Thomas Hardy's representation of human will in The Return of the Native, The Mayor of Casterbridge, Jude the Obscure, and Tess of the D'Urbervilles

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THOMAS HARDY'S REPRESENTATION OF
HUMAN WILL IN THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE,
THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE, JUDE THE
OBSCURE, AND TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES

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Introduction

Thomas Hardy expresses in his novels a firm conviction that man has the power to influence the course of his life and that the way in which he uses this power determines the quality of his existence. Hardy's belief in the significance of human will becomes evident, however, only when attention is focused upon the psychology of the characters revealed as they interact with one another and as they respond to the circumstances of their lives. Failure to perceive the psychological bases of Hardy's novels may contribute to the belief that Hardy envisions human existence as governed not by human will but by chance, social laws and customs, or the natural and moral laws of the universe; for the immediate impression conveyed by Hardy's novels is that the author holds a pessimistic view of human will as being totally ineffective and totally futile.

A study of the psychological bases of Hardy's novels, The Return of the Native, The Mayor of Casterbridge, Jude the Obscure, and Tess of the d'Urbervilles reveals the significance of human will in Hardy's vision of human existence.

1The Works of Thomas Hardy in Prose and Verse, The Wessex Edition (London, 1920), I (Tess of the d'Urbervilles), III (Jude the Obscure), IV (The Return of the Native), V (The Mayor of Casterbridge). All references to these novels will be to this edition and will be in the text.
For although in each of these novels, the effectiveness of the will of the characters seems to be negated by the powers of chance, moral and natural laws, and social laws and customs, in actuality, human will is not denied but merely shielded by other more obvious forces.

Each of these novels, with the exception of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, manifests many characteristics of a literary genre more specific than the novel, and the shield of each is made up of these characteristics. *The Return of the Native*, for example, has many of the characteristics of the traditional tale and consequently represents the world as governed primarily by coincidence or chance. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is much like the classical tragedy which asserts the existence of a universal moral order through the defeat of any violator of this order. *Jude the Obscure* resembles the modern protest novel which is concerned with exposing the ills of social laws and customs. The characteristics of these genre are merely superimposed upon Hardy's portrayal of existence, however, and should not be used as the sole bases for determining Hardy's personal philosophy. In most cases, they shield rather than illuminate the conception of human existence actually expressed in these novels.

Probing beyond the obvious literary characteristics reveals an optimistic view of human potential, for in each novel events of significance to the outcome of the story are
the results of human will and action. The fact that Hardy's protagonists meet with defeat does not indicate that Hardy believes human will to be ineffective; defeat in Hardy's novels is the result of the misuse or disuse of man's potential for effective action; that is, defeat is the result of man's failure or refusal to exert the power inherent in his will to effect a satisfying and fulfilling existence for himself. The defeat or "paralysis of the will" suffered by Clym Yeobright, Michael Henchard, and Jude Fawley is a consequence of the ways in which they used their wills, and not the result of the negation of their wills by forces of chance, universal law, or society.

_Tess of the d'Urbervilles_ differs from the other three novels in that the characteristics of a literary genre more specific than the novel are not superimposed upon it. Nevertheless, the forces of chance, universal law, and society are evident and seem to bring about the defeat of Tess Durbeyfield. Despite these forces, however, Tess achieves a quality of existence unknown to the other protagonists. Clym Yeobright, for example, manages his life in such a manner that he is left with strong feelings of guilt. His last words are, "My great regret is that for what I have done no man or law can punish me" (449). Michael Henchard's final impulse is toward self-degradation. In his last will and testament he requests "that I be not bury'd in consecrated
ground" and "that no mourners walk behind me at my funeral" and "that no man remember me" (384). Jude Fawley sinks into despair at the end of his story and dies cursing the day he was born. Among his last words are, "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, 'There is a man child conceived!" (488). Unlike these characters whose actions lead them to remorse, Tess learns the use of human will which leads to a sense of fulfillment. The quality of Tess's existence has been such that when the time for her death arrives, she can say calmly, "I am ready" (505).

Thus a study of the psychological bases of the action underlying the "shields" of Hardy's major novels not only reveals Hardy's belief in man's potential for self-determination but also provides insight into his concept of ideal human conduct. Implicit in the portrayal of Tess Durbeyfield are the principles by which life can become meaningful and self-fulfilling.
Chapter 1 - The Return of the Native

One of Hardy's tendencies is to model his novels after the traditional tale. Donald Davidson notes in "The Traditional Basis of Thomas Hardy's Fiction" that Hardy "wrote as a ballad-maker would write if a ballad-maker were to have to write novels." Furthermore, Davidson feels "that the characteristic Hardy novel is conceived as a told (or sung) story, or at least not as a literary story; that it is an extension, in the form of a modern prose fiction of a traditional ballad or an oral tale" (168). This inclination or "habit of mind" is responsible for many of the characteristics of Hardy's plots.

[Hardy's fictions] are always conceived of as stories primarily, with the narrative always of foremost interest. They have the rounded, often intricate plot and the balance and antithesis of characters associated with traditional fiction from ancient times. Action not description, is always foremost; the event dominates, rather than motive, psychology, or comment. There is no loose episodic structure. (168-169)

Furthermore, Davidson sees as the basis of the high degree of coincidence in Hardy's writings the fact that "the traditional tale admits, and even cherishes, the improbable and unpredictable" (171). Similarly, Davidson attributes Hardy's

2 Southern Review, VI (Summer 1940), 167. Subsequent references to this article will appear in the text.
method of characterization to this habit of mind.

The most striking feature of Hardy's habit of mind, as traditional narrator, is in his creation of characters. The characters of the Wessex novels, with certain important exceptions, are fixed, or "non-developing" characters. Their fortunes may change, but they do not change with their fortunes. Once fully established as characters, they move unchanged through the narrative and at the end are what they were at the beginning. They have the changelessness of the figures of traditional narrative from epic, saga, and romance to broadside balladry and its prose parallels. (173-174)

Although this habit of mind is evident to some degree in each of the novels under discussion, The Return of the Native manifests the qualities of the traditional tale to the extent that the significance of the will of the characters is often neglected. The plot of this novel is more intricate than that of the other novels because the central interest is diffused over the circumstances of a number of characters, whereas the plots of the other tend to follow closely the course of the life of a single major character. In addition, chance or coincidence instead of psychological motivation of the characters is more a governing force in this novel than in the others. Harvey Curtis Webster feels that The Return of the Native is "the most pessimistic of the early novels" and gives as one of the reasons the fact that "chance, in the shape of accident and coincidence, joins itself with...other unsympathetic powers to assure man's un-
happiness. For chance not only hastens events in this novel but also brings it to its climax and its sorrowful ending. And, finally, the extensive narrative descriptions of characters such as that of Eustacia Vye in the chapter "Queen of the Night" reveal Hardy's attempt to "fix" characters in the minds of the readers so that their behavior and fate will seem befitting their "types."

