an ideal town, beautified by her inspiring ideas. She saw in Gopher Prairie:

. . . a Georgian city hall: warm brick walls with white shutters, a fanlight, a wide hall and curving stairs. She saw it the common home and inspiration not only of the town but of the country about. It should contain the court-room . . . public library, a collection of excellent prints, a rest-room and model kitchen for farm-wives, theatre, lecture rooms, free community ballroom, farm-bureau, gymnasium. Forming about it and influenced by it, as mediaeval villages gathered about the castle, she saw a new Georgian town. (p. 130)

Carol often becomes discouraged by the difference between her dreams and reality. For example, Carol has always envisioned herself as "a smart married woman in a drawing room, fencing with clever men" (p. 51). She remembers this vision while at a welcoming party given by the Sam Clarks in her honor. The guests "were a blurry theatre-audience before which she self-consciously enacted the comedy of being the Clever Little Bride of Doc Kennicott" (p. 48). When she tries to charm the men with brilliant conversation, she shocks them and arouses their prejudices instead. Once again, reality refuses to take the shape of her imagination.

The following chapters show Carol to be arty, impulsive, pretentious, and somewhat of a meddler. Her romantic notions are seldom practical, and she is inclined to be self-centered.

She praises herself for her own good taste. She is proud of her own charm, her good looks, and her active mind. She has a need to be the center of attention, and to be admired by others. She has a very strong need for admiring reassurance, as is evident when she "found the Marburys admiring and therefore admirable" (p. 17).

Carol wants to be a great reformer, but at the end of five months, she has made no progress. Her goals are as vague as they were when she saw Gopher Prairie for the first time.

She does not attempt to see other people's interests or ambitions, even those of her husband. At the end of the novel, she is surprised to discover that "there was also a story of Will Kennicott, into which she entered only as much as he entered into hers; that he had bewilderments and concealments as intricate as her own, and soft treacherous desires for sympathy" (p. 422). Her self-centeredness keeps her from realizing this simple fact earlier.

During the Kennicotts' first quarrel, Carol thinks that "she hated him, that she had been insane to marry him, that she had married him only because she was tired of work" (p. 170). However, she is angry at this point. There is no evidence in the book to substantiate the fact that she really does hate him. However, there is no evidence that she loves him, either. Carol alternates between thinking of him as a father when she needs reassurance, and as a son when she becomes

romantic about his usefulness and solidity.

At one point, Carol thinks, "I wouldn't want to hurt Will. He doesn't stir me, not any longer. But I depend on him. He is home and children" (p. 159).

Even so, Carol is cold toward him, as well as toward other men. Will says, "Of course I knew how cold you were. I knew you wouldn't stand it if Valborg did try to hold your hand or kiss you, so I didn't worry" (p. 380). At another point, he says of Carol, "she doesn't know what passion is. She simply hasn't got an idea how hard it is for a full-blooded man to go on pretending to be satisfied with just being endured" (pp. 296-97). However, Carol's words "He doesn't stir me, not any longer . . ." seem to contradict the opinion that she is cold as a permanent condition. Also, during their honeymoon, "she had been frightened to discover how tumultuous a feeling could be roused in her" (p. 26). Seemingly, Carol may not be highly-sexed, but she is capable of responding under the proper conditions.

During the course of the novel, Carol has two minor affairs, one with Guy Pollock, the lawyer, and one with Erik Valborg, the tailor's assistant. Both romances prove Carol to be a young woman with romantic dreams, searching for a beautiful romance that cannot exist in the real world. She desires to be the guiding light of a young artist, but neither Guy nor Erik fits this dream.

In Guy, she imagines a Prince Charming in the midst of the American Midwest, a kindred soul, full of mystery and romance. After about two months, Carol realizes that he is not a mystery or a romantic figure,

but that he belongs entirely to Gopher Prairie.

Disillusioned with Guy Pollock, Carol is later attracted to Eric Valborg. She admires his "artistic face," his good taste in clothes, and his sense of appreciation for beauty. She romantically compares him to the poets, especially to Keats, and imagines him as a future genius and herself as his guiding star. Again, she yearns to be the inspiration behind some artistic talent. She also compares Erik to her own father, who had died when she was eight years old: "She was startled by the return of her father, startled by a sudden conviction that in this flaxen boy she had found the gray, reticent judge who was divine love, perfect understanding. Of one thing she was unhappily certain: there was nothing of the beloved father image in Will Kennicott" (p. 339).

Both affairs began when Carol "discovers" a kindred, romantic soul. Both end when reality invades her dreams and disillusion her. She finds that Guy and Erik are real people, with real faults and real problems. They refuse to fit into an idyllic mold, to conform to her romantic dreams. Disappointed, she turns her energies to other things, still hoping to be the guiding light of something.

Carol feels that she is a great reformer, but is she? So far, she has accomplished absolutely nothing except to antagonize various people in the community. Even with Guy and Erik she comes to a dead end. Where has she failed, and why?

Lewis contrasts Carol with Vida Sherwin. Vida is a schoolteacher who becomes one of Carol's closest friends:

Vida was, and always would be, a reformer, a liberal. She believed that details could excitingly be altered, but that things-in-general were comely and kind and immutable. Carol was, without understanding or accepting it, a revolutionist, a radical, and therefore possessed of "constructive ideas," which only the destroyer can have, since the reformer believes that all the essential constructing has already been done. (p. 248)

Carol is impatient. She thinks that she need only point out the faults, and the enlightened population of Gopher Prairie will correct them, while praising her for her clever insight. She lacks Vida's common sense about the matter. Below is a typical Carol-Vida conversation:

Carol--"But can't the men see the ugliness?"

Vida--"They don't think it's ugly. And how can you prove it? Matter of taste. Why should they like what a Boston architect likes? . . . Anyway, the point is that you have to work from the inside, with what we have, rather than from the outside, with foreign ideas. The shell ought not to be forced on the spirit. It can't be! The bright shell has to grow out of the spirit, and express it. That means waiting." (p. 137)

Carol does not want to wait. She wants to jump ahead and make progress immediately. Vida "was healthily vexed by Carol's assumption that she was a sociological messiah come to save Gopher Prairie."

Vida continues to brood:

These people that want to change everything all of a sudden without doing any work, make me tired: Here I have to go and work for four years, picking out pupils for debates, and drilling them and nagging at them to look up references, and begging them to choose their own subjects--four years, to get up a couple of good debates! And she comes rushing in, and expects in one year to change the

whole town into a lollypop paradise with everybody stopping everything else to grow tulips and drink tea. (pp. 247-48)

When Vida or Will try to help Carol, to channel her energies in the right direction, Carol becomes sulky, and furious with the inhabitants of Gopher Prairie. Carol cannot take criticism of any kind, from her husband, her friends, or the town. When Vida tells Carol of the town's criticism of her Chinese party, Carol explodes: "Their meanness of mind is beyond any horrors I could imagine. They really thought that I--and you want to 'reform' people like that when dynamite is so cheap?" (p. 97). It seems that Carol is capable of "dishing out" criticism, but not of taking it.

Vida tries to explain that "Gopher Prairie standards are as reasonable to Gopher Prairie as Lake Shore Drive standards are to Chicago. And there are more Gopher Prairies than there are Chicagos" (p. 96). However, Carol still refuses to listen to Vida or to learn from her own experiences.

It seems that Carol, in the six years she spent in Gopher Prairie, would have profited from her mistakes and have matured somewhat. Instead, she seems to be no more mature than she was as a college senior.

At this point, she leaves Gopher Prairie and goes to Washington, only to find that narrowness, dullness, and conformity exist in large cities as well as in all the Gopher Prairies. She returns to Gopher Prairie a little wiser with this knowledge and is thus able to be more tolerant of the townspeople. Still, though, she kept her dreams, even romanticized her return to Gopher Prairie. Later, "she laughed

at herself when she saw that she had expected to be at once a heretic and a returned hero; she was very reasonable and merry about it; and it hurt just as much as ever" (p. 429).

Carol has learned to laugh at herself, to call her neighbors by their first names, and to accept certain social customs (such as segregation of the sexes at parties and in automobiles) (p. 431), but has failed as a reformer and has gained little from the experience.

Carol is very perceptive in pointing out flaws, but like a young girl of sixteen or so, she has gathered her dreams from romantic novels and is impatient to change existing conditions. She formulates no plan of action. She has beautiful dreams, but never solidifies them into reality. She also never considers whether the community she plans to transform even wants to be transformed. She has the attitude that what she does for them is entirely for their own good, forgetting (or maybe never knowing) that a desire for change must exist before that change can occur.

Carol is often just in her denunciations of the town. The maids were underpaid for the amount of work they did. She wanted to make charity less humiliating to the recipients (p. 141). She suggested the establishment of an employment bureau, classes in childcare and proper nutrition, and a municipal fund for home building to help the poor (p. 140). She is the only one who stands up for Fern Mullins, a young schoolteacher whose reputation is unjustly at stake.

Carol saw the needs of the town and sympathized with its martyrs (like Fern) but, as stated earlier in this paper, she lacked the

patience, common sense, and ability to formulate a realistic plan of action in order to bring about the needed reforms. She dreamed of an ideal world and was disappointed whenever the real world fell short of her expectations. In the end, she learns to accept some facts of reality, but she is still a dreamer. She comments, "I may not have fought the good fight, but I kept the faith" (p. 432). The question remains open whether Carol will someday renew her fight. She reaches a compromise in that she attempts to blend into Gopher Prairie standards, (become a part of it) but "keeps the faith."

Carol never finds a complete happiness. Her dissatisfaction and restlessness will never let her be tolerant of her surroundings. She will be forever groping for the unattainable. Her main fault, though, is that she lacks clearness of vision. She strives to attain her ideals, but she lacks the ability to formulate a workable plan to achieve them, and very often even lacks a definite idea of what those goals are.



## CHAPTER II: NOTES

<sup>1</sup>  
Sinclair Lewis, Main Street (New York: New American Library, 1961), p. 8. All references to the novel are to this edition.

## CHAPTER III

ARROWSMITH

## I. Madeline Fox

Madeline Fox was Martin Arrowsmith's first flame. She was a pretty girl, tall and slender, a bright social butterfly at the University of Winnemac. She was a graduate student in English, believing herself "to be a connoisseur of literature; the fortunates to whom she gave her approval were Hardy, Meredith, Howells, and Thackeray, none of whom she had read for five years."<sup>1</sup> She showed more concern for culture than for scholarship--culture being parties, dances, tennis, and knowing socially prominent people.

Madeline has a shallow personality. She thinks well of herself and prides herself on her own superiority. She was staying at Winnemac "ostensibly to take a graduate course in English, actually to avoid going back home. She considered herself a superb tennis player; she played it with energy and voluble swoopings and large lack of direction" (p. 26). And at one point she states to Martin: ". . . it's dreadful the way people don't have ideals about their work. So many of the English grad students just want to make money teaching, instead of enjoying scholarship the way I do" (p. 27).

Madeline often reproved Martin for being "uncultured," for wearing the wrong shirt, for his manners, for his vulgarity, his laziness, and so forth. Lewis says: "Few women can for long periods

keep from trying to Improve their men, and To Improve means to change a person from what he is, whatever that may be, into something else. Girls like Madeline Fox, artistic young women who do not work at it, cannot be restrained from Improving for more than a day at a time" (p. 47).

Martin desired to possess her, as if she was an object to be owned: ". . . she was precious, she was something he must have" (p. 44). His intentions towards this end were not "honorable," for "he did not think of proposing marriage. He wanted--like most poor and ardent young men in such a case, he wanted all he could get" (p. 45). Martin and Madeline did become engaged, however, and during this time Martin thought himself to be deeply in love with her, though his thoughts were more lust than love. Then Martin met Leora, and soon found himself engaged to two girls at once.

In the presence of Leora, Martin saw and "catalogued Madeline's pretenses, her nagging, her selfishness, her fundamental ignorance. . . He saw that it was she, with her pretenses, who was the child, and the detached and fearless Leora who was mature, mistress of the real world" (p. 61).

Martin decides to bring Madeline and Leora together and admit his double engagement. When he does so, Madeline springs up and leaves the restaurant, maintaining her pride and composure: "She had never looked quite so proud and fine. She stared at them, and walked away, wordless. She came back, she touched Leora's shoulder, and quietly kissed her. 'Dear, I'm sorry for you. You've got a job! You poor

baby!' She strode away, her shoulders straight" (p. 69).

Madeline, with her exit from the restaurant, also leaves Martin's life. She has remained, throughout their acquaintance, a calm, cool, beautiful goddess who can do no wrong and is bent upon improving Martin so that he be worthy of her. She is shallow, glib, and conceited, boasting of her abilities and her acquaintances. However, she never drops her pride or her composure, and she never admits defeat.