The seeming emphasis on intricacy of plot rather than on the psychology of characters, the seeming domination of chance over human will, and the seeming inclination toward character manipulation rather than character development is enhanced by the pervasiveness of the setting, Egdon Heath. Hardy describes the heath, "the vast tract of unenclosed wild" (3) as "in keeping with the moods of the more thinking among mankind" (5). He observes that the heath "was at present a place perfectly accordant with man's nature—neither ghastly, hateful, nor ugly; neither commonplace, unmeaning, nor tame; but like man, slighted and enduring" (6). However, although the heath is at one with "the more thinking among mankind" and with the "slighted and enduring," it is an enemy to all who oppose it. "Civilization was its enemy" (6), an enemy against which the heath constantly asserted its

3On a Darkling Plain: The Art and Thought of Thomas Hardy (Chicago, 1947), pp. 120-121. Subsequent references to this edition will appear in the text.
character and always won. "The sea changed, the fields changed, the river, the villages, and the people changed, yet Egdon remained" (7). Thus implicit in this description of Egdon Heath is a pessimistic view of the nature of modern man, "slighted and enduring," as well as the belief that all human efforts not subservient to the dictates of the heath are futile. In such a setting the subtleties of human psychology, the assertion of human will, and the growth and change of individuals are dwarfed to infinitesimal significance. Descriptions of this sort lead to observations such as John Holloway's on Hardy's use of nature.

That human life and indeed human consciousness itself, is wholly subject to the control of Nature is something which the people in Hardy's novels illustrate everywhere. It is his constant care to make the reader visualize them encompassed by a landscape to which they are subordinate...They are not simply in, but governed by and subdued to their environment.

The Return of the Native can, indeed, be read as a story of fixed characters playing their roles in an "improbable and unpredictable" drama in which all are "governed by and subdued to their environment." Thomasin is the honest country girl made miserable by the lady-killer, Wildeve, who later falls into the power of the pagan goddess, Eustacia Vye. Clym is the self-proclaimed, misguided ideal-

ist whose hopeless ambition is to bring enlightenment to the never-changing heath. The neglected aging parent, Mrs. Yeobright dies a spiteful death owing to agents of the heath, the sun and an adder. Respect for his mother after her death leads Clym to abandon his idealistic goals of bringing change to the heath, and he submits instead to preaching on "morally unimpeachable subjects" (485). The pagan goddess and the lady-killer in a final desperate attempt to overcome and escape the heath are drowned in a weir in the midst of a rainstorm. Thus the tale comes to a close with all who were at odds with the heath finally subdued, while Venn and Thoma-sin, the only ones thoroughly reconciled to the heath from the first, remain undefeated. The whole story can be told without reference to "motive, psychology, or comment" but as simply a series of incidents intertwined around a group of stereotyped, unchanging characters involved in a bizarre "improbable and unpredictable" tale.

Such a reading, however, is superficial and considers primarily authorial descriptions of characters. A rigorous appraisal of the psychology of each character as revealed in his actions and in his interactions with other characters and with his environment reveals that human will, not the power of the heath or the perverse operation of fate, is the most significant determining force behind the action of the novel.
As Hardy introduces his characters, he not only indicates their physical appearances but also conveys his concept of their personalities as they are to function in the ensuing tale. For example, Mrs. Yeobright, the mother of the hero, is first described in the presence of a group of heath dwellers or rustics, for the contrast thus provided best brings out Hardy's concept of her. She is "a well-known and respected widow of the neighborhood, of a standing which can only be expressed by the word genteel" (35). The whiteness of her face against the Egdon sky is likened to a cameo, which suggests an aristocratic heritage; for it is precisely her consciousness of family background which Hardy indicates sets her apart from the rustics. Mrs. Yeobright's attitude emphasizes this awareness.

The air with which she looked at the heathmen betokened a certain unconcern at their presence, or at what might be their opinions of her for walking in that lonely spot at such an hour, thus indirectly implying that in some respect or other they were not up to her level....Her normal manner among the heathfolk had that reticence which results from the consciousness of superior communicative power. (35)

In addition to her attitude of indifference and superiority to the heathmen, Mrs. Yeobright has extremely acute mental vision. Hardy tells us that her "well-formed features" are "of the type usually found where perspicacity is the chief quality enthroned within" (35). Midway through the novel, Hardy enlarges this description of her shrewdness to give his
reader a concept of the formidable amount of wisdom Clym is opposing when he acts against the advice of his mother. Mrs. Yeobright is described as having "a singular insight into life, considering that she had never mixed with it." She is among the ones gifted with such intuition that she can "watch a world which [she] never saw, and estimate forces of which [she has] only heard." Hardy also conceives of Mrs. Yeobright as a pensive person. He notes that "her life was very complete on its reflective side." Her "philosophy of her nature, and its limitations by circumstances" had become so much a part of her that they were "almost written in her movement" (223-224).

Hardy's concept of Mrs. Yeobright is thus one of a "respected widow" who considers herself above the social level of her neighbors and consequently above concern over their opinions of her. Her "chief quality" is perspicacity of such acuteness that she has "singular insight into life" although she has participated so little in it.

Shortly after she is introduced, however, Mrs. Yeobright begins to reveal the true complexity of her personality through her actions. In his description of her Hardy does not mention the characteristic which most obviously, most frequently, and most significantly motivates her actions; that is, despite her genteel standing and despite her air of superiority, Mrs. Yeobright's greatest concern is protecting
the social standing of her family. Her fear of losing the respect of her neighbors and thus damaging her standing in the community is responsible for much of her action.

For example, she had opposed the marriage of her niece to Damon Wildeve because she wanted Thomasin "to marry a professional man" (92), and Wildeve was only the neighborhood innkeeper. Mrs. Yeobright's fear of Wildeve's threat to her family standing was so great that she forbade the banns in church even though doing so meant "making [herself] the public talk for weeks" (45). Subsequently, she had decided that since Thomasin was not a daughter but only a niece, she should do as she pleased; and after a few months wedding plans were made once more. However, because drawing the harsh light of public attention to a marriage which had once been forbidden would have been an irregularity which might have further threatened Mrs. Yeobright's family standing, the couple had decided upon a quiet wedding in another town.

Thus the situation of these three characters at the opening of the novel is a consequence primarily of Mrs. Yeobright's fear of threat to her family standing. If she had not feared Wildeve's social position as a threat to her family standing, the marriage would have been made with no irregularities. Later, if she had not feared another exposure to the light of public opinion, the wedding would have taken place in Egdon and the confusion over the license avoided.
"The chief quality enthroned within" Mrs. Yeobright may be perspicacity, but she apparently is not perspicacious enough to realize that she is responsible for most of the unpleasantness attaching to Thomasin's marriage. In addition, if she had been a little more perspicacious, she could have averted further tragedies by perceiving that Thomasin is no longer in a frame of mind to marry Wildeve. Still motivated by her fear of public opinion, Mrs. Yeobright insists that the wedding plans be carried out now that they have been made public. When Thomasin declares, "I will be the miserablest woman in the world, and not let him see me again. No, I won't have him!" Mrs. Yeobright answers, "It is too late to speak so." She insists, "Marry him you must after this" (45). Later in speaking to Wildeve alone, Thomasin makes it quite evident that her marriage to Wildeve is more in accordance with her aunt's desire than her own.

"But I don't care personally if it never takes place," she added with a little dignity; "no I can live without you. It is Aunt I think of. She is so proud, and thinks so much of her family respectability, that she will be cut down with mortification if this story should get abroad before--it is done." (49)

Thus when the marriage which brings so much grief does take place, it is largely the result of Mrs. Yeobright's need to protect the social standing of her family. Far from being simply a "well-known and respected widow" who is made to
suffer her son's heartlessness, Mrs. Yeobright is herself the wielder of a relentless will which brings grief to many.