## II. Leora

Martin was sent to Zenith General Hospital to secure a strain of meningococcus from a patient. He asked directions from Leora, a first-year probationer nurse, and was irritated at her indolent amusement at his self-importance and at her "manner of treating him as though they were a pair of children making tongues at each other in a railroad station" (p. 55). After securing the strain, he returned to teach her that it would "take a better man than she is, better man than I've ever met, to get away with being insulting to me!" (p. 55). Instead, he confessed that he was a medic, showing off:

He felt an instant and complete comradeship with her, a relation free from the fencing and posing of his struggle with Madeline. He knew that this girl was of his own people. If she was vulgar, jocular, unreticent, she was also gallant, she was full of laughter at humbugs, she was capable of a loyalty too casual and natural to seem heroic. (p. 56)

Although Martin was engaged to Madeline Fox, he urged Leora to go to dinner with him that same night. He even suggested going to the Grand Hotel (an expensive place that Madeline had been wanting

to go to for a long time). Leora insisted on going to the Bijou instead, a less expensive place. She would never ask to be entertained expensively or to go to grand places as Madeline would.

Martin was instantly absorbed in Leora. "He found in her a casualness, a lack of prejudice, a directness . . . She was feminine but undemanding; she was never Improving and rarely shocked; she was neither flirtatious nor cold. She was indeed the first girl to whom he had ever talked without self-consciousness" (p. 58).

Leora hesitatingly tried to make Martin see her childhood. Martin cried, "Darling, you don't have to tell me about you. I've always known you. I'm not going to let you go, no matter what. You're going to marry me--" (p. 60). Martin went home that night engaged to both Leora and Madeline.

As discussed earlier, Martin brings the two girls together in the Grand Hotel for lunch, and admits his double engagement. After Madeline had left the restaurant, Martin was afraid to look at Leora:

He felt her hand on his. He looked up. She was smiling, easy, a little mocking. "Sandy, I warn you that I'm never going to give you up. I suppose you're as bad as She says; I suppose I'm foolish--I'm a hussy. But you're mine! I warn you it isn't a bit of use your getting engaged to somebody else again. I'd tear her eyes out! Now don't think so well of yourself! I guess you're pretty selfish. But I don't care. You're mine!" (p. 70).

Rarely would Leora demand anything from Martin, but in this one demand she was adamant. He was hers and hers alone. When Martin began to show an interest in Orchid Pickerbaugh, Leora said little, but Martin knew her feelings:

He began to resent Leora's demand that she, who had eternally his deepest love, should also demand his every wandering fancy. And she did demand it. She rarely spoke of Orchid, but she could tell (or nervously he thought she could tell) when he had spent the afternoon with the child. Her mute examination made him feel illicit. (p. 221)

Martin is not sure how he feels about Leora's demand. He wavers between agreeing with her and rebelling against her. She reminds him of her warning in the restaurant:

"I don't mind your cursing and being cranky and even getting drunk, in a reasonable sort of way, but ever since the lunch when you told me and that Fox woman, 'I hope you girls don't mind, but I just happen to remember that I'm engaged to both of you'--You're mine, and I won't have any trespassers. I'm a cavewoman, and you'd better learn it . . . Well, I'm not going to go on scrapping about it. I just wanted to warn you, that's all."  
(p. 199-200)

Martin continued to encourage Orchid although he did feel guilty about it whenever he thought of Leora. Regardless, he felt trapped. The situation is solved when Leora decides to visit her family for a fortnight. She gives Martin a brief warning, but does not lecture to him:

"Sandy, I'm not going to ask you any questions when I come back, but I hope you won't look as foolish as you've been looking lately. I don't think that bachelor's button, that ragweed, that lady idiot of yours is worth our quarreling. Sandy darling, I do want you to be happy, but unless I up and die on you some day, I'm not going to be hung up like an old cap. I warn you."  
(p. 221)

At first Martin yields to temptation, but Orchid's constant phone calls and presence interfere with his work and add complica-

tions to his life. He decides: "Orchid is too easy. I hate to give up the right of being a happy sinner, but my way was so straight, with just Leora and my work, and I'm not going to mess it" (p. 226).

Martin prefers Leora because she never complicates things for him.

When she returns, the situation with Orchid has solved itself.

Leora realizes that part of Martin's attraction towards her stems from the fact that she never interferes. She analyzes why Martin prefers her over Madeline as follows:

"I do feel we're nearer together than you and Her. Perhaps you like me better because you can bully me--because I tag after you and She never would. And I know your work is more important to you than I am, maybe more important than you are. But I am stupid and ordinary and She isn't. I simply admire you frightfully (Heaven knows why, but I do), while She has sense enough to make you admire Her and tag after Her." (p. 70)

Leora never minds that Martin's work and studies came first.

She had a genius for keeping out of his way, for not demanding to be noticed, so that, while he plunged into his books . . . he had ever the warm, half-conscious feeling of her presence. Sometimes, at midnight, just as he began to realize that he was hungry, he would find that a plate of sandwiches had by silent magic appeared at his elbow. He was none the less affectionate because he did not comment. She made him secure. She shut out the world that had pounded at him. (p. 108)

Leora never asks to be entertained. She goes to movies by herself, reads books, and patiently waits for Martin to notice her, while she leads a mute little life of her own. When she and Martin are together, she enjoys his company without wanting to go out or

have guests come in. Her only request is to "someday" go to France. She so seldom asks for anything that this strange request touches Martin, and he promises her that they will go--someday.

Leora attunes herself totally to Martin's needs and moods. She encourages him, boosts his confidence, feeds his ego, and scolds him when he needs it. When he becomes discouraged after losing his first patient, she scolds, "You're the most conceited man that ever lived! Do you think you're the only doctor that ever lost a patient? I know you did everything you could" (p. 156). She senses his need to get away by himself and talk to Sondelius. She urges him to attend the lecture while she stays home. She also senses his need to get away from being an "influence" and a lecturer and get back to research. She says:

"Just the same, my lad, I'm not going to help you fool yourself. You're not a booster. You're a lie-hunter. Funny, you'd think to hear about these lie-hunters, like Professor Gottlieb and your old Voltaire, they couldn't be fooled. But maybe they were like you: always trying to get away from the tiresome truth, always hoping to settle down and be rich, always selling their souls to the devil and then going and doublecrossing the poor devil . . . But anyway, you, Sandy, you have to stumble every so often; have to learn from your crazy mistakes. But I get a little tired, sometimes, watching you rush up and put your neck in every noose . . ." (p. 211)

Leora follows Martin confidently and unquestioningly. "I know I'm going to love Chicago" (p. 257) and "I'm simply going to adore New York" (p. 264) are her only comments whenever Martin resigns to take a new job. She follows behind him, never complaining,



and never questioning. Only once did she ask him how much his new salary was, and never did she question his decision to move. Few wives would accept being excluded from these decisions.

Leora has a tremendous capacity for accepting people as they are. She always accepted Martin as he was and never tried to change him. Even Clif Clawson she accepted. In fact, it was Leora who listened to Clif's unending jokes while Martin grew bored and impatient. Leora "could sit for hours looking amiable while Clif told how clever he was at selling, and she sturdily reminded Martin that he would never have a friend more loyal or generous" (p. 110).

Perhaps Leora's unassuming, accepting nature was the cause of her strange popularity in the Ashford Grove Group. Mrs. Tredgold adopted Leora even though she possessed none of Mrs. Tredgold's elegance.

Leora also has tact. Lewis says of her: "Leora had cunning. When she could not be enthusiastic, she could be unannoyingly silent" (p. 289). It was Leora who prevented Martin from being hated in Wheatsylvania when she suggested taking up a collection to send a seamstress (who was a carrier of typhoid) to a sanitarium to be cured. And it was Leora who soothed and encouraged Martin with a smile, a few words, or just her presence.

She is an adequate housekeeper, though perhaps not the best. "But she had no talent for the composing of chairs and pictures which brings humanness into a dead room. Never in their life had

she spent three minutes in arranging flowers" (p. 345). However, her housekeeping was good enough so that Martin never complained of it. In only one thing did he ever find fault with her--her sloppy appearance. Martin was especially aware of her sloppiness when he compared her to Madeline's sleek appearance. Later, he "began to consider Leora's clothes not merely as convenient coverings, but as a possible expression of charm, and irritably he realized how careless she was" (p. 235). It soon became a sore point between them. He remarked, "Why can't you take a little time to make yourself attractive? God knows you haven't anything else to do! Great Jehoshaphat, can't you even sew on buttons?" (p. 236). The following scene took place soon after, on the way home from a party. Martin snarled:

"Lee, why can't you ever take any trouble with what you wear? Here this morning--or yesterday morning--you were going to mend that blue dress, and as far as I can figure out you haven't done a darn thing the whole day but sit around and read, and then you come out with that ratty embroidery--"

"Will you stop the car!" she cried.

He stopped it, astonished. The headlights made ridiculously important a barbed-wire fence, a litter of milkweeds, a bleak reach of gravel road.

She demanded, "Do you want me to become a harem beauty? I could. I could be a floosey. But I've never taken the trouble. Oh, Sandy, I won't go on fighting with you. Either I'm the foolish sloppy wife that I am, or I'm nothing. What do you want? Do you want a real princess like Clara Tredgold, or do you want me, that don't care a hang where we go or what we do as long as we stand by each other? You

do such a lot of worrying. I'm tired of it.  
Come on now. What do you want?" (p. 237)

The talk accomplished little as far as changing Leora's appearance.

In a taxicab, returning from the Duers, Martin once again brought up the subject. "Don't you ever learn anything? I remember once in Nautilus we stopped on a country road and talked till--oh, darn' near dawn, and you were going to be so energetic, but here we are again tonight, with just the same thing . . ." (p. 262).

When Leora dedicates her entire life to making Martin comfortable and happy, why does she neglect this one sore spot? The reason is never stated, but it is probably due to her own admitted laziness. She is forever indolent about doing things for herself, which would include her dressing habits.

She is completely dependent upon her husband. She admits: "Sandy, don't you know I haven't any life outside of you? I might've had, but honestly, I've been glad to let you absorb me. I'm a lazy, useless, ignorant scut, except as maybe I keep you comfortable" (p. 336). Her being is geared to his. She would always follow him: "Leora whose fate it was ever to wait for him in creaky rocking-chairs in cheapish rooms" (p. 269). She never intrudes and is always content just to be near him.

She is always seen as a part of Martin. In only two scenes is she independent of him--on the ship, and at her death. Lewis lets us see her thoughts on the ship, but these thoughts are only of Martin. She is alone in her death scene, but as she dies, her last words are

"Martin! Sandy! Sandy!" (p. 374).

Her death is due in part to her complete dependence on Martin. She forgets to inject herself with the phage, according to Martin's instructions. She has always been negligent concerning herself, but this time it would prove fatal. In her loneliness for Martin, she smoked a half-smoked cigarette he had left in the lab, simply because it was his. The cigarette contained enough plague germs to kill a regiment.

After Leora's death, Martin realized how much he had loved her, and also he admitted how much he had neglected her. She had served him as a convenience, but she was a convenience which he dearly loved.

### III. Joyce Lanyon

Martin meets Joyce Lanyon while he is in St. Hubert. He leaves Leora in Penrith Lodge, a place he considers safe from the dread epidemic, and travels down to St. Swithin's Parish as the guest of Cecil Twyford at Frangipani Court. Martin and Twyford are enjoying tea when Joyce joins them in the garden. Martin is struck by the resemblance in their looks: "She was perhaps thirty to thirty-seven, but in her slenderness, her paleness, her black brows and dusky hair, she was his twin; she was his self enchanted" (p. 368). In his amazement, Martin had never before been so aware of a woman's presence.

Joyce Lanyon is the widow of Roger Lanyon, a man of family and wealth. He had left Joyce with a considerable amount of money and

property, including several plantations in St. Hubert. It was these plantations that had brought Joyce from New York to St. Hubert, where she had been trapped by the quarantine.

Martin is very much aware of Joyce's presence the rest of the night. He calls her his sister, but privately he is wondering if he is going to fall in love with her. He thinks lustfully of her loveliness while at the same time he considers her as quite useless (p. 369). Later that night, in bed, he lies awake, aware that Joyce is near and thinking of Leora. He compares the two, immediately feels guilty, and: "Suddenly he was out of bed, kneeling, praying to Leora" (p. 370).

Joyce volunteers her aid to fight the plague, and soon proves herself very handy in the kitchen. She is a remarkably good cook and an able worker.

Working together, the two became fast friends. They talked easily while at work, but afterwards, when Joyce had bathed, powdered, and dressed, Martin "talked to her as one who was afraid of her. Their bond was their resemblance as brother and sister" (p. 371). They were amazed at how similar they were in appearance.