Hardy's initial description of Thomasin is similarly that of a person innocent of causing grief to anyone; yet her subsequent actions reveal that she is indeed somewhat responsible for much of the sorrow suffered by herself and others. Thomasin is introduced in a position of dependence and seems to be the embodiment of innocence. She had appealed to Diggory Venn for a ride to Egdon from Anglebury where she was to have been married to Damon Wildeve. She is described sleeping in Venn's van on a couch, made safe from the red dye by the protection of draperies which Venn had hung around her. She is a picture of goodness and beauty, elevated to near angelic stature.

A fair, sweet, and honest country face was revealed reposing in a nest of wavy chestnut hair. It was between pretty and beautiful. Though her eyes were closed, one could easily imagine the light necessarily shining in them as the culmination of the luminous workmanship around. The groundwork of the face was hopefulness; but over it now lay like a foreign substance a film of anxiety and grief. (41)

Thomasin's innocence and candor become even more evident when she opens her eyes and sees Venn and Mrs. Yeobright standing over her.

Her several thoughts and fractions of thoughts as signalled by the changes on her face, were exhibited by the light to the utmost nicety. An ingenuous transparent life was disclosed, as if the flow of her existence could be seen passing within her. (42)
Her candor reveals that she has not yet discovered a need to mask her thoughts or impulses because of a fear that they would be unacceptable to society; and the fact that the "film of anxiety" is foreign to her indicates that she has found living up to socially prescribed standards agreeable to her nature. She has lived in such accord with her social environment that the very "flow of her existence" could be disclosed in good faith that it would find acceptance by those around her.

Unless the nature of Thomasin's innocence is further scrutinized, such a description would seem to absolve her of any responsibility for her misfortune. But Thomasin is responsible for her ill-fated marriage to Wildeve. Her fault, however, is not the compulsive assertion of will practiced by Mrs. Yeobright, but instead it is the failure to act in obedience to her own impulses. Unaccustomed to feeling and asserting her own impulses in matters of little real significance, Thomasin finds it easier to agree to her aunt's wishes than to assert her own even in a matter as important as marriage, the consequences of which she, not Mrs. Yeobright, will have to endure. Thus though she feels a reluctance to marry, she allows her feelings to be overwhelmed by the strength of her aunt's need to preserve the respectability of her family name.

Observing Thomasin's character in action reveals that the candor, which in the narrative description was represented
as merely a crowning complement to "a fair, sweet, and honest country face," in actuality has much more serious ramifications. The candor which is so evident in Thomasin has been purchased at the cost of the total negation of her personal existence.

Hardy's portrayal of Damon Wildeve is similar to that of Thomasin except that Damon appears more guilty in the narrative descriptions that he does in action. The initial description of Wildeve is of a man capable of living up to the ominous implications of his name. When Thomasin and Mrs. Yeobright approach Wildeve's house, the first glimpse they get of him is of "a vast shadow, in which could be dimly traced portions of a masculine contour [blotting] half the ceiling" (46); and when Mrs. Yeobright sees him sitting in his parlor, he is again represented as a shadow covering light. "The back and shoulders of a man came between Mrs. Yeobright's eyes and the fire" (47). Following so soon after the light images used to describe Thomasin, these shadowy descriptions reveal Hardy's concept of Wildeve as the person responsible for the shadow of grief eclipsing the light of Thomasin's face. Details of the nature of this shadow become evident when we learn "the grace of his movement was singular—it was the pantomimic expression of a lady-killing career." His physical features apparently serve his "career" well, for "altogether he was one in whom no man would have seen anything to admire, and in whom
no woman would have seen anything to dislike" (47). The contrast between the polished appearance of this lady-killer and the "fair, sweet, and honest country face" of Thomasin makes quite evident Hardy's concept of the relationship of the two characters. Wildeve is to be the character responsible for the grief Thomasin is to experience.

Damon Wildeve, however, despite his "lady-killing career," seen in action is far less responsible than the two women for the grief experienced by Thomasin. There is little evidence that Wildeve's intentions with regard to Thomasin had been less than honest; his attraction to her was sincere. However, because of Eustacia's "pagan goddess" image, Damon Wildeve is frequently assumed to be a rejected lover using an innocent country girl to help alleviate the pain of rejection. J. O. Bailey interprets Damon's relationship with Eustacia as follows:

Eustacia had been Wildeve's mistress, but she tired of him. For diversion, he courted Thomasin....Wildeve, longing for Eustacia, agreed half-heartedly [to marry Thomasin].

In actuality, however, it was Wildeve who tired of his first sweetheart and chose Thomasin instead; for according to Eustacia's accusation to Wildeve, "You chose her, and walked about with her, and deserted me entirely" (69). In addition

to choosing Thomasin freely, Wildeve obviously was seriously
bent upon marrying her, not merely flirting with her until
he tired of her as well. For his interest in her had been
strong enough to have the banns read in church, and to sur-
vive her aunt's forbidding the banns and her subsequent
change of sentiment. Furthermore, he had actually acquired
a marriage license and driven Thomasin to Anglebury to be
married, all presumably under his own volition; for Thomasin
obviously is incapable of asserting her will over another
person, and Mrs. Yeobright had been opposed to the proposed
marriage until it had become known publicly. Thus aside from
Hardy's implication that Wildeve is a lady-killer, all evi-
dence indicates that the mishap in Anglebury really was ac-
cidental and not, as Mrs. Yeobright contends, evidence of
Wildeve's desire to "play tricks" (45) upon her.

Similarly, there is no reason to believe Wildeve does
not intend to marry Thomasin in Budmouth the following
Monday. He mentions the possibility several times, and when
the uninformed rustics come to serenade the "newlyweds,"
Wildeve indicates his awareness of social opinion and of his
social responsibility. He says

"We are regularly besieged. There are fifty
of them out there if there's one. You stay
in this room with Thomasin; I'll go out and
face them. You must stay now, for my sake,
till they are gone, so that it may seem as
if all was right. Come, Tamsie dear, don't
go making a scene—we must marry after this;
that you can see as well as I." (51)
Ironically, because of her fear of losing her social position, Mrs. Yeobright helps to encourage a renewal of Wildeve's relationship with Eustacia. She does so by making no attempt to disguise her distrust of Wildeve; as a result, she is very unpleasant to him. In her first confrontation with Wildeve, Mrs. Yeobright demands "haughtily," "What is the meaning of it all?" (47). And after his explanation, she declares, "I think you are very much to blame" (47). Despite the shoulder- ing of blame by both Thomasin and Wildeve, Mrs. Yeobright continues her unpleasant accusations.

"Such things don't happen for nothing," said the aunt. "It is a great slight to her and my family; and when it gets known there will be a very unpleasant time for us. How can she look her friends in the face tomorrow? It is a very great injury, and one I cannot easily forgive." (48)

This unpleasantness arouses resentment in Wildeve; and Thomasin, with her accustomed honesty, encourages its growth. Naively, she makes Wildeve clearly aware of his powerful position by saying, "I merely feel that you have my aunt to some extent in your power at last" (49). Resentment becomes righteous indignation as Wildeve answers

"As a matter of justice it is almost due to me," said Wildeve. "Think what I have gone through to win her consent; the insult that it is to any man to have the banns forbidden ....A harsher man would rejoice now in the power I have of turning upon your aunt by going no further in the business." (49)
Mrs. Yeobright further encourages the renewal of the love between Wildeve and Eustacia by escaping through the back window while Wildeve is engaged with the serenaders. Overcome with the crowning humiliation of the serenade, the two women find it easier to escape the situation entirely than to see it to its logical conclusion; that is, to set a date and time for the correction of the mishap in the wedding plans.