Plagued with guilt, Martin secures an invitation from Twyford for Leora to join them at Frangipani Court. When he arrives at Penrith to pick her up, he finds Leora's body. He buries her there, and "then he went to pieces" (p. 376).

After Leora's death he had returned to Twyford's but once, to fetch his baggage, and he had not

seen Joyce Lanyon. He hated her. He swore that it was not her presence which had kept him from returning earlier to Leora, but he was aware that while he had been chattering with Joyce, Leora had been dying.

"Damn' glib society climber! Thank God I'll never see her again!" (p. 377).

Martin did not see Joyce for weeks after his return to New York. He buries himself in his work for a while, but his work does not absorb his complete attention. In his hotel room he "was reduced from Dr. Arrowsmith to a man who had no one to talk to" (p. 390). Loneliness drives him to telephone Joyce and invite himself to tea. She welcomes him.

What does Joyce see in Martin? She had admired him at the almshouse, where she had helped cook.

Had he been suave then and witty, she would not have been greatly interested. She knew too many men who were witty and well-bred, ivory smooth and competent to help her spend the four or five million dollars with which she was burdened. But Martin was at once a scholar who made osmotic pressure determinations almost interesting, a taut swift man whom she could fancy running or making love, and a lonely youngster who naively believed that here in her soft security she was still the girl who had sat with him by the lagoon, still the courageous woman who had come to him in a drunken room at Blackwater. (p. 391)

Her main attraction for Martin, though, was that she had felt useful and independent for the first time in her life when she had worked as an almshouse cook for him on the island (p. 394).

They were married the following January. Soon after, Martin discovered that Joyce demanded certain attentions from him that

Leora had not. Joyce refused to sit quietly in the background and be ignored: "She could, she said, kill a man who considered her merely convenient furniture, and she uncomfortably emphasized the 'kill'" (p. 397).

Rippleton Holabird, the director of the institute at which Martin worked, would not let Martin forget that he was in danger of becoming merely a "Rich Woman's husband" without his job at the Institute. Holabird used this threat to manipulate Martin.

Joyce, tired of Martin's long absences when he was working at the Institute, had a lab built in the unoccupied rooms over the garage. Martin concedes it is the best bacteriological lab he has even seen, but realizes that he will be unable to get away by himself to work. Joyce and her friends would frequently be interrupting his work.

Joyce respects science but has no understanding of it. She is proud of Martin and of his work, but she never really understands the concepts behind it and never fully understands Martin's dedication to his work. She leads friends through the lab while Martin is at work, showing off her scientist. She insists that Martin appear at various social functions and is furious if he forgets. Yet she takes a pride in Martin's work, even if she does constantly interrupt it.

Martin and Joyce have a son, whom they name John Arrowsmith: "Joyce worshipped him, and Martin was afraid of him, because he saw that this miniscule aristocrat, this child born to the self-approval

of riches, would someday condescend to him" (p. 426). He is proud of his son, though; he would often sit and watch his son, rejoicing in his strength. However, Martin never shows any strong love for his son. The closest he ever comes is when he is leaving to join Terry. He kisses his son and mutters: "Come to see me when you grow up, old man" (p. 426).

Martin, fed up with everything, leaves Joyce, resigns from the Institute, and goes to join Terry Wickett at Birdie's Rest, an isolated shack where Terry is working on his research in peace, without external pressures.

Martin becomes absorbed in his work once again. He still loves Joyce--when he happens to think about her--but Joyce is an inconvenience to him. Unlike Leora, she demands to be recognized as a person, not as an insignificant but useful fixture. For this reason, Martin leaves her.

Joyce does not appear to be excessively demanding. She shows people Martin's lab once a week. Several times a week she requests Martin's presence at dinner. She demands that his kisses be sincere, and she suffers quietly through Clif Clawson's smutty jokes. She wants him to remember her birthday, to knock before entering her room, and to admire her hats. Martin feels like all of this is above and beyond what should be expected of him. However, most wives would agree that these things are just the beginning of a much longer list. Joyce is not unreasonable in her demands. It is Martin who is unreasonable.



Comparing Joyce to Leora, Joyce seems the more human of the two. Leora is content to be ignored, brushed aside, and forgotten. She has no life apart from her life with Martin. Joyce is a more normal human being than Leora. She rages when Martin ignores her, she refuses to be merely his shadow, she expresses joy when she shows him the new lab, she tries to amuse him, she expresses loneliness, and she tells him what she thinks. Yet Martin loves them both. He stays with Leora because she is undemanding (except in fidelity). He leaves Joyce because he cannot respond to her simple demands in any other manner. She is an inconvenience to him.

## CHAPTER III: NOTES

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Sinclair Lewis, Arrowsmith (New York: New American Library, 1961), p. 26. All references to the novel are to this edition.

## CHAPTER IV

DODSWORTH

## I. Fran Voelker

Sam Dodsworth and Fran Voelker marry in 1903. Sam is an ambitious young businessman with the drive and foresight which will take him to the top of the business world. At the time he marries he is twenty-eight years old. He is a graduate of Yale and is in the automotive business. Fran is the only daughter of a German-American brewer, coming from an upper-middle-class home. She has received her education from eastern schools and has spent a year in Europe. She speaks German and has a limited knowledge of French and Italian.

The first twenty years of their marriage were not terribly different from most other marriages. Fran bore and raised two children, Emily and Brent, became a leader in society, and was an efficient leader in club work. However, she never matured emotionally during this time. She only acquired more tricks to satisfy her ego, much as a small child does.

Essentially, Fran is a child. Perhaps the nine-year span in the ages of Sam and Fran is in part responsible, but whatever the reason, Sam lets Fran get away with being immature. He hovers over her and protects her as if she is his child, and he enjoys the child-like qualities in her. Like a child: ". . . she played absurd

pleasant games--he was the big brown bear and she the white rabbit; he was the oak and she the west wind who ruffled his foliage--and she did it, too, until he begged for mercy.<sup>1</sup>

Sam was awed by her beauty, dazzled by her radiance, and often found himself putty in her hands. He often thought of her as quicksilver, but "quicksilver is hard for a thick hand to hold" (pp. 209-10). He often felt "like a worthy parent watching his daughter" (p. 79) instead of like a husband.

Sam sees Fran as mature and responsible yet as possessing a childlike quality which delights him. It is not until Sam has spent an extended amount of time with her that he sees her in a truer light:

. . . he had suddenly grasped something which he had never completely formulated in their twenty-three years of marriage: that she was not in the least a mature and responsible woman, mother and wife and administrator, but simply a clever child, with a child's confused self-dramatizations. The discovery had dismayed him. Then it made him the more tender. His other children, Brent and Emily, did not need him; his child Fran did need him. (p. 192)

Sam realizes at last that Fran is a child and that she has never matured. With the realization that she is not some sort of goddess, he takes her off the pedestal upon which he had placed her and sees her as a real person for the first time: "And the minute he was pleased with the bright child quality in her, the irresponsibility annoyed him. . . Bobbing at cherries is not so pretty a sport at forty-three" (p. 209).

Sam suffers disillusionment and heartache, but in the end he

emerges as successful. Fran gets lost in her search for happiness. She is never satisfied with what she has in her hands but chases every dream that comes along. She tries to find perpetual youth and gaiety, and with each failure she becomes more ruthless. In her search, she often leaves Sam behind.

Sam represents security to Fran. She treats him as if he was her chaperone except whenever she feels insecure or alone. In these moments she turns to Sam for support. The first time Sam leaves her she clings to him and tells him how much she will miss him. The next day she sends him a radio: "You are a big brown bear and worth seventy nine thousand gigalos even when their hair greased best butter stop did I remember to tell you that I adore you" (p. 143).

Occasionally the Dodsworths find themselves without a social life in a strange new country. At times like these Fran turns to Sam: "But it thrust them together, this aching tedium of marooned evenings, and they were often tender. . . They were again companions . . . They had again the sweetness of depending on each other" (p. 205). Soon the couple would establish themselves in social life again, and Fran would pull away from Sam. Sam knows: "It was true, the thing he had been trying to ignore. The beautiful intimacy which for a fortnight Fran and he had found in their loneliness, her contentment to be with him and let the world go hang, had thinned and vanished, and she was straining away from him as ardently as ever before" (p. 90).

Sam wearies of being Fran's valet instead of her husband, but he seldom does anything to change the situation. In London, when

he finds himself with Mr. A. B. Hurd, he feels he retains "something of a position as an industrialist," but usually he becomes "merely the Husband of the Charming Mrs. Dodsworth. . . In Berlin, he felt that no one considered him as anything save her attendant" (p. 249). He lets Fran treat him in this fashion without protesting and outwardly appears to be satisfied to be her chaperone.

Fran becomes an incurable flirt although she is adamant in stating that she detests flirtation. Sam believes her words, but deep in his heart he is uneasy:

He wondered if her rigid distaste for flirtation had existed only because she had not found American men attractive. She seemed softer, more relaxed, more lovely, and considerably less dependent on him. She was surrounded by amusing men, and warmed by their extravagant compliments. His conscious self declared that she couldn't possibly be tempted, but his subconscious self was alarmed. (p. 131)

Fran is nearly always surrounded by admiring males. She constantly protests that she and whoever are "merely the most impersonal kind of friends" (p. 185). Several of these "friendships" turn into romances, yet there is no evidence that she ever falls in love with any of these men. These affairs simply feed her insatiable appetite for flattery.

There is no doubt that Fran is exceedingly **vain**. She craves attention and is ruthless in getting it. She glories in the fact that she is capable of making men desire her. These men reassure her of her importance, her beauty, and her youth. Fran's need

for this reassurance has grown with the years and her vanity has become more grasping with each year.

She responds to anyone who flatters her and pays attention to her. In fact, everyone except Sam flatters her. Perhaps this is partially why she brushes him to the side--because he does not service this particular need that is so strong in her. Fran enjoys the preliminaries of courtship--the attentions and flatteries--but she only succumbs when it is the only way to keep these attentions. With Sam there is no need to succumb; she already possesses him, and although he flatters her in his mind, he rarely expresses these thoughts verbally.

Fran's attitude toward these men changes gradually. At first she is shocked by their advances. She is insulted and shocked by Major Lockert's advances and wants to leave England. Later, she wants to see Arnold Israel everyday but not divorce Sam. The change in attitude is complete when she wants to divorce Sam and marry Kurt von Obersdorf. She admits to Sam that she and Kurt would have had an affair if Sam had not interrupted, and expresses no guilt about her change in attitude.

Fran is beautiful but does not mature past the age of six. She craves attention and enjoys being enshrined by Sam. She uses other people to enhance her own shining self-image, and whenever someone threatens this image, she must place that person back into proper focus in the background.

Fran keeps herself superior to people by the subtle art of de-

flating them to build herself. With Sam she is a genius at assuring him of his inferiority. She criticizes him constantly for being slow and clumsy, yet she never comments on his good qualities. She steals his self-confidence by nagging him and by putting him down with well-placed remarks. She sees herself as European and sophisticated in contrast, and enjoys being superior to him (p. 200). Whenever Sam rebels against this treatment, she twists his words around and puts him on the defensive, nags him further, and in general deflates his ego.

Matey Pearson says of Fran: "She thinks that nobody on earth is important except as they serve her or flatter her" (p. 272). She feels a social position is worth sacrificing for. She insists on being the center of attention and feels that it is her beauty, knowledge, and grace that keep the Dodsworths socially prominent. Matey tells Sam: "Fran has been preening herself and feeling more and more that it was only her social graces and her Lady Vere de Vere beauty that kept up your position, because you were too slow and clumsy and so fond of low company and so generally an undependable hick" (p. 271). In short, Fran craves attention and social renown and sees others in terms of how much they enhance her image.

Fran enjoys playing the role of the martyr. She feels that Sam is a cross that she must bear, that his clumsiness is a handicap to her, that it is her understanding patience which should be commended instead of the qualities in Sam. She always has a cross of one kind or the other. Sam reflects: "She always had troubles--



always. They weren't very serious troubles, he thought: Renee had been cross, the cook had been cross--apparently Fran herself had never been cross" (p. 183).

Whenever she is in a mood of martyrdom and bad temper she nags Sam and makes him miserable, too. It seems that anything that goes wrong is Sam's fault and never her own. At one point Sam forgets to make hotel reservations. She snaps at the clerk, and later in the taxicab she snaps at Sam: "Sam, do you ever realize that it really wouldn't injure your titanic industrial mind if you were occasionally just the least little bit thoughtful toward me, if you didn't leave absolutely everything about the house and traveling for me to do?" (p. 52). She feels martyred and righteous, and blames Sam for the bad temper she has worked herself into. Lewis states: ". . . Sam was always to blame if it rained, or if they could not get a table by the window in a restaurant; it was not her tardy dressing but his clumsiness in ordering a taxi which made them late for the theater" (p. 209). She even blames the divorce on Sam: "Oh, Sam, if I could only make you see that it was your ignorance, your impotence, and not my fault--" (p. 289).

Even though Fran constantly blames Sam, she depends on him. This is especially true in the matter of money. Without Sam's money she would not have the social position she has, nor would she be capable of spending time in Europe. She thinks she is economical and prides herself on this fact, but the truth is that she is spoiled:

In the matter of money she was a brat. She talked, always, of her thoughtfulness about economy; of jewing down a milliner from a thousand francs to seven hundred, of doing without a personal maid. But she took it for granted that they should have the best suite in the best hotel in every town, and she so used the floor maid and the hairdresser and so had to tip them that a personal maid would have been cheaper. (p. 206)

Fran takes these conveniences for granted, but she would not have them if they had not been provided for with Sam's money.

Fran declares that she is loyal to Sam. She discounts her flirtations and her rebukes to him. At one point, when Fran declares she is always loyal to him, he explodes:

"Oh, haven't you! I suppose you call it loyalty to be constantly hinting and suggesting that I'm merely an ignorant business man, whereas anybody--anybody!--that has an English or French accent, any loafer living on women, is a gentleman and a scholar." (p. 102)

In Fran's mind, loyalty to Sam means that she will not let anyone cut him down. If someone does downgrade Sam, it reflects badly on one of her possessions. Therefore she backs him up in an argument with Lady Ouston. Later, when he reminds her of this, she remarks: ". . . naturally! I said it out of loyalty to you. I've never yet failed you in that--or in anything else" (p. 102). Actually, the reason she backs him up is to preserve the image of marital concordance and to keep the others from looking down on Sam (and on her, indirectly). Her loyalty is to herself and her own image rather than to family or friends.

Fran feels no obligation to be loyal to family or friends if

not to her benefit. She refuses to meet Tub and Matey Pearson or to show them around because they cannot enhance her socially. She also shows no loyalty to her children. She refuses to publicly acknowledge the birth of her grandchild or to return home to visit her daughter.

Fran believes that she is a good mother. She enumerates her motherly chores to Sam. She says she had bought their clothes, ordered their food, seen to their health, taken them to the doctor and dentist, planned parties and written invitations, and even scrubbed Emily's floor once when the maids were ill and the nurse was out. Actually, she had done all the external things to maintain the image of the good mother, but these things are quite ordinary and trivial. She really believes that she has been a sacrificing mother, but the children have had a nurse or governess and she has had plenty of maids at all times. However, she will not let people know that she is a grandmother because such an admission would ruin her chances of being eternally young. When Sam wants to tell Kurt about the birth of Emily's son, Fran cries: "But, Sam, don't you realize that Kurt--oh, I don't mean Kurt individually, of course; I mean all our friends in Europe--They think of me as young. Young! And I am, oh, I am! And if they know I'm a grandmother--God! A grandmother!" (p. 253).

Sam wants to go home to see Emily's baby. Fran refuses to go:

I'd be just another burden, at a time when

she has plenty. On the other hand, as it would affect me--

"When the world hears the word 'grandmother,' it pictures an old woman, a withered old woman, who's absolutely hors de combat. I'm not that and I'm not going to be, for another twenty years. And yet, most people are so conventional-minded that even if they know me, see me, dance with me, once they hear I'm a grandmother that label influences them more than their own senses, and they put me on the sidelines immediately. I won't be! And yet I love Emily and--" (p. 258)

Fran is much more concerned with her own image than she is about husband, children, or friends. She tries to maintain a "good mother" image, but the "grandmother image" terrifies her. She is afraid of growing old and wants to grab life while she is still young. She does her best to make other people think of her as young. She even tells people on ship that she is much younger than Sam. One of the passengers comments: ". . . that charming Mrs. Dodsworth--she told me she was much younger than her husband--he's a little slow, don't you thing--but she's so fond of him--looks after him like a daughter" (p. 346). Fran is desperate to have others think her young and will go to any lengths to achieve this. She knows she cannot keep youth forever, and this thought makes her frantic:

"I have only five or ten more years to continue being young in. It's the derniere cartouche. And I won't waste it. Can't you understand? Can't you understand? I mean it, desperately! I'm begging for life--no, I'm not!--I'm demanding it!" (p. 35)

Whenever Fran thinks that someone can enhance her self-image, she can be a clown, great lady, and flirt, all at once. If she

does not think someone is worth the trouble, she is obnoxious, cold, aloof, and deflating. She leaves guests feeling chilled when she retreats upstairs with a headache. Yet with other people who might enhance her, she turns on the charm and attempts to impress them:

Fran let it be known that she herself was of importance. She rebuked people who--never having seen her before--failed to know that she was an expert at tennis, French and good manners. She didn't exactly say it, but she spoke as though ruddy old Herman Voelker, her respectable sire, had been at least a baron, and she was forever laughing at this fellow-traveler as being "common" and approving that other as being of "quite a good family--quite decent." She was like a child boasting to a playmate of her father's wealth. (p. 209-10)

Fran makes it clear to others that she should be the center of attention because she is so accomplished and graceful. She is a social climber, cultivating the right people and cruelly cutting down those who cannot help her to the top. She is impressed by titles and old families. She equates Europeanism with culture and social prestige. Therefore she is impressed by title aristocracy who contribute nothing but their presence to society, and is rude to A. B. Hurd, a representative of Revelation Motors.

Fran desires others to think of her as European because she feels this carries more prestige than being an American does, yet Fran cuts Lady Custon down for doing exactly that: "I'll bet you anything that fool woman was born an American: Convert: Professional expatriate: She's much too English to be English" (p. 84).

Fran picks up bits and pieces of information and uses it to her

advantage. She is impressed by the "right things" and always admires these things verbally, but she has no comprehension why it deserves to be admired. She only mimics what critics say and what cosmopolites do without understanding why. She manages, then, falsely to gain the reputation of being better than she is culturally. To her, culture is only interesting if it enhances her to others who are socially prominent. Fran feels herself to be superior to sightseeing, but occasionally she lowers herself enough to go to galleries and exhibits with Sam:

And curiously, he enjoyed galleries and picture exhibitions more than she.

Fran had read enough about art; she glanced over the studio magazines monthly, and she knew every gallery on Fifth Avenue. But, to her, painting, like all "culture," was interesting only as it adorned her socially. (p. 114)

Fran is always picking up bits and pieces of knowledge: then she quickly rushes out and uses all that she has learned. She thinks of herself as well-informed and intelligent and wants everyone to acknowledge it. Matey compares her to Sam: "And you want to know a fact twice before you say it once, and she--well, she wants to say it twice before she's learned it at all!" (p. 271). Fran does this constantly. She quickly learns to say lift for elevator, zed for zee, laboratory for lăboratory, schenario for scenario, and shi for ski. She always holds her fork in her left hand and laboriously crosses all her sevens whenever she writes to friends in Zenith. She insists that these superficial things point out her Europeanism (p. 225).

Furthermore, Fran cannot bear it if anyone insinuates that there is something that she does not know. A perfect example of this is the case involving Jerry Watts. In Zenith Sam calls him a "white grub," but Fran calls him cultured and fine because he had flattered her. But in Paris when the Dodsworths bump into him, Fran shows an obvious distaste for him because he patronizes them. What really irritates Fran is Jerry's assumption that he can show Paris to her: "... that any other citizen of Zenith should know more about Paris than she was intolerable" (p. 125).

Fran is decent to Jerry Watts until he introduces Mr. Endicott Everett Atkins, who knows princesses and ambassadors. Fran turns her attentions to Mr. Atkins and is cold toward Jerry Watts, who has fulfilled his services.

Fran is also cold toward Sam. She is affectionate when she wants her way or when he shows signs of anger, but is cold toward him whenever she has him under her control. She uses Sam just as ruthlessly as she uses everyone else--to further her own self-interests. The fact that she is married to him only slightly changes things. She is obligated to suffer his ardors and allow a certain degree of intimacy whenever he behaves himself. After the Arnold affair, even this occasional intimacy changes. She seems relieved by the change, and somehow Sam knows that she is forbidden to him.

Sam is embarrassed by his own drives because Fran has intimidated him: "He had heard much of the 'sexually cold American woman.'

Heaven knows, he raged, he had felt it in Fran" (p. 318). She makes him feel guilty whenever he is aggressive sexually, so much so that he restrains himself from physical intimacy. He often reflects that he never really knew her: "She had retired into the mysteriousness which had hidden her essential self ever since the night when he had first made love to her . . . and she said, without saying it, that she was far from him and that he was not to touch her body, save in a fleeting good-night kiss" (p. 58).

Sam accepts Fran's coldness as an unchangeable fact in their marriage. The simple fact that Fran bore two children is amazing in itself. Sam and Fran never discuss this problem or search for solutions. Sam accepts the situation, and Fran, by clever conversation, is capable of changing Sam's passion into affection:

"Even if I didn't want to, oh, kiss you--Sorry I don't seem to be more passionate. I wish I were, for your sake. But apparently I'm not. But even so, we have been happy, haven't we! We have built something pretty fine! . . . Even if we haven't been wild operatic lovers, I do think we mean something awfully deep and irreplaceable to each other. Don't we?"

His touchy ardor gave way to affection. (p. 33)

Sam is less hurt by Fran's sexlessness towards him than he is by her apparent affection for Lockert. He accuses her of carrying on with Lockert and attempts to explain his feelings. He has been patient with Fran and has restrained his passions toward her, but it hurts him tremendously to see her attracted to Lockert when she is so cold to her own husband. Fran ignores what he is really telling her and twists his words around until Sam is so confused



that he apologizes: "Sorry I said anything" (p. 79).

Why is it that other men are attractive to Fran but Sam is not? She is married to Sam but their relationship is a father-daughter one more than a husband-wife relationship. Fran has many faults, but the blame for the way their marriage is deteriorating is equally Sam's.

Sam treats Fran as an "angel of ice," which is not a very realistic way to treat a woman. He is afraid of her and bows at her every command. At the same time he does not pay much attention to her. He is not interested in what she does when he is not around, never notices what she wears, never attempts to find out what would satisfy her sexually. He is not an imaginative lover. His vocabulary of "whispered sweet nothings" consists of "Did I ever remember to tell you I adore you." No wonder Fran craves attention and new and exciting things! She is bored!

Perhaps if Sam had been more romantic he would have satisfied Fran. Instead he is a father to her and tries to amuse her. The first night they are in London, Sam tries to find friends to amuse Fran instead of spending time alone with her. Lewis remarks on this situation:

How many millions of American husbands had sat on the edge of how many millions of hotel beds, from San Francisco to Stockholm, sighing to the unsympathetic telephone, "Oh, not in?" ruffling through the telephone book, and again sighing, "Oh, not in?"--looking for playmates for their handsome wives, while the wives listened blandly and never once cried, "But I don't want any one else! Aren't we two enough?" (p. 56)

Sam has paid so little attention to Fran as a person that he is incredulous when he sees that she is attracted to Lockert. For the first time in years he perceives that he does not own her--that she is a separate person in her own right and that she is capable of having interests that do not center about or concern him. Fran accepts Lockert as an old friend to wrangle with and laugh with, as she never can with Sam. She enjoys Lockert's placid bullying and treats him as a friend and an equal. She cannot treat Sam this way because they are not friends, they do not confide in each other or take time to learn what the other is thinking.

Sam is surprised at this new development. It had never before dawned on him that after twenty-four years of marriage he did not know this dimension of her. He curses himself for ignoring her, for thinking "carburetors more fascinating than the souls and bodies of women" (p. 213).

Sam has never given attention to romance. Fran is his wife and is therefore "won"; the romance is over. Fran feels differently. She still desires attention but must find it elsewhere. One of the men she turns to is Arnold Israel. She defends her actions to Sam thus:

"Of course he's had other affairs--perhaps lots of them! Thank Heaven for that! He's had some training in the arts of love. He understands women. He doesn't think they're merely business partners. Let me tell you, my dear Samuel, it would be better for you, and for me both, if you'd devoted a little of your valuable time to the despised art of rousing a

woman to some degree of romantic passion--  
if you'd give some of the attention you've  
lavished on carburetors to me--" (p. 199).

Until this time Sam had been too busy to be discontented. He had believed that Fran loved him because he had never taken time to evaluate the situation.

Fran so craves attention that she even welcomes bullying. Perhaps this is where she gets the following philosophy:

"It's my profound conviction that there's no woman living, no real normal woman, who doesn't want a husband who can beat her, if she deserves it--no matter though she may be president of a college or an aviator. Mind you, I don't say she wants to be beaten but she wants a man who can beat her! He must be a man whom she respects! She must feel that his work, or his beautiful lack of work, is more important than she is."