Mrs. Yeobright and Thomasin thus unwittingly have provided both the justification and the freedom for Wildeve's renewal of his relationship with Eustacia. For feelings of righteous indignation and the fact of his freedom from definite commitment to Thomasin provide the psychological basis for this renewal. There is strong evidence to support the belief that before the visit of the two women to his home, Wildeve had had no desire or intention of seeing Eustacia again.

For example, his return to Eustacia can hardly be called the eager response of a rejected lover to a signal from his mistress. For although he admits that he "saw a woman on Rainbarrow at dusk looking down towards [his] house" (73) and that he "has seen [Eustacia's] bonfire all the evening" (69), his decision to go to her is made late in the evening and with the air of a man resigned to doing his duty.
He stood and looked northeast at the undying little fire—high up above him though not so high as Rainbarrow. Wildeve stood, and stood longer, and breathed perplexedly, and then said to himself with resignation, "Yes—by Heaven, I must go to her, I suppose!" (57-58)

Furthermore, when Wildeve does join Eustacia, his first words in response to her laugh of "triumphant pleasure" are "I have come....You give me no peace. Why do you not leave me alone? I have seen your bonfire all the evening" (69). Wildeve's good intentions toward Thomasin are further supported by the fact that even though he declares he will resume his meetings with Eustacia, he confesses to her, "until I got here tonight I intended after this one good-bye, never to meet you again" (72).

Furthermore, when Wildeve, still free from definite commitment to Thomasin, meets Eustacia again in a week, he confesses to her, "the immediate reason [for the postponement of the wedding] was that the license would not do for the place ....Since then her aunt has spoken to me in a tone which I do not like" (96). Mrs. Yeobright's distrust of Wildeve is clearly a significant reason for the postponement of the wedding. Wildeve is expressing his indignation at her treatment of him by refusing to satisfy her wish to see Thomasin married.

Hardy's portrayal of Eustacia Vye is similar to his portrayal of Mrs. Yeobright, Wildeve, and Thomasin; his narrative
description of Eustacia is not substantiated by her subsequent behavior. We first see Eustacia through the eyes of Diggory Venn. Her figure is seen atop Rainbarrow, the highest hill on the heath; and "above the figure was nothing that could be mapped elsewhere than on a celestial globe" (13). In other words, as first seen, Eustacia is elevated far above all humanity, far above Egdon Heath, subordinate only to celestial bodies. In addition to Eustacia's image of elevation, her presence is the crowning glory of the heath; she gives the heath a life and spirit otherwise missing.

Such a perfect, delicate, and necessary finish did the figure give to the dark pile of hills that it seemed to be the only obvious justification of their outline. Without it, there was the dome without the lantern, with it the architectural demands of the mass were satisfied....The form was so much like an organic part of the entire motionless structure that to see it move would have impressed the mind as a strange phenomenon. (13)

Throughout his initial descriptions of Eustacia, Hardy tends to portray her as either equal to or elevated above, Egdon Heath, that eternally intractable, "vast tract of unenclosed wild." Her every movement and sound suggest that she is the embodiment of the spirit of Egdon Heath.

Her movement down Rainbarrow is as natural as the "glide of a water drop down a bud" (14), and when she sighs, the sound "modulates so naturally into the rest that its beginning and ending were hardly to be distinguished....Thrown out on
the winds, it became twined in with them, and with them it flew away" (61). She uses a path which "a mere visitor would have passed...unnoticed even by day" (63), and "her extraordinary fixity, her conspicuous loneliness, her heedlessness of night, betokened among other things an utter absence of fear" (60).

As she moves to a small bonfire burning in front of her house, Eustacia's position of elevation above mankind is stressed again. The impression of strength and power is conveyed in the description of this scene where "disconnected tufts of furze [were] standing upon stems along the top [of the bank like] impaled heads above a city wall....Altogether the scene had much the appearance of a fortification upon which had been kindled a beacon fire" (64). Imprisoned in this "fortification" is Johnny Nunsuch; and despite his weariness, Eustacia insists that he remain to keep the fire burning. Under her power, he is like a "little slave" (66); "he seemed a mere automaton, galvanized into moving and speaking by the wayward Eustacia's will" (66-67).

The meaning of Hardy's portrayal of Eustacia through images of power and kinship of spirit with the heath is finally made clear in an extensive narrative description of Eustacia. In the chapter "Queen of the Night" Hardy states that "Eustacia Vye was the raw material of divinity. On Olympus she would have done well with a little preparation" (75). Her eyes are "pagan" (76), and as a youth "she had used
to side with the Philistines” (80). Hardy evidently wants to convey an image of a pagan goddess; thus her spirit mingles easily with that of the heath which has remained unchanged by Judeo-Christian civilization, and as a goddess her power would be akin to that of the heath which Hardy had originally conceived as resistant to all impulses going against its own nature.

Hardy notes that Eustacia has "the passions and instincts which make a model goddess" (75), but this does not necessarily mean that she succeeds in becoming a model goddess. She may very well have a passion to indulge her every whim, desire, or impulse as would be possible if she had absolute power over her environment, but only when this power is achieved can she be equated with a pagan goddess. Without the power, the passions and instincts make not a goddess but an ordinary woman beset with a compulsive need for constant reassurance of the effectiveness of her power over those around her. Eustacia fails pitifully to live up to the pagan goddess image conveyed by Hardy’s narrative descriptions. The image of Eustacia conveyed by her actions is of a woman who wants desperately to believe in the god-like power assigned to her by the author but whose every attempt to demonstrate this power ends in a mockery. As Leonard W. Deen notes in "Heroism and Pathos in Hardy’s Return of the Native."
"Eustacia can remain mysterious and fatal only as long as our view of her is external and relatively long range."^6

At close range, she appears ridiculously melodramatic as she lets "her joyous eyes rest upon [Wildev]' without speaking, as upon some wondrous thing she had created out of chaos" (69); or as she murmurs "exultingly," "I knew it was because you loved me best and couldn't [marry Thomasin]" (70). Her melodrama is frequently undercut mercilessly by Wildeve. For example, when she complains, "it is in my nature to feel gloomy....It was born in my blood, I suppose," he dryly comments, "Hypochondriasis" (70). Or when she compares her triumph over Wildeve to the triumph of the Witch of Endor in calling up Samuel and declares, "I have shown my power," Wildeve responds, "I saw a woman on Rainbarrow at dusk looking down towards my house. I think I drew out you before you drew out me" (72).

Eustacia's need to receive constant reassurance of the effectiveness of her power is also revealed in her actions. Even though she knows that the sensation of power derived would be little better than an illusion achieved through play acting, she tells Wildeve, "I think I like you to desert me a little once now and then. Love is the dissmallest thing where the lover is quite honest....My low spirits begin at the very

^6Nineteenth-Century Fiction, XV (December 1960), 208. Subsequent references to this article will appear in the text.
idea. Don't you offer me tame love, or away you go!" (96). Later, when Wildeve tells Eustacia that Thomasin has an interest in a suitor other than himself, Eustacia no longer wants Wildeve, for winning him would in no way be a demonstration of her power.

Her spurning Wildeve as soon as he becomes hers in reality reveals another aspect of her personality; Eustacia does not desire things because of their inherent value, but she desires whatever she cannot have and her imagination supplies whatever is needed to make it attractive. She could idealize the innkeeper to the point of finding him a desirable lover as long as he belonged to someone else; once assured of her claim, she becomes too aware of his imperfections, and "for the first time she felt that she had stooped in loving him" (117).

Eustacia's attraction to Clym is likewise a consequence of her mind finding attractive anything beyond her grasp. The fact that he has lived in Paris continually feeds her attraction to him. Unlike Wildeve, Clym is not spurned by Eustacia as soon as he commits himself to her; for part of her concept of him is his Parisian life, and she will not tire of him until she has won this from him as well as his commitment of himself. Eustacia will always see Clym as a visitor from "the French capital—the centre and vortex of the fashionable world" (128), rather than as a native re-
turned; and no amount of truth about Clym's nature destroys Eustacia imaginative concept of Clym.

For Clym openly despises his life in Paris and clearly expresses his love for the heath. He comments on "the friendliness and geniality written in the faces of the hills around" (136), and he tells Eustacia, "to my mind the heath is most exhilarating and strengthening, and soothing. I would rather live on these hills than anywhere else in the world" (220). Clym expresses his hatred for his life in Paris when he tells Eustacia, "I have vowed not to go back" (234); and he expresses his intention to live and work among the heathmen when he tells her, "I have come to clean away the cobwebs" (219) in the superstitious minds of Egdon people.

But Eustacia's desire for what she cannot have is so intense that she refuses to let these facts cloud her vision of Clym. Convinced he will overthrow his own plans in time, Eustacia accepts his proposal with confidence that her future will be bright. "You will never adhere to your education plan, I am quite sure; and then it will be all right for me; and so I promise to be yours for ever and ever" (234).

The initial description of Clym Yeobright is similarly contradicted by his subsequent actions. For a study of Clym's behavior reveals that he is more complex than he would seem from his narrative descriptions, and it is this complexity which has the most bearing on the action of the novel. The image conveyed by Hardy's long narrative descriptions of Clym
is that of a man representing civilization's encroachments upon nature. According to this description, Clym had been formed by nature into a nearly perfect specimen of manhood. Yet, one look at his face reveals that one of the hazards of civilization, the overdevelopment and overuse of the mind, was ravaging his natural, physical being. Hardy says of Clym:

The face was well shaped, even excellently. But the mind within was beginning to use it as a mere waste tablet whereon to trace its idiosyncrasies as they developed themselves. The beauty visible would in no long time be ruthlessly overrun by its parasite, thought. ...He already showed that thought is a disease of flesh, and indirectly bore evidence that ideal physical beauty is incompatible with emotional development and recognition of the coil of things. (161-162)

In addition to this ravagement of his own nature, Clym encroaches upon the natural world which produced him. Clym is a native of the heath, and "had been so inwoven with the heath in his boyhood that hardly anybody could look upon it without thinking of him" (198). "He was permeated with its scenes, with its substance, and with its odours. He might be said to be its product" (205). Ironically, his encroachment upon the natural life is the product of his love for the heath. He wants to improve the way of life which the heath represents by replacing the ignorance and superstition of the rustics with wisdom and culture without disturbing their habit of plain living; for "he had a conviction that the want
of most men was knowledge of a sort which brings wisdom rather than affluence" (203).

Hardy is clear in his belief that Clym's aspirations are doomed; for not only is Clym trying to infuse culture into a natural community which has remained essentially unchanged for centuries, but he is also hoping to reach his goal by means of an unnatural sequence of changes:

In consequence of this relatively advanced position, Yeobright might have been called unfortunate. The rural world was not ripe for him. A man should be only partially before his time—to be completely to the vanward in aspiration is fatal to fame....Successful propagandists have succeeded because the doctrine they bring into form is that which their listeners have for some time felt without being able to shape. A man who advocates aesthetic effort and deprecates social effort is only likely to be understood by a class to which social effort has become stale matter. To argue upon the possibility of culture before luxury to the bucolic world may be to argue truly, but it is an attempt to disturb a sequence to which humanity has been long accustomed. (203-204)

Thus, Hardy's concept of Clym is of a man who is basically good. His unnatural intellectual growth, which taints his natural goodness, is the result of the influence of civilization upon him; for "much of this development he may have owed to his studious life in Paris" (203). And his desire to educate the rustics is motivated less by personal ambition than by generous and compassionate impulses toward his fellow men. Hardy treats Clym sympathetically, as if sorry that he has been led so far astray, and thus prepares his readers in
advance to believe that whatever evil Clym may do will no doubt be the result of the best intentions.

In his usual manner, however, Hardy leaves to dramatization the revelation of the trait which is even more basic to Clym's actions than his idealistic nature. This aspect is that Clym's desire to serve his fellow men is a product of a feeling of guilt. He explains his ambitions to his mother saying that he is misusing his health and strength in the effeminate diamond business.

"I get up every morning and see the whole creation groaning and travelling in pain, as St. Paul says, and yet there am I, trafficking in glittering splendours with wealthy women and titled libertines, and pandering to the meanest vanities—I who have health and strength enough for anything." (207)

Clym's decision to open a school is the consequence of these feelings of guilt at not spending his life at a vocation more demanding of the health and strength with which he has been blessed. It is guilt, not idealism or love, which is the stimulus for his self-sacrificing action; and his actions throughout the novel reveal that this idealism is not a reflection of Clym's true character but is more an intellectual garb donned to assuage his feelings of guilt. The character revealed in action is a man who thoroughly enjoys a simple life of basic physical (not intellectual) pleasures.

For example, when Clym's eyes become inflamed causing a temporary weakening of vision, he not only willingly postpones
his plans but also takes up furze cutting. He finds himself lighthearted and content at his work and accompanies his labors with singing. He is relieved now that "a forced limitation of effort offered a justification of a homely course to an unambitious man, whose conscience would hardly have allowed him to remain in such obscurity while his powers were unimpeded" (299). Now that his health and strength are no longer perfect, he does not feel guilty living a life solely for his own pleasure.

This inclination toward simple and natural pleasures is also revealed in his attraction to Eustacia. Clym first meets Eustacia dressed as a boy, "the power of her face all lost, her coquetry denied existence, nothing but a voice left to her" (169). When he hears her voice he suspects she is a woman and is intrigued enough to follow her when she leaves. Later when Clym learns that "Miss Vye" has been pricked with a long stocking needle, his only comment is "'Tis a cruel thing" (209). But when Sam, a turf cutter, reports the same accident as occurring to "the beauty on the hill" Clym's interest is suddenly aroused:

"Beauty?" said Clym.

"Yes, tolerably well-favoured," Sam replied.

"Dark or fair?"

Clym continues his interrogation with such obvious interest that Mrs. Yeobright interjects uneasily, "Miss Vye is to my
mind too idle to be charming" (210). "I have never heard that she is of any use to herself or to other people. Good girls don't get treated as witches even on Egdon" (211). Despite his mother's criticisms of Eustacia, Clym arranges to meet her and she soon becomes a significant part of his life.

As their relationship progresses, it becomes quite obvious that Clym's foremost characteristic is not dedication to humanity or to his plan to educate the heath dwellers but is a love of simple, natural pleasures such as the sexual gratification which a beautiful woman represents. Thus despite her obvious incompatibility with his ambitions, he insists upon including her in his life.