Sam looked at her in mild astonishment. If anything had been certain about their controversies, it had been that Fran ought to be more important to him than his work. (p. 225)

"And that's just what you do have in Europe, and what we don't have in America . . . Do you know why the American husband gives his wife so much freedom? Because he doesn't care what she does--because he isn't sufficiently interested in her to care! To the American man--except darlings like Sam here--a wife is only a convenience, like his motor, and if either one of them breaks down, he takes it to a garage and leaves it and goes off whistling!"

This time her glance at Sam told him what she need not have told him, but she went on with an admirable air of impersonality:

"Whereas the European husband, if I understand it, feels that his wife is a part of him--or

at least of his family honor--and he would no more permit her this fake 'freedom' than he would permit one of his legs to go wandering off cheerfully without the other! He likes women!" (p. 236).

Sam at last realizes that Fran desires a European husband, that she is unhappy and unfulfilled by him. Fran has given him a challenge which surprises him, but he fails to meet it. He continues to plod along at his normal pace instead of acting. It is almost as if Fran is offering Sam one last chance, one last warning, but that warning goes unheeded. Fran is subtle in begging Sam to take action, but the message is clear.

Kurt gives Fran the attention for which she is starved. He always notices what she wears, bullies her about her clothes, sends her flowers, and goes shopping with her. Sam never bothered with these details. Kurt is athletic, dances smoothly, flatters her, enjoys culture, and has a sense of romance. He also is a count (p. 288). He seems to be all that Fran desires, except rich, but she chooses these other qualities over Sam's wealth.

Fran wants excitement and madness, things that the cautious and aging Sam can never give her. She wants attention and romance, which he overlooks. She could be content with Sam if he would search for these things with her, but when he will not, she tells him: "You can stay right here if you insist, but I'm going to take the lovely things that--I have a right to take them because I understand them" (p. 35). And she does, too. She leaves Sam behind like she would leave an outgrown shoe.

Fran soon finds she cannot cope without financial security. She discovers Kurt is not all she has dreamed him to be, but by this time, Sam has found someone else who he is comfortable with, who does not demand attention or romance.

Fran is left alone, a confused child. She has never matured and has always depended on Sam for security. Without Sam to back her up she has no one to turn to.

Fran has never learned to discipline herself. She has connived and sulked her way through life, behaving like a spoiled child, a brat! She scolds herself and calls herself naughty because no one else ever has. She seems to be looking for discipline and sees Sam as a father figure, but Sam never disciplines her. When she pulls away from him, he just watches her slide slowly away without trying to pull her back.

Fran is a superficial and pretentious woman who shallowly parrots every bit of information she has heard. She is extremely vain and demands to be the center of attention. She is terribly afraid of aging because her beauty draws most of the attention she receives, and she fears that without her youth she will fade into the background. She is spoiled and selfish, judging the people around her on how they can be of benefit to her shining self-image.

Most of all she is insecure. She needs attention in order to build her ego. When Sam fails to give this attention to her, she seeks it elsewhere in a series of affairs with other men. She does not love any of these men, but she is attracted to them because they

enhance and flatter her, which superficially boosts her ego. She is driven by her ego and becomes more and more ruthless in satisfying it. In the process she loses Sam, loses the security she had in their marriage, loses her dreams, and is inevitably losing her battle against growing old.

## II. Edith Cortright

Edith Cortright is the daughter of a Michigan banker who became Secretary of the Treasury of the United States. She married Cecil R. A. Cortright of the British Embassy and had lived with him in Argentina, Portugal, Rome, Roumania, and England. Since the death of her husband three years before Sam meets her, she has wandered from England to Italy and back (p. 206).

A note from Tub Pearson's nephew, Jack Starling, had persuaded her to visit the Dodsworths in Venice. She invited them to tea in her flat in the Ascagni Palace, which overlooked the Grand Canal.

At first, Sam is not especially impressed by Edith Cortright. She is described as fortyish, pale, dressed in soft black which she wears a little sloppily, and she has lovely hands, a soothing voice, and intense eyes. She is unpretentious in comparison to Fran. Sam finds himself wishing that they were going to see more of her.

The contrast between Fran and Edith Cortright is obvious. They are exact opposites of one another. Fran is pretentious and shrill, Edith is abrupt and quiet. Fran is fashionable and shining, Edith is

dressed conservatively. Fran is childish, Edith acts maturely. Fran constantly harps at Sam, Edith accepts him as he is. In short, Edith's virtues are the opposites of Fran's faults.

When Fran leaves Sam, he returns to Vienna, where he bumps into Edith Cortright. In his loneliness he is eager for companionship. She invites him to tea and he readily accepts. He begins to see Edith as a desirable companion although he is a little afraid of her.

Edith is sympathetic and is easy to talk to. She is a good listener and encourages Sam to talk freely. She is slightly eccentric in that she dresses and wears her hair the way she wants rather than following the dictates of fashion. Unlike Fran, she is indifferent to titles and luxury. She is equally willing to tramp around with Sam or sit quietly at home. She is friends with her servants, the shopkeepers, and the aristocracy. To top it all off, she is an excellent cook and loves housekeeping.

Sam begins to spend an ever increasing amount of time with Edith. Just after she admits that she enjoys cooking and housekeeping, he begins to think that he and Edith might return to Zenith together.

Sam and Edith retired to the Rocolé's villa in Naples for a while. Edith surprised him. She quit wearing black and showed herself to be quite vigorous at swimming, sailing, tennis, and managing a house. And in the peace of the evening they would sit together over late tea:

And in the twilight hush, Edith's voice  
was quiet, not pricking him with demands

for admiration of her cleverness, her singular charms, but assuring him (though actually she talked only of the Ercoles, perhaps, or politics, or antipasto) that she was happy to be with him, that she took strength from him by giving him strength. (p. 334)

Sam finds a quiet companionship with Edith that he had never experienced with Fran. Her easy acceptance of him gradually builds his self-confidence and makes him feel secure in her presence. He finds that he misses her whenever she is away, and he is constantly finding some moment or idea that he wishes to share with her. He relies on her because she produces a calm and peacefully happy feeling in him.

He begins to desire to settle down with Edith, but this dream is interrupted by Fran's plea that he return to her. A short scene occurs when he breaks the news of this latest development to Edith, but the scene is nothing like the earlier ones with Fran. Edith states her opinion and then is quiet, allowing Sam to do what he thinks best. She does not condescend to him, ridicule, or attack him, as Fran might have done.

Sam returns to Fran but discovers that she has not changed in the slightest. He settles his affairs with her and returns to Edith. Although he still yearns after Fran, he realizes that their relationship was destructive to him.

He discovers a new youthfulness in himself as a result of Edith's undemanding companionship, and he finds the courage to jump into life once more and to follow his dreams. He and Edith eventually return to



America to experiment with caravans, a project Fran had scoffed at.

Edith is the exact opposite of Fran. She is accepting, sincere, unpretentious, and thoughtful of others. She is warm and understanding, sympathetic, and pleasant. She does not dress to impress others, nor does she cultivate friendships with only "the best." She is an excellent cook and a good housekeeper. She is willing to follow Sam, whether it is tramping around as tourists or settling on a farm in Michigan. In short, she is undemanding and is content just to be with Sam, accepting him as he is.

## CHAPTER IV: NOTES

1  
Sinclair Lewis, Dodsworth (New York: Harcourt, Brace  
and Company, Inc., 1929), p. 208. All references to the novel are  
to this edition.

## CHAPTER V

ANN VICKERS

Ann Vickers spent her childhood in Waubanakee, Illinois, located just south of the center of that state. Her father, as Superintendent of Schools, was one of the local gentry, so Ann grew up as an upper-middle-class child. Her mother died when she was ten, her father a year after Ann left college. As she was an only child, she was left without family ties at the same time that her career began.<sup>1</sup>

Ann would someday leave Waubanakee: "Yet that small town and its ways, and all her father's principles of living, entered into everything she was to do in life. Sobriety, honest work, paying his debts, loyalty to his mate and to his friends, disdain of unearned rewards . . . and a pride that would let him neither cringe nor bully" (p. 7). All of these things influenced Ann, and became a part of her.

As a child, Ann was a "chunk of a girl, with sturdy shoulders and thin legs. Her one beauty, aside from the fresh clarity of her skin, was her eyes, dark, surprisingly large, and eager" (p. 2). She was not too good at baseball, but she abounded with energy and determination, and could hold her own at most sports. She could often be seen taking charge, being the leader, and giving orders to the others. She was cocky and sure of herself, willing to fight anyone who opposed her.

Then Adolf Klebs arrived. The children stopped their play as:

. . . they turned to see, standing on the bank, a new boy. Ann stared with lively admiration, for this was a hero out of a story book. Toward such mates as Ben and Winthrop, she had no awe; except in the arts of baseball and spitting, she knew herself as good a man as they. But the strange boy, perhaps two years older than herself, was a god, a warrior, a leader, a menace, a splendor; curly-headed, broad-shouldered, slim-waisted, smiling cynically, his nose thin and contemptuous. (pp. 5-6)

Ann immediately surrendered her position as leader to this newcomer: "She had never before encountered a male whom she felt to be her superior, and in surrender she had more joy than in her blithe and cocky supremacy of old" (pp. 6-7).

Adolph became Ann's hero as well as the object of her affections. For the first time, she was aware that she was a girl, worried whether or not she was pretty, and wished that Adolph would kiss her.

She met Oscar Klebs, Adolph's father. The townspeople called him a Communist, but when Ann went by his cobbler's shop to see him, she immediately liked him. He treated her like a grownup, as if her opinions and thoughts were important. For the first time, someone was seriously inviting her to consider social problems (pp. 12-13). Long after she had quit caring about Adolph Klebs, his father remained in her mind. Throughout her life, "Oscar Klebs seemed always to be sitting beside her, demanding that she think" (p. 40).

Between the ages of eleven and fifteen, Ann "came to look on the race of males so protectively that it was questionable whether she would ever love one whom she could not bully and nurse" (p. 20).

After a party at which she had become disillusioned with Adolph, Ann thought, "The boys, the ones I want, they'll never like me. And golly, I do like them! But I just got to be satisfied with being a boy myself" (p. 34).

After graduation, Ann entered Point Royal College for Women, a pleasant school situated on the slope of a hill above the Housatonic River in Connecticut (p. 42). She soon found herself, "without particularly wanting to be, Important. She was on the basketball team, she was secretary of the cautious Socialist Club, she was vice-president of the Y.W.C.A., and, next year, as a Senior, likely to be its president" (p. 43).

Ann, aged nineteen now, was "appallingly wholesome-looking" (p. 42). She was "tall, large-boned, threatened by fat unless, as she always did, she fought it" (p. 42). She had brown hair, slim legs, and long, strong hands. Her best feature was still her eyes, large, dark, and shining.

Ann lived alone for two years, but her Junior year she shared an apartment with Eula Towers. Often, girls would gather in the apartment with them and talk of the future, debating between marriage and a career. Both traditional and new attitudes were presented. Amy Jones argued: "After all, isn't civilization founded on the hearthstone? And how could a really nice woman influence the world more than by giving an example to her husband and sons?" (p. 47). And Mary Vance remarks: "I do want to have a home. That's why you get a swell education--so you can marry a really dandy fellow, with brains

and all, and understand and help him, and the two of you face the world . . ." (p. 48). Edna Derby remarks that women have been the slaves of men for too long, and should demand freedom and follow careers (p. 47). Ann, too, wants a career in something of a vaguely social nature. She struggles to express this desire in words: "I'd like to contribute, oh, one-millionth of a degree to helping make this race of fat heads and grouches something more like the angels" (p. 49).

Such discussions were common, but the decisions were vague. Surrounded by the feminine atmosphere of the school, the girls seldom had suitors waiting for them upon graduation, and less seldom, had any clear idea of what career they would pursue:

"In the co-educational state universities, the girls might be jolly and casual enough with young men, and, daily seeing them fumbling in library and laboratory, not take them too seriously. But in this cloister even the girls who had been wholesomely brought up with noisy brothers were so overwhelmed in the faint-scented mist of femininity that they became as abnormal as the hysterical wrens in a boarding school.

They were obsessed by the thought and desire of men, and most of them took it out in pretending to despise men--when there were no men about. But when there were . . ." (p. 67)

But when there were, even the plainest male teacher had about him a group of admiring young ladies. Therefore, when news spread that a new young history teacher, and a bachelor at that, had arrived, the girls went wild. Ann, upon hearing of the arrival of this new "Greek God," swore that all men are troglodytes and that she would

never fall for one of them. In the same breath, she decided to consult him about the one hole in her schedule (p. 52). By the end of her visit, she had secured a place for herself in his class, as well as joined the gaping group of girls who clustered about him.