She is completely incompatible with his education plans. Sam "reckons" Eustacia is a "different sort of body" from a schoolteacher (212), and Eustacia herself tells Clym, "I don't quite feel anxious to [teach school]. I have not much love for my fellow-creatures. Sometimes I quite hate them" (219). Nevertheless, after meeting Eustacia by the well, Clym's "most intelligible sensation was that his scheme had somehow become glorified. A beautiful woman had been inter-twined with it" (220). Furthermore, Eustacia is incompatible with Clym's plan to live among the heath dwellers, for she confesses to Clym, "I cannot endure the heath, except in its purple season. The heath is a cruel taskmaster to me" (220).
Finally, she is incompatible with his basic nature. He expresses awareness of the incompatibility of his hopes and dreams with those of Eustacia when he says, "You are ambitious, Eustacia--no, not exactly ambitious, luxurious. I ought to be of the same vein, to make you happy, I suppose. And yet, far from that, I could live and die in a hermitage here, with proper work to do" (235). Yet Clym marries her, his love for her apparently overwhelming his desire to serve effectively on the heath.

These then are the five major characters of The Return of the Native. Although Hardy, in the mode of the traditional tale, attempts to fix the characters in the readers' minds through long initial descriptions, they each in turn resist the confines of Hardy's deliberate intellectual conception of them and assert themselves as full, complex characters, responding individually to the situations of their lives. Thus though the characters may at first seem static, they do in actuality shape the course of their own lives by the ways in which they react to and interact with one another.

Regarding the movement of plot in the traditional tale, Davidson was earlier quoted as saying that "the traditional tale admits, and even cherishes, the improbable and unpredictable." The Return of the Native is filled with incidents which come about by chance and have significant influence upon the movement of plot. However, none of these inci-
dents negates the effectiveness of the will of the characters; for the following are true of each of the important chance incidents. First, if the incident had not occurred by chance, it would have occurred in the natural, predictable pattern of the life of the heath. Second, the consequences of the chance incidents are not owing to chance but to the personalities of the characters who were caused to react or interact through the chance incident; that is, whether the incident was brought about by chance or through the natural and predictable course of Egdon life, the same consequences would have resulted because of the power of the will of the characters. And finally, although this is not true of all the chance incidents, many of them are brought about through Diggory Venn, who because of his vocation as a tradesman whose "wanderings ...had frequently taken an Egdon direction" (92), is available in any number of places in the vicinity of the heath to function as an agent by which the plot is advanced. Much of what happens to him or what he causes to happen to others is the result of chance meetings on the heath; however, his wandering vocation usually provides enough reason for occurrences such as his encounter with Thomasin in Anglebury to make them credible.

The novel opens with a chance meeting between Venn and Captain Vye which has the ultimate result of bringing about the meeting between Eustacia and Wildeve. For Vye, upon learning that the woman passenger was riding from Anglebury,
surmised that the proposed marriage between Thomasin and Wildeve had not come about as planned; this information given to Eustacia led her to signal Wildeve to come to her. However, if this incident between Vye and Venn had not occurred, Vye, a frequenter of the Quiet Woman Inn, would have learned of the mishap within a few days and the same ultimate result would have been brought about.

Another such incident is the meeting between Venn and Johnny Nunsuch as he runs home from Eustacia's bonfire. At this meeting Venn learns of the meaning of the bonfire that he had seen burning so brightly near Mistover, and he receives some indications that Eustacia was the cause of the mishap in Anglebury. As a result of this information, received by chance, Venn vows "an active devotion to [Thomasin's] cause" (93), and he becomes involved in the story. This chance incident, however, merely dramatizes the psychological action underlying the veneer of plot manipulation. For it is highly unlikely, in view of his still strong love for Thomasin, that Venn would have left Egdon until he had discovered the cause of her distress and done what he could to help her. If he had not learned of the situation from Johnny Nunsuch, he would certainly have learned it from another source; for the relationship between Wildeve and Eustacia was a matter of public knowledge.
Chance meetings are significant to the extent that they tend to precipitate the action of the novel. For example, after his evesdropping at the second meeting of Eustacia and Wildeve and after his unsuccessful attempt to persuade Eustacia to give Wildeve up so he will marry Thomasin, Venn is "awakened to the fact that one other channel remained untried" (110) when he sees Mrs. Yeobright walking toward the Quiet Woman Inn. This other channel, revealed to him through this chance encounter, is proposing himself as a suitor willing to take Wildeve's place. The consequence of this proposal is Mrs. Yeobright's using the appearance of a second suitor as a threat to Wildeve's claim to Thomasin's hand in marriage. Mrs. Yeobright's strategy succeeds in reuniting Thomasin and Wildeve as Eustacia is prompt to scorn to love "the man... whom a woman inferior to herself did not value" (116).

On Venn's next trip to Egdon a similar chance encounter results in the increase of bad feeling between Mrs. Yeobright and Eustacia. While sitting in the Quiet Woman, Venn learns that Christian Cantle is carrying money belonging to Thomasin. After witnessing Christian's loss of the money to Wildeve through a dice game, Venn intervenes and in turn wins all the money from Wildeve. Not realizing that half the money belongs to Clym, Venn gives it all to Thomasin. This misappropriation is the cause of an argument between Mrs. Yeobright and Eustacia which delays reconciliation between Clym and his mother.
Finally, a chance encounter is the cause of Venn’s precipitating the climax of the novel. Venn happens to be walking with Clym to meet Eustacia returning from a dance in a neighboring village. He sees Wildeve slipping away from Eustacia and assumes that they had arranged a meeting. Fearing threat to Thomasin’s happiness, Venn engages in counter-moves to prevent Wildeve’s nighttime visits to Eustacia, resulting in Wildeve’s presence at Eustacia’s house on the afternoon of Mrs. Yeobright’s visit.

Criticisms of the use of chance are justified if incidents as arbitrary as these encounters are the sole means of plot progression. This is not true of The Return of the Native. Chance encounters catalyze but do not create crucial events. Chance causes characters to come together, but the nature of the resulting interaction is determined primarily by the personalities, motives, and wills of the characters. Whether the characters are brought together by chance or by some other means, the nature of the interaction would be essentially the same.

For example, the marriage of Wildeve and Thomasin is determined not by Venn’s proposal but by the personalities of those involved. Thomasin’s desire to save her reputation, Eustacia’s inclination toward “not desiring the undesired of others” (116), and Wildeve’s original intention to marry Thomasin and his eventual need to prove that Eustacia’s rejection of him does not leave him destitute are the forces
which actually cause the marriage to come about. Venn's opportune meeting with Mrs. Yeobright at a time when he had "desponding views on Thomasin's future happiness" (110) may have hastened the event; but in view of the personalities of those involved, any other resolution to this triangular situation is highly unlikely.

Similarly, the personalities of Eustacia and Mrs. Yeobright cause their misunderstanding. Although Venn's accidental misappropriation of Clym's inheritance is the ostensible cause of the rupture which makes reconciliation between Clym and his mother particularly difficult, in actuality the cause is the feeling of hostility each woman feels toward the other.

Eustacia feels that Mrs. Yeobright had always been intent upon setting Clym against her. Before her marriage she had imagined the end of Clym's love for her under his mother's influence. She expressed her apprehension to Clym saying, "Your mother will find out that you meet me, and she will influence you against me!" (232). Mrs. Yeobright, in turn, not only resents the woman who won her son away from her but also objects to her character. She claims to Clym that Eustacia is "lazy and dissatisfied" (226), and holds the fact that she is a bandmaster's daughter against her (239). Furthermore, Mrs. Yeobright's hostilities have resulted in self-pity. She accuses Clym, "You have come only to distress me, a lonely
woman, and shorten my days!" (241). And she complains to
Thomasin, "O Thomasin, do you think he hates me? How can he
bear to grieve me so, when I have lived only for him through
all these years?" (250-251).

Thus, although the argument between these two women oc-
curs because of Venn's accidental misappropriation of the
guineas, the argument is not about the guineas. The major
part of the argument is merely an expression of each woman's
hostility toward the other, hostility which would have been
expressed regardless of the reason for their meeting (287-290).
The personalities of the two women were such that they were
predisposed to clash. Any excuse would have served.

The events which bring about the crisis and dictate the
outcome of the novel are similar to those discussed above.
Despite the seeming predominance of chance, the personalities,
motives, and wills of the characters are of primary signif-
cance. As in the incidents discussed earlier, chance acts as
a catalyst by bringing characters into dramatic interaction.
The nature of the interaction is determined by the characters.
Furthermore, what seems to be chance at first is often the
result of human will.

For example, Clym's loss of vision which aroused Eusta-
cia's dissatisfaction with her marriage was not a thunderbolt
hurled by all-powerful fate, but a logical consequence of
human action. Because Clym spent too much time with Eustacia
"living on with a monotony which was delightful to them" (283).
he neglected his studies for three or four weeks after his marriage. Because Eustacia expressed again her desire to live in Paris, Clym felt the need "to be...enabled to appeal to substantial results from another source in arguing against her whim" (293). The consequence of Clym's neglect of his studies and Eustacia's persistent pursuit of her Parisian vision was Clym's resolve "to chain himself more closely than ever to his books" (293); thus, he read far into the night, causing the eye inflammation which proved so damaging to his marriage.

Clym takes up furze cutting and Eustacia, discouraged by awareness that Clym's cheerful acceptance of his misfortunes means that Paris is as far from reach as ever, gains permission to go to a dance in a neighboring village. Her meeting with Wildeve in this village is quite by chance, but their experience and the resulting alliance is dictated by their personalities.

Wildeve's previous behavior had demonstrated his zest for opposition; this quality helps determine the consequence of this chance meeting. His interest in Thomasin was persistent until his enemy, Mrs. Yeobright, was won to his cause. Then Thomasin seemed less interesting to him, but he eventually married her more as a maneuver in his struggle against Eustacia's opposition to him than as the culmination of his efforts to win Thomasin. Eustacia's marriage had strengthened
the opposition against his winning her love, and had thus enlivened Wildeve's interest in her; for "to be yearning for the difficult, to be weary of that offered; to care for the remote, to dislike the near; it was Wildeve's nature always" (253-254). After her marriage, Eustacia's "preciousness in his eyes was increasing in geometrical progression with each new incident that reminded him of their hopeless division" (277).

Thus when Wildeve encounters Eustacia at the dance, he meets her with the idea of advancing his position in his struggle for the difficult. During the dance, his feelings reflect his inclination to relish opposition.

As for Wildeve, his feelings are easy to guess. Obstacles were a ripening sun to his love, and he was at this moment in a delirium of exquisite misery. To clasp as his for five minutes what was another man's through all the rest of the year was a kind of thing he of all men could appreciate. He had long since begun to sigh for Eustacia; indeed, it may be asserted that signing the marriage register with Thomasin was the natural signal to his heart to return to its first quarters, and that the extra complication of Eustacia's marriage was the one addition required to make that return compulsory. (311)

Eustacia, in turn, demonstrates once more her inability to cope with reality. Clym's loss of vision had made him a more than ever unlikely prospect for a successful, dignified life in Paris, and Eustacia had meager hopes that Clym would ever regain full eyesight. The golden halo of Clym's Parisian associations had suddenly vanished, and Eustacia had found
herself face to face with the reality of Clym Yeobright, a native of Egdon Heath.

Eustacia's search for gaiety at the dance is her attempt to shake off depression by escaping from reality into an imaginary state of ecstasy. She succeeds in her attempt as she dances with Wildeve.

A clear line of difference divided like a tangible fence her experience within this maze of motion from her experience without it. Her beginning to dance had been like a change of atmosphere; outside, she had been steeped in arctic frigidity by comparison with the tropical sensations here. She had entered the dance from the troubled hours of her late life as one might enter a brilliant chamber after a night walk in a wood. (310)

After the dance is over, her eyes become accustomed to the brilliance, and "her sense of bitter disappointment" (312) comes back to her. The magic of the moment of imaginary escape is over for Eustacia. Wildeve, however, may have been led to believe that the "tropical sensations" they had experienced indicated a reawakening of the feeling which had once existed between them, although in actuality Eustacia was responding to the mood of the dance and not necessarily to him. "Wildeve by himself would have been merely an agitation; Wildeve added to the dance, and the moonlight, and the secrecy began to be a delight" (310). Although Eustacia had only been giving herself to the escape provided by the dance, Wildeve, encouraged by the experience, insists upon calling on her at
her home, despite the discouraging maneuvers of Venn. "The spell that she had thrown over him in the moonlight dance made it impossible for a man having no strong puritanic force within him to keep away altogether" (332). Thus although the meeting at the village dance was accidental, the experience they shared and the resulting relationship was a result of their personalities.

The next chance meeting is that of Venn meeting Wildeve walking home from the dance with Eustacia. Venn assumes that they had planned a meeting and in Thomasin's interest, he watches Wildeve every night to prevent him from arranging any more such meetings. Determined to see Eustacia at any cost, Wildeve resolves to visit Eustacia during the day. At the same time, Mrs. Yeobright, alarmed by Venn's report of potential scandal brewing in Clym's house, resolves to swallow her pride and call on her son.

Thus, Venn's chance encounter with Wildeve breeds in turn Wildeve's chance encounter with Mrs. Yeobright. However, though the face of Wildeve's presence appears to be the cause of all the following misunderstanding, a close look at what actually happens shows that the way the characters make choices invites conflicts which could have been avoided.

Mrs. Yeobright's decision to depart from her house at 11:00 a.m. on August 31 for a six mile walk was extremely unbecoming of her perspicacity. Having lived on the heath for
so many years, she certainly should have known that the heat would be unbearable. However, she enters upon her mission, apparently considering unreasonable suffering a necessary part of her visit. When she arrives at Clym's house she knocks twice; but seeing Eustacia through the window and finding the door unopened to her knock, she assumes, "he is at home; yet he lets her shut the door against me!" (339). Apparently so convinced that her son is bent upon making her suffer, Mrs. Yeobright does not realize that Clym may very well be in the back garden, upstairs, or as is the case, asleep. Without making another attempt to gain his attention and without even stopping for rest or water, she turns around to begin her six mile walk back under the afternoon sun. Still convinced that Clym is responsible for her suffering, she tells Johnny Nunsuch, "Tell your mother you have seen a broken-hearted woman cast off by her son" (342).

Inside the house Eustacia is confused by the sight of Mrs. Yeobright at her door. Until this day, Eustacia had suffered nothing but insults and abuses from Clym's mother, and she does not know what to expect now. In addition, Eustacia, aware that Mrs. Yeobright suspected a past relationship between herself and Wildeve, is further confused by Wildeve's presence. Seeing Mrs. Yeobright at the door, she says to Wildeve, "Mrs. Yeobright. O, what she said to me
that day! I cannot understand this visit—what does she mean? And she suspects that past time of ours" (337).