Hargis began by lecturing on the fall of Rome, a lecture which quickly caught Ann's attention because what he said contradicted all she had been taught about the subject before. She turned "toward Glenn Hargis as she had turned toward no masculine magnet since Adolph Klebs" (p. 63-64).

The relationship between the young professor and Ann soon developed into more than friendship. It ended even more suddenly, in a mountainside log cabin during a December picnic. Dr. Hargis made what Ann considered improper advances: "She sat up, furious that in betraying himself as just another Model T out of the mass-production, he betrayed her also as nothing but a mechanism, to be adjusted like a carburetor, to be bought like a gallon of gas" (p. 88).

Ann never went back to his office or made an effort to seek him out after the picnic. However, Hargis's kisses had awakened her sexual feelings:

She had never been very conscious of her body. It was an acquaintance often encountered, rather than an intimate. She had known it glowingly tired after basketball or tramping; she had known it softly relaxing in sleep under a comforter on a winter night . . . yet mostly it had served her, without much demand. Now it was all demand, inescapable.

The caress of Hargis had awakened her body to its rights, its possibilities of joy. Ann lay sleepless . . . and her loins ached, her breast ached, and in dismay she found tantalizing images of Glenn Hargis charging like traffic through her brain . . . (p. 92)

Thereafter, Ann suffered Hargis's ridicule of her in class until the end of the semester. She had no classes under him her senior year, so she only saw him at faculty teas. "Her passion turned into bustling activities of a vaguely social aspect" (p. 94).

It must be noted at this point that throughout the novel, Ann will dissolve sexual frustration by throwing her entire being into social work. When the frustration does not exist (as, for example, when Barney returns home), she lets her social work slide into the background.

Ann first exploded as a feminist in Sunday School in Waubesa. She began questioning her teacher about the biblical incident when God turns Lot's wife into a pillar of salt. Ann did not understand why Lot went off and left her, or why God should punish her so to begin with. The teacher became furious with Ann's questioning. When Ann told her father about it, he laughed. She stormed to herself, "Yes, it's men like Lot and the Lord and my Dad--laughing!--that make all the trouble for us women!" (p. 18).

While at Point Royal, Ann joined the Point Royal Socialist Club, which had an average attendance of six:

Once Tess Morrissey, a stern young woman, said they ought to study birth control, and they gasped and talked with nervous lowered



voices. "Yes, women should be allowed to govern their own destinies," Ann whispered. But then Tess, from her work in biology, murmured of actual methods of control, they looked uncomfortable and began to discuss the beauties of woman suffrage, which was to end all crime and graft. (p. 59)

The young women meant well, but they were intimidated nevertheless. Ann and her friends were more comfortable when the issues remained vague than with a specific issue.

Ann graduated in 1912. The following ten years she spent searching for her life's work. She studied nursing for a year and then quit to organize a suffrage movement at Old Fanning Mansion, the New York Headquarters. She was arrested in Tafford after a riot, and spent two weeks in jail. Her brooding in jail encouraged her "to escape from the righteous bondage of the suffrage movement" (p. 154). It also eventually led her to her career in prison reform.

Her confinement in jail gave her something she had had little of--time to think. She yearned for a lover, a man "who should have the irony of Adolph Klebs, the fresh ruddiness of Glenn Hargis" (p. 153):

. . . she longed to escape from the naggings and exhibitionism of reform to the security of a man, a house, children, land, and the serene commonplace.

Land and children and a hearth and her man!

She had never so closely yearned for them as in this bustling idleness. . . .she had been too busy to consider adequately what this individual Ann Vickers was, and what she wanted.

. . . .  
But it was an individual enough Ann who  
thought about men in the sordid and perverted  
feminism of the jail, among women staled and  
bound by sex. (pp. 152-153)

Ann admits to herself that, "someday, some man that I was to  
kiss, like Adolph, is going to want to kiss me, like Glenn Hargis,  
and then I'm going to forget all the statistics on the underpayment  
of women workers, and kiss him back so hard the world will go up in  
smoke" (p. 114).

She resigned from the Old Fanning Mansion and went to work at  
the Corlears Hook settlement in lower New York. By 1917 she was  
assistant head-resident (p. 154).

Ann met Captain Lafayette (Lafe) Resnick at a Settlement dance.  
He was "thin, sallow, not tall, with unsteady hands and imploring  
dark eyes. He seemed to be two or three years older than Ann--  
she was twenty-six now: (p. 162).

Ann, on one occasion, was to meet Lafe at the Hotel Edmond.  
She dressed in a semi-evening frock of soft lavender in order to  
look as feminine as she could. This was just "after having scolded  
a Jewish stenographer for putting so much of her salary into rayon  
stockings and so little into green vegetables" (p. 167).

On another occasion, Ann had painstakingly saved enough money to  
purchase an evening frock of blue taffeta and then found that she had  
to wear a jacket and sailor suit. She was furious that she could not  
wear her pretty dress: "She did, she raged, want to be something

for once besides the frowsy, grubby organizer who snooped into tenements and addressed envelopes and spoke on the corner of Main Street" (pp. 125-26). She angrily stated: "I like pretty things! Suppose I were to meet some grand man there tonight, wearing this old gym skirt. Damn!" (p. 125).

Ann is tough and determined and firm on the outside, but inside she still yearns for "feminine" things--pretty dresses, male attentions, a husband, home, and children. Lafe gave her hope of all these things. She subtly lets Lafe know that she is only tough externally when she says: ". . . I've always thought I had some talent for mothering--I suppose most females think so--but I warn you, I'm not quite so stolid and dependable as I seem. I have nerves, too, under the fat" (p. 165).

Perhaps Ann never understood Lafe for what he really was, but colored him with her own desires:

She was confused when, awakening at three in the morning, she could not recall how Lafe looked nor how he had spoken. Even then she did not suspect that she had never once seen him and never heard him: that from the first second to the last she had read into his boastful whining all the wise gallantry for which she had been longing in a man, and into his glittering eyes a cleansing passion which was not his at all but only a projection of her own desire.  
(p. 172)

Ann and Lafe plunge into an affair that ends when Lafe is transferred, leaving Ann pregnant. She is too proud to tell him that she is pregnant for fear that he would think it his duty to marry her. She hoped he would propose on his own. However, as time passed, it became evident that he had no such intentions.

Dr. Wormser performed the illegal abortion. Ann was convinced that the baby would have been a girl, and that "her girl should be named Pride, and pride of life, pride of love, pride of work, pride of being a woman should be her virtues. Pride Vickers . . ."

(p. 220). Ann was further convinced "that Pride had not been slain but had only postponed her coming; that when another child was born of her, it would be Pride and only Pride" (p. 220).

For many years, until Ann at last has a child, Pride Vickers would remain very real to her, always a part of her thoughts. Some unfulfilled urge in Ann would never be satisfied until Pride could be born.

Ann was head-resident of a settlement house in Rochester for two years. At age twenty-nine, the University of Rochester gave Ann an honorary M.A. degree. She was listed as sixth on the Time-Register's annual list of "The Ten Most Useful Women in Rochester" (p. 235). And she was not entirely happy.

Ann had a deep desire to be useful, but she occasionally grew tired of being just "another cog in another wheel" (p. 132). She feared losing her individuality and becoming just another face in an uplift movement. She began to desire to escape--to get away from social work and rediscover herself--what kind of person she was and what she wanted out of life. She decided to go to Europe.

She quit the settlement work and went to work for Ardence Benescoten as her personal secretary and publicity manager. She worked for six months and watched her bank account grow as she dreamed

of Europe. At last, the six months over, she departed "to find out whether there was still an individual called Ann, with the ability to love and be angry and foolish, or only a human pigeonhole named Miss Vickers" (p. 247).

Ann felt ill-at-ease in the tourist areas of Europe. She soon sought out the Labor M.P.'s, women journalists, Hindu nationalists, and pacifist generals. "And because she saw the workaday England, the boilers and coal-pits and dynamos behind the theatre lights, she loved it, and felt vastly more at home in it than in shattered abbeys" (p. 262).

Ann returned from Europe with the conviction that:

"So long . . . as there is one hungry child, one swamp in the world causing malaria--and that will doubtless be forever--I must go on scolding at slackness and cruelty. I must do it even at the cost of hating myself as a prig--a sentimentalist--a charlatan--an egotist setting up my own itch against the wisdom of the ages (that stupidest of superstitions!)." (p. 265)

Ann would always have a "vague belief, probably from reading novels, that the resolute and moral hero can always, in the last chapter, conquer the unconquerable" (p. 352). She would always be striving toward that last chapter, when she would conquer and correct the social ills of the world.

Ann found a job at the Copperhead Gap Penitentiary in the Women's Ward. She was appalled at the conditions which existed there and immediately launched a private campaign of reform. She met with hatred and intense resistance and was finally, by blackmail, forced to resign.

She learned one lesson: "It's not true that women aren't as selfish, as cruel, and as hard as men. We have all the masculine strength!" (p. 352).

Ann found employment as assistant superintendent of the Stuyvesant Industrial Home for Women. Two years later, she became superintendent of the same Home. She had written a book titled Vocational Training in Women's Reformatories. She was well-known in all sociological and juridical groups in America. In January of 1928, Erasmus University (Connecticut) awarded to Ann the degree of Doctor of Laws. In short, she was considered a Great Woman (p. 386).

Ann was very aware of her role as a Great Woman and tried to live up to it: "She remained classic and calm. That was ever so important a part of being a Great Woman, she was learning: being silent when she didn't know what to say" (p. 388).

Even as a Great Woman, Ann Vickers yearned for a husband, a child (Pride) and a home: "I wish I had a husband . . . I wish I had Pride. My daughter!" (p. 399). She felt clinging at such times. When Lindsay Atwell (a man with whom she believed herself to be in love) arrived, she "kissed him, to his placid surprise, till she almost strangled him. But she did not tell him she was tired: being tired was his privilege." (p. 404)

Ann wanted Lindsay to propose to her. Lindsay, however, was afraid that Ann would overshadow him. He explained to Ann that "I'm afraid you're a little too big for me. I have a career of

my own. And if I married you, I'd simply become your valet, I'm afraid, my dear" (p. 406).

Lindsay told Ann he was marrying someone else. After he had left, "all the dissevered pieces of Ann Vickers flew together and she became one integrated passionate whole, a woman as furious for love as Sappho" (pp. 407-08).

She evaluated her role as a Great Woman, her ambition, and her career. She stormed:

"And I don't care one hang for all of it! I want love, I want Pride, my daughter.

. . .

How simple we were when we used to talk about something called 'Feminism'! We were going to be just like men, in every field. We can't. Either we're stronger (say, as rulers, like Queen Elizabeth) or we're weaker, in our subservience to children. For all we said in 1916, we're still women, not embryonic men--thank God! (p. 409)

Ann's character changes at this point in the novel. Her suppressed "female" instincts now rise to the surface. From this point forward, Lewis has her searching desperately for fulfillment as a "female" rather than as a "social worker." She wants a home, a husband who is stronger and greater than she is, and she wants to have Pride (her postponed daughter). Her social work becomes secondary to these goals although she remains active in prison work.

Russell Spaulding asked Ann to marry him and she accepted,

with no better reason to give than: "Why? Oh, I suppose because he asked me to. And I like him, you know. Yes. Of course I do" (p. 414). Russell is a fat, joking childish "bumble puppy" (p. 419).

At first, Ann was happy. The happiness, however, did not even outlast the honeymoon. She soon admitted:

"He's a child. He does mean well. He's not a fool . . . But he's a child. He's vain. He's pretentious. I don't want him as the father of my children--of Pride.

. . .

"I don't want Pride to reproduce him. That's what a woman wants in her child: to perpetuate the man she loves.

"Oh my God! How could I have done this? . . . to get myself into a position where I have to share the bed of this clown . . ." (pp. 419-420)

Ann regretted wedding Russell Spaulding, and took precautions so that this child of a man would not father the child she so desperately wanted:

But--here was the heart and hell of woman's tragedy: if she did not have Pride in the next two or three years, she could not have her. At forty-five, Ann would be young, just mastering ambition, yet too old for children . . .

The cards were stacked--and no amount of spirited Feminism would ever unstack them.

A race, now, a desperate one, between her unwillingness to let Russell Spaulding father her child, and the time when no one could father it. But all the same, she could not let him get his flabby hands on her and on Pride. No! (p. 440)



At last, Ann could stand no more. After one and three-fourths years of marriage, she moved back to her old apartment. Russell stormed and pleaded, but to no avail. Ann was determined that they should live separately. They did see each other on occasion, and each time Russell would beg, storm, or command, but Ann would not move back in with him.

Ann still yearned for love and for Pride, her daughter, but the man who would father her child must be a man whom she respected and loved.

Ann met Barney at a party. Judge Bernard Dow Dolphin, of the Supreme Court bench of New York State, immediately commanded her respect. His strength of character matched hers, and she soon found herself falling in love with him. An affair began between the two that brought great happiness to Ann and a returning hope of bearing Pride. She now saw Barney as the father of her daughter.

Ann was so completely in love with Barney Dolphin that she ignored the fact that he represented all that she had previously been fighting:

Drearly she told herself that this one man whom she loved beyond all human beings represented, then, precisely the cynical, vulgar dishonesty in public officials that she had been most passionately fighting.

She told herself that, quite clearly, but she did not hear herself. (p. 470)

Ann became pregnant by Barney. She rejoiced that at last she would have Pride and that her daughter was fathered by a strong and

respected man. However, Ann was still married to Russell Spaulding and Barney was also a married man. Ann decided to move back in with Russell so that her child would be respectable. She would not let Russell touch her, but she let him believe that he was the father of this child. And she yearned for Barney.

At last, Ann had her baby, the baby she had wanted for years, only her baby was a boy instead of a girl. "Within two days she would have called anyone who hinted that she had been expecting a daughter a fool" (p. 503). The baby was named Matthew, by his biological father, Barney Dolphin.

The night of Matthew's birth, Barney managed to sneak into the hospital to see Ann. His presence comforted Ann, and he held her hand as she fell asleep.

"And I used to think in Feminist days," she brooded, as she floated off to sleep, "that the whole physical side of love--kisses, caresses, little pattings--was vulgar . . . Holding hands? Banal! I was going to have a high spiritual romance. Sit across from the well-beloved and discuss the funding of municipal gas works, I suppose! I have a high spiritual romance! And Barney's hand seems to me, this particular day, like the sheltering hand of God!" (pp. 508-09)

With the love of Barney and the birth of Matthew, Ann has found a happiness that has excluded her former feminist zeal. She speaks of "Feminist days" as being in the past. She has channeled her tremendous energy into being a mother to Mat and into her love for Barney.

Ann was a typical mother: "She saw, immediately, that Mat was certainly the most beautiful, the strongest-backed, and the most precociously intelligent infant in the world. She tried not to tell people about it at dinner parties . . ." (p. 511).

In the happiness of motherhood, Ann almost lost sight of her goals at the prison until an incident occurred that brought back all the old fight and energy that she had once displayed in her work. On Friday, April 3, a prisoner had been released, then re-arrested that same night. When talking to court reporters, she had blamed her behavior on the laxness of the Industrial Home. The Saturday morning papers carried a second-page spread of the story. (pp. 522-23)

Ann furiously dove into her work. She talked to reporters and to the governor. She prepared to fire Mrs. Keast, the woman who had caused most of the uproar. In the midst of this flurry of activity, she resolved to separate completely from Russell and made arrangements to purchase Pirate's Head Cottage for herself and her son, Mat (p. 526-27). She went home that night feeling satisfied with both her work and her resolutions concerning her personal life.

Ann arose early Wednesday morning to read the corrections concerning the Industrial Home in the paper. "Ann had a notion that there were favorable accounts of the Industrial Home in all the papers. She did not read them. She never did read them" (p. 531). Instead, she read the first page headlines:

T W O J U D G E S A R E I N D I C T E D  
 B Y N E W Y O R K G R A N D J U R Y  
 F O R R E C E I V I N G B I G B R I B E S

JUSTICES BERNARD DOLPHIN AND HENRY SIEFFELT  
 ACCUSED OF CROOKED VERDICT IN  
 QUEENS SEWER CASE

SECRET SESSION OF GRAND JURY STUDIES DATA  
 OF INVESTIGATION AND MAKES  
 SURPRISE REPORT

(p. 531)

Ann neglected her own fight in her concern with Barney's plight. She sat through his trial, agonizing in the stuffy courtroom:

They'll never see it--that Barney isn't like that--that at worst he just played the game as his organization did--that he needed money for his accursed crystal virgins, not for himself--that if he did anything wrong, he never will again--Oh, I could choke them--they'll never understand him," agonized Ann . . .the feminist, the professional social worker, the expert criminologist. (p. 535)

Barney was found guilty and sentenced to six years of hard labor. The sentence was just, but Ann could never accept it as so.

Ann re-evaluates her life, knowing that she has let her work slip because of her devotion to Barney and to Mat. She knows that Barney is exactly the type of person she has always fought against, and she does not care. She knows in her heart that she will never be ashamed of her devotion to Barney (pp. 543-44). She desires more than anything else, to have a place where she, Barney, and Mat

can someday be together. Towards this end, she directs her energies.

"Ann was astonished at how much money she could make when, for the first time in her life, she gave attention to this dull art" (p. 548). She began lecturing strictly for money and wrote a newspaper column called "Keeping Girls from Going Wrong" based on her experience working in prisons (p. 549). She was no longer interested in the humanistic value of a job, but only in its value in cold, hard cash. Ann had become a businesswoman rather than a social worker. And all the time, ". . . she was aware that the Great Woman, Dr. Ann Vickers, was not quite so reputable a character as formerly" (p. 551).

Ann, at this point, has completely given up her former values and goals. She is no longer a social worker, a humanitarian, a conscientious reformer. Her entire being is bent upon one purpose--to achieve a personal happiness by "fulfilling" herself as a Woman. Her great energy toward this purpose is almost warlike. She defies the world, daring them to criticize her.

She had bought Pirate's Head, and worked diligently to pay it off and to furnish it for Barney's return. The emotional stress during this period was so great that "she thought so often of suicide that only the presence of Mat, his funny grins, his funny swift crawling, his chuckle of 'Mama,' kept her from that escape" (p. 553). Her work, her obsession with money, and her son kept her mind occupied for the eleven months after Barney's convic-

tion. The more than four years left seemed to her like an eternity.

After eleven months had passed, Barney was pardoned by the governor. He returned to Ann's apartment, unannounced. They rejoiced in their reunion and made plans for the future--a future together.

Ann still claims to be a feminist. She tells Barney: "I'll always have jobs--you may as well get used to it--it makes me only the more stubborn a feminist, to be in love!" (p. 559). However, in her personal life she adopts the role of all but the feminist. A conversation between Ann and Barney on their first morning after his return reveals Ann's new attitude:

". . . Ann!"

"Yes, milord."

"I think that soil where the rose-bushes are planted is wretched. You ought to put in enormous quantities of fertilizer."

"Yes--"

"And I wouldn't be in too much of a hurry to sell this place, even if we do go West. We have--I should say you have, an excellent investment."

"Of course, I'll do what you think."

"And while I was in the pen, I read your paper on the relationship of crime and tuberculosis, in the Journal of Economics. I'd question your figures. Shall I check up on them?"

"Oh, would you? That would be terribly kind. Oh, Barney!" said in meek ecstasy the Captive Woman, the Free Woman, the Great

Woman , the Feminist Woman, the Domestic  
 Woman, the Passionate Woman, the Cosmopolitan  
 Woman, the Village Woman--the Woman.

. . . .

She said, and she made it casual as she could,  
 "Did you ever think, Barney, that we're both out  
 of prison now, and that we ought to have sense  
 enough to be glad?"

"But how are you--"

"You, you and Mat, have brought me out of  
 the prison of Russell Spaulding, the prison  
 of ambition, the prison of desire for praise,  
 the prison of myself. We're out of prison!"  
 (pp. 561-62)

This great change in Ann Vickers, this sudden reversal of character from strong-willed to meek, is questionable. Lewis seems to assert that this change is not only plausible, but permanent. The question is, how can she change her basic temperament? And how can she become a traitor to the ideals for which she has fought?

Lewis directly interferes at one point, and tells Ann that the fight for equality is useless: "The cards were stacked against you, Ann. No doubt they will be against your great-great-granddaughter. But since birth and life have thrust you into the game, at least be warned that the cards have been stacked" (p. 443).

In Ann's display of "meek ecstasy" on the last page, Lewis intimates that the various pieces of Ann--all of her different roles--become united in one role--"The Woman" (p. 562). Ann has at last realized her role as a Woman, has become domestic and submissive, and has converted her passion of reform into the passion of a Woman--for her husband, her children, her home. This is a

conversion rather inconsistent with her character, but one which Lewis manipulates, regardless.

It seems that Ann's whole quest in life is for a husband, a home, and a child. Her strong personality conflicts with this goal to the extent that she frightens most men off--they are afraid of being overshadowed by her. The other extreme--those like Russell--are not strong enough to hold her, to dominate her, and to satisfy her. She submerges her desires and passions in social work, eventually becoming a very prominent figure in this field. Barney represents a chance to fulfill herself. In her love and devotion to Barney her submerged passions surface, and her great energies are bent towards him rather than toward social work. With the birth of Mat and the eventual acquisition of a home, her goals are realized and her energies are converted from social to domestic.



## CHAPTER V: NOTES

1

Sinclair Lewis, Ann Vickers (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1933), p. 7. All references to the novel are to this edition.

## CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

The women characters in the novels Main Street, Arrowsmith, Dodsworth, and Ann Vickers are much more similar than they appear to be at first glance. All of these characterizations, with the exception of Edith Cortright, are incomplete and all remain at the same level of maturity as when they are introduced.

A development in Lewis's own attitudes toward his characters can be traced through the novels. Initially, with Carol Kennicott, Lewis presents an immature but vivacious and likeable girl who has her faults but has her good points, too. The positive and negative are balanced in her character so that the reader sympathizes with her faults. Leora Tozer represents an extreme. Her one flaw is covered by an avalanche of good qualities. Lewis practically idealizes this character, and the reader is overcome with sympathy for this virtuous girl. Fran Dodsworth is an exact opposite of Leora. Her faults are so outstanding that even the reader despises her. She appears as almost inhuman because of her numerous flaws. By the time Lewis characterizes Ann Vickers, he seems uncertain what his own attitude toward her is. She is attributed with many of the "masculine strengths" and is a likeable character, but she undergoes a role change near the end of the book which seems highly improbable and is weakly done. It is as if Lewis suddenly remembers that she is a woman and must therefore be submissive and house-

wifely. The sudden change is unreal. Lewis's attitude shows a definite development through the characterizations of these four women.

Carol is a tiny, pretty energetic young girl who has vague dreams of being a great liberator. She wants to be an influence and be responsible for improving somebody or something. She dreams of herself in this role, but she is impractical, lacks tact and patience, and is indefinite as to what she wants to influence or how to go about it. She wants to change existing situations without working for this change. She makes a lot of noise but accomplishes little, and in the long-run she becomes disillusioned with her dreams. She lacks the common sense to use tact or to be aware of the real needs and feelings of others.

Carol's self-image is very different from reality. She sees herself as cultured and 'literary' and believes that others should acknowledge this. She is always conscious of an audience watching her, an audience that is envious of her cultured knowledge and desirous of that same knowledge. Instead, her "audience" sees her as pretentious, fault-finding, and somewhat of a meddler. They find that she can dish out criticism but cannot take it. She sulks and becomes furious whenever she is criticized. The very fact that someone would DARE to criticize her is contrary to the way she sees herself, and for that reason is unacceptable.

Carol is self-centered and vain. She needs the reassurance she receives from the attention and admiration of others. She is

self-centered because she needs this reassurance so badly. Whenever she is not getting this positive feedback, she becomes restless and dissatisfied, also becoming more critical.

Carol is cold toward all men, including her husband. She had responded to Will at one time, but no longer does. She has several minor affairs with other men, but these are not sexual. The fact that these men recognize and appreciate her talents, thereby admiring her, is the basis of these relationships. Carol is searching for romance, not for sexual affairs; in her mind these two things are separate. Will simply provides the security and stability which she needs. He almost plays the role of the benevolent father who smiles fondly upon his flighty daughter.

Carol does not mature through the course of the novel. She does learn to laugh at herself and to accept certain social customs, but she does not mature, nor does she ever learn to be satisfied with what she has.

Lewis treats Carol with some degree of sympathy so that the reader recognizes her faults yet still likes her. He does not exaggerate her good points, but the sympathetic elements are there. With Leora, he does exaggerate. She possesses only one minor fault. Her good qualities are so numerous and her dedication to her husband is so complete that she appears inhumanly perfect.

Leora belongs to a male chauvinistic world. Her whole purpose in life is to be of service to her husband. She depends entirely on him for her existence and is totally submissive to him. She never

demands anything from him except his loyalty. Even in this matter, when his attentions stray, she never nags him. She briefly warns him, then drops the subject. She never complains and is willing to let him take the lead.

Leora is described as feminine and tiny. She is not pretentious as Carol often is: she is natural and unassuming. She even sees through the pretenses of others, recognizing them for what they really are and accepting them without scorn or disapproval. She is casual with everyone, refusing to put on airs. She is a good companion because she is content to listen to Martin talk, even if she does not understand everything he says. She is unprejudiced and understanding. She never interferes.

Martin is "her man." She is completely loyal in return. She never flirts with any other man: she is totally geared to Martin. She enjoys his company so that she never demands to be entertained. She builds his ego instead of her own: she follows him unquestioningly and confidently, senses his moods and acts accordingly, and never complains. Even when she is dying, her last words are his name.

The only fault Leora has is her sloppy appearance. She is unconcerned with her appearance, a point which occasionally irritates Martin. Leora admits she is lazy when it comes to doing things for herself, but however negligent she is about herself, she is never negligent of Martin.

Leora appears as a convenience rather than as a real person.

She seems to have no thoughts or desires of her own. She is totally dedicated to her husband, having no life of her own outside his. In the end, she becomes a martyr to science and dies with his name on her lips.

Lewis treats her two counterparts, Madeline and Joyce, with less sympathy than he does Leora. He consciously gives Leora one fault while he liberally sprinkles Madeline and Joyce with flaws.

Martin is interested in Madeline before he ever meets Leora. Madeline is tall, slender, and pretty. She is a social butterfly who boasts of her acquaintances as well as of her own abilities. Like Carol, she is rather shallow and pretentious. She considers herself as "literary" and "cultured" and enjoys feeling superior to others because of this. Also, like Carol, she rebukes others and wishes to improve them. She is selfish and does not try to understand others. She demands that Martin pay attention to her and treat her as a person instead of as an object to possess. She nags him whenever he fails to please her. She acts like a child playing grown-up games, changing the rules to suit herself.

Joyce Lanyon is much more likeable than Madeline. Joyce is slender, pale, and lovely. She is a wealthy widow to whom Martin is immediately attracted because of the similarity in their looks. She proves herself to be a good cook and able worker as well as highly desirable to Martin. She, like Leora, admires him tremendously, is proud of him, and wants to be useful to him. Unlike Leora, though, she is not content to be treated like part of the furniture. She

demands that he notice her presence, that he pay her attention, and that he be considerate of her. She wants him to be near her and to be present at certain social functions. Her demands are not unjust but Martin begins to consider her an inconvenience. After their son, John, is born, she becomes even more of an inconvenience, demanding that he also notice John. Martin, unwilling to meet these simple demands, leaves her.

Of the three women, Joyce seems the most real. Madeline and Leora are opposites. Madeline is superficial and self-oriented whereas Leora is unpretentious and completely oriented toward Martin. Joyce is a combination of these two characters, but after Leora's quiet complaisance, she seems demanding and unreasonable.

Lewis is definitely in favor of Leora. He treats Joyce with a mixture of sympathy and contempt, whereas Madeline is portrayed as a complete fool. Leora alone is treated with approval and total sympathy.

Fran Dodsworth has all the bad qualities of Madeline, and more. Fran's flaws are the exact opposites of Leora's virtues. If Lewis had divided all the traits of an average person into two groups as he saw them, one positive and the other negative, he would have assigned Fran all of the negative ones and Leora all the positive ones. If Leora is an angel, Fran is a complete bitch.

Like Carol, Madeline, and Joyce, Fran is slender and attractive. Her one positive quality is her beauty whereas Leora's one fault is her sloppy appearance. Fran uses her beauty negatively, though.

She uses it to call attention to herself, to gain the favors and attentions of men. She surrounds herself with admiring males and thrives on their flattery. She is insecure and needs this flattery to feed her insatiable ego.

Fran maintains her own superiority by constantly criticizing others. She tries to secure her social position by becoming intimate with those at the top of the social ladder. She is impressed by superficialities such as titles and old families, caring little to examine the person behind them. She is rude to those not in such a position, immediately assuming that she is superior to them and that they are not worthy of her attention. She sincerely feels that a social position is worth sacrificing for, so she is willing to sacrifice family, friends, and even her marriage for such a social position.

To Fran, Sam represents security. He is familiar and reliable, protecting her whenever she needs protecting. He also represents financial security. Without Sam's money she could not buy all the clothes she does, or roam about Europe. Sam pampers her and gives her everything she wants. She is spoiled and uses his affection to her advantage. She knows how to control his ardors so that his role is that of a valet more than of a husband. She is, however, intimate with him at times in order to keep him under her control. She thinks of Sam as a hick, and keeps him feeling inferior to her by well-placed comments and constant haggling. She blames him for everything that goes wrong and criticizes him for every imperfection.



There is a nine-year span between the ages of Fran and Sam. Perhaps this is why Sam feels like a parent watching his beautiful and wayward daughter. He treats Fran like a child, and she responds as such. She is immature and, like a child, is egocentric. She plays games with Sam, is self-dramatizing, is a braggart, and is undisciplined. She is incapable of accepting responsibility for her actions. Like a child, she always places the blame elsewhere.

Fran is terribly concerned about her image. She dresses for show, hoping to impress others. She worries about what others will think of her and does her best to present a good image. Most of all, she worries about her age. She feels that she will no longer receive the attention she enjoys now when she becomes "old." She desperately clings to youth, even to the point of hiding the fact that she has a grandchild. Even her family takes second place to her vanity. She wants beauty and youth and attention. She knows she will lose beauty and youth with age, and she fears that without these qualities she will also lose the attention she needs. She is therefore frightened of growing old and desperately tries to grab what she wants while she still can. She becomes grasping, using people to help her climb to the top.

Fran is not totally at fault. She seeks attention and romance from other men because Sam has never given either to her. He has shown more interest in his job than in his wife. He is too busy to be concerned with her. Fran refuses to be merely a convenience for

him. Unlike Leora, she nags her husband, and when he does not respond, she seeks this attention and romance elsewhere. Perhaps if Sam had treated Fran as a real person with real needs instead of as an "angel of ice" she would have found fulfillment in their marriage and have been satisfied.

Lewis treats Fran with obvious dislike. Fran is an absolute bitch, and Sam is her poor, martyred husband. When Sam finally leaves Fran, the reader identifies with and sympathizes with him and feels Fran has finally received what she deserves.

Sam finds sympathy and understanding in Edith Cortright. Edith has a lot of Leora's qualities, but she has thoughts of her own, too. Edith, like Leora, is attractive in her own, quiet way. She also shares Leora's fault of sloppy dressing, except to a much smaller degree. She is not sloppy, but neither is she immaculate. In Edith, it is not a fault. She dresses conservatively, in quiet good taste.

Edith is also unpretentious, a relief after Fran's shallowness. She is unimpressed by titles and luxuries, yet she is comfortable with them. She is undemanding, accepting Sam as he is without trying to improve him. She is a good listener and a sympathetic companion to him. She is friendly and warm to him and to other people regardless of title or name.

She surprises Sam when he discovers that she is an excellent cook and enjoys housekeeping. She is athletic and enjoys being

out-of-doors with him. She is equally willing to play tennis or go sight-seeing, whichever Sam prefers. In short, she is content to follow him around, doing what he wants to do, happy just to be with him. Edith is very similar to Leora in that they build their man's egos rather than their own, as Fran does. The difference between the two is that Leora seems not to have a mind of her own, whereas Edith has her own opinions of various events. She enjoys discussing politics and so forth with Sam; Leora merely listens to Martin's ideas. For this reason, Edith seems more real than Leora.

Ann Vickers is different from all the other women characters. Ann Vickers was written four years after Dodsworth, the last of the previous novels discussed. This lapse in time might account for the changes in character between Ann and the earlier characters. Lewis's attitudes toward women remain basically the same, but in Ann those qualities which Lewis would downgrade in the earlier characters are acceptable in Ann. Not until the end does Lewis suddenly attempt to make her fit into a "feminine" mold.

Ann was raised to value the merits of sobriety, honest work, loyalty to mate and friends, disdain of unearned rewards, and pride in one's self. Her sense of pride is so strong that it often interferes with her own desires and prevents her from expressing these desires to others. She is a capable and honest worker, disdainful of unearned praise. She displays a fierce loyalty towards her mate and friends, willing to defend them even when she knows they are

in the wrong.

Ann possesses many "masculine" qualities. She is a natural leader as a child, and continues to be so as an adult. Without meaning to be, she is important. People know who she is and respect her opinions. She is sure of herself and is ready to fight anyone who opposes her. She even spends time in jail for standing up for what she believes in. Her determination and stolid dependability often make her seem tough but also help her succeed.

Ann wants to be useful. She becomes apt at reform and in the process becomes one of the leaders of the reform movement. She finds she has become too important for most men; without intending to, she makes them feel like her valet. She knows she must find a man who is more important than she is and who is not intimidated by her tremendous energy and strength of character. Until that time she would continue her campaign for reform. Ann becomes involved in social work as a means of redirecting her energy away from fulfilling her own desires. It seems that Ann's whole search is for this particular man and that she will be unsatisfied until she finds him. She busies herself in social work to keep her mind off of the subject.

At first, Ann is afraid of losing her identity by submerging herself in social work. She goes to Europe to get away from it but soon finds that she is ill-at-ease when she is out of familiar territory. She begins to seek out labor leaders, political acti-

vists, and other reformers in Europe rather than sightsee with the rest of the tourists. She returns to America and once again plunges into social work.

She also returns knowing that, more than ever, she wants to find the right man. She yearns for a traditional home, a husband, and a child. She feels unfulfilled by the success she has gained; she can be fulfilled only by a child. The bearing of this child becomes, to her, a symbol of her fulfillment as a woman. It begins to dominate her mind, pressuring her to find the right man before she reaches the end of her child-bearing years.

She longs for a man so much that she almost invents one. Lafayette Resnick is hardly the man she thinks he is, but her desires color her own view of him. Later, she marries Russell Spaulding, only to regret it soon afterwards. Not until she meets Judge Barney Dolphin does she find a man who is really like the one she has been searching for.

At this point, Ann's submerged feminine character comes out. She falls in love with Barney, thoroughly enjoying the sense of surrender. She feels clinging at times, and finds that suddenly a man is more important to her than her work. She knows she is willing to give up her work for her man. She will energetically defend him, even if he is in the wrong. She will follow where he leads, content just to be near him. And most important of all, she will bear his child. In short, she will stand by him regardless of what happens to him.

This role reversal is rather sudden. Ann changes in so many ways that the total of her changes lacks credibility. She loses sight of her goals and her values and even loses her reputation. She redirects her energy from social work to passion and her home. She claims to be out of the prison of her own goals. She has given up her whole identity for her man. It is hard to imagine the rebellious Ann who once spent time in jail as the weak and submissive housewife.

Ann reaches fulfillment in this relationship. She bears a son by Barney whom they name Mat. She is proud of Barney and proud of her son. She lets her work slide and directs her attentions to Mat and Barney. When Barney is imprisoned, she becomes a businesswoman bent upon making money to buy the house at Pirate's Head Cove for herself, her man, and her child. She is totally dedicated to Barney and Mat, ignoring her past values, her past goals, and in short, her past life.

In summary, Lewis's feelings about a woman's role are fairly consistent through all four of these novels. His woman characters are often a little wayward, but they find true happiness when their passion is directed to the home. They find fulfillment in being domestic and submissive.

Carol finds some degree of happiness when she learns to be content with Gopher Prairie and to accept things the way they are instead of rebelling. Leora is happy because she is totally content to

be Martin's shadow. She follows his lead and never complains. She is happy just to be near him. Fran never finds happiness. She refuses to be domestic or submissive. As a result, she is restless and unhappy, searching for a means of fulfillment which she will never find. Edith respects herself, but she finds her greatest happiness in just being with Sam. Ann finds happiness after she meets Barney. She suddenly becomes passive and domestic, finding a happiness and a sense of fulfillment which she had never felt before.

From Lewis's point of view, certain qualities should belong to a woman. She should be domestic, meaning that she should be dedicated to her husband, her children, and her home. She should defend them and shelter them, sacrificing her own ambitions and goals for them. In fact, she should have no other ambitions beyond such housewifely duties. She should be an excellent cook and enjoy keeping house. She should welcome her husband's friends to her home, being gracious and courteous to them whether she likes them or not. She should be patient and understanding, always willing to listen to and encourage her husband. She should build his ego, admire him, and be willing to stand behind him. She should be loyal to him both in words and actions, never flirting with other men nor criticizing him in public or private. She should never try to improve him but should accept him as he is. She should never nag. She should be content just to be with him, neither interfering nor

demanding attention. She should be unpretentious yet be attractive and fairly well-dressed. She should be warm and affectionate with her husband, friendly but not flirtatious with others. She should depend on her husband to provide financial support and to make the decisions. She should accept these decisions unquestioningly and without complaint.

In brief, a woman should love and accept her man as he is, and she should confidently follow his lead without complaining. Most of all, she should be undemanding. She should remain quietly in the background, ready to sense his moods and pay attention to him without demanding equal attention. She should be happy to be a convenience rather than a real person.



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