Typically, Eustacia decides against facing the unpleasant reality of the situation. She tells Wildeve, "How can I open the door to her, when she dislikes me—wishes to see not me, but her son? I won't open the door!" She rationalizes, "Her knocking will, in all likelihood, awaken him...and then he will let her in himself." Clym stirs in his sleep, and murmurs, "Mother," but does not awaken. Eustacia, however, had taken advantage of his awakening to leave him with the burden of welcoming his mother and had escaped to the garden before she was sure Mrs. Yeobright had been welcomed. (332)

Thus the door was not opened to Mrs. Yeobright because Eustacia was unwilling to face unpleasantness; and the door remained unopened because Mrs. Yeobright was too willing to believe that her son intended to close her out of his life. Wildeve's chance presence had less to do with the situation than the feelings of the two women.

Later, however, Wildeve's presence contributes significantly to the conflict, owing primarily to Eustacia's unwillingness to risk a little unpleasantness to avoid misunderstanding. Although she sees Clym suffering miserably by blaming himself for letting his mother feel she has been cast out by her son, Eustacia cannot bring herself to tell him
that she is the one to blame. When the truth is finally discovered, her secrecy is interpreted as a tacit admission of guilt; appearance is that she refused to open the door for fear of being discovered with Wildeve, her lover.

In addition to Eustacia's inability to cope with the unpleasantness of reality, however, Clym's vulnerability to feelings of guilt is significant to the misfortunes suffered by the major characters. He acknowledges that his mother was partially responsible for their misunderstanding: "she didn't come to see me, though I asked her, before I married, if she would come....My door has always been open to her—a welcome here has always awaited her. But that she never came to see" (371). Yet, he is, at the same time, merciless in his self-condemnation for failing to have labored harder for a reconciliation. He says to Eustacia, "O, if any man wants to make himself immortal by painting a picture of wretchedness, let him come here!....I cannot help feeling that I did my best to kill her....it is useless to excuse me! My conduct to her was too hideous—I made no advances; and she could not bring herself to forgive me" (366).

More fatal than Clym's extreme feelings of guilt, however, is his consequent yearning for punishment to alleviate his guilt. Clym "longed for death as a field laborer longs for the shade" (367). And he says, "If there is any justice in God let Him kill me now. He has nearly blinded me, but
that is not enough. If He would only strike me with more pain, I would believe in Him forever!" (369). This yearning has significant consequences, for it is the cause of his unreasonable treatment of Eustacia.

Clym learns from Johnny Nunsuch that another man had entered the house after himself on the day of his mother's death; he also learns that after his mother had knocked at the door, Eustacia had looked out the window at her but did not open the door. Clym confronts Eustacia with this information and in a fiery rage demands, "Tell me, now, where is he who was with you on the afternoon of the thirty-first of August? Under the bed? Up the chimney?....The day I mean was the day you shut the door against my mother and killed her" (387). He dashes her desk to the floor but finds nothing to prove her guilt. "Tell all, and I will pity you. Was the man in the house with you Wildeve?" (392) he demands. Eustacia refuses to answer because of a previous promise made to Wildeve. Clym and Eustacia separate, primarily because of this refusal; for Eustacia had already managed to explain the closed door; "I--wilfully did not undo the door the first time she knocked--but--I should have unfastened it the second--if I had not thought you had gone to do it yourself. When I found you had not I opened it, but she was gone" (392).

Clym's treating Eustacia as if she were guilty of disloyalty is extremely unreasonable. He found no evidence against her in her personal papers, and the idea that Eustacia
would arrange a meeting with a lover in her husband's presence is absurd. He persists in believing in her guilt, however, because unfair as it may be to Eustacia, that is the only way he knows to punish himself. His unreasonable behavior is a consequence of his need to suffer and alleviate his guilt for not having shown more concern for his mother.

That he is suffering by the separation is evident. Despite his harshness toward Eustacia, he is still in love with her. As she dresses to leave him, she is so distressed that "for once at least in her life she was totally oblivious to the charm of her attitude. But he was not, and he turned his eyes aside, that he might not be tempted to softness" (392-393). In the days following, he is constantly on the watch for Eustacia. As he works at reordering his mother's house, he is constantly thinking of her.

When a leaf floated to the earth he turned his head, thinking it might be her footfall. A bird searching for worms in the mould of the flowerbeds sounded like her hand on the latch of the gate; and at dusk, when soft, strange ventriloquisms came from holes in the ground, hollow stalks, curled dead leaves, and other crannies wherein breezes, worms, and insects can work their will, he fancied that they were Eustacia, standing without and breathing wishes of reconciliation. (408-409)

As time passes and his wife does not return to him repentant, Clym begins to feel the effect of his self-punishment. "The severity with which he had treated her lulled the sharpness of his regret for his mother." And he begins to try to con-
vence himself of her innocence; "now that the first flush of his anger had paled he was disinclined to ascribe to her more than an indiscreet friendship with Wildeve, for there had not appeared in her manner the signs of dishonour." Finally, he begins to yearn once more for her company.

On the evening of the fifth of November his thoughts of Eustacia were intense. Echoes from those past times when they had exchanged tender words all the day long came like the diffused murmur of a seashore left miles behind. (409)

He wants her back, but instead of acting immediately in response to his strongest impulse, he goes to Wildeve to find additional evidence of Eustacia's innocence. Finding Wildeve not at home, Clym returns home without further evidence, but even without it he decides to write to Eustacia. Apparently reconciled to inviting Eustacia back without sound reasons for doing so, he begins his letter, "I must obey my heart without consulting my reason too closely" (412). But a day has been lost in Clym's fruitless search for reasonable justifications for his desire to have Eustacia back, and this delay contributes to the final misfortune of the novel.

Eustacia meanwhile is also inviting misfortune by continuing in her familiar pattern of behavior. Typically, she seeks to escape reality rather than to try to direct her life. Her first impulse is toward suicide with her grandfather's pistols, but Charley, Captain Vye's servant and Eustacia's devotee, thwarts her attempt. Unable to escape and unable
to improve her situation without facing more unpleasantness, Eustacia gradually subsides into indifference and apathy. She does nothing, apparently willing to let events fall out as they might. Her apathy, however, and not the way events happen to fall out is responsible for her death. The events of November 5 and November 6 which may be attributed to chance were not fatal in themselves. Eustacia's behavior, however, made them appear so.

On the fifth of November, Charley attempts to please Eustacia by building a bonfire for her like the one Johnny Nunsuch had kept for her a year ago. Wildeve is thus inadvertently summoned to Mistover and events begin to progress without Eustacia's willing them. However, the fact of the meeting which was indeed accidental, is not as crucial as her decision, which certainly is not accidental. Wildeve offers to help Eustacia escape from the heath, and she cannot resist his offer. She arranges to signal him when she is ready to depart.

On November 6, the day Eustacia decides to leave Egdon Heath, Clym gives his letter to a heath worker to deliver. The worker forgets the letter until 10:00 p.m., and because Eustacia has already gone up to her room, Captain Vye decides not to disturb her with the letter. Although the worker's forgetfulness and Captain Vye's decision are significant, Eustacia had one more opportunity to avoid the fatal conse-
quences of the undelivered letter. If she had really cared about saving her marriage, she would have checked every possibility of the arrival of a letter from Clym before she began her journey. But she goes directly out of the house without checking with her grandfather for the possibility of a letter having arrived in the four hours since she went up to her room. Thus Eustacia's apathy, her failure to use her will from first to last, is responsible for her death.

Throughout The Return of the Native characters appear to be helplessly subject to chance circumstances. In reality, however, each chance occurrence derives its significance from the way in which the characters use their wills; chance does not negate the power of the wills of the characters; it merely gives them opportunities to exercise their wills. Most of the characters suffer misfortune because of the misuse or disuse of the power of their wills and not because of the ineffectiveness of their wills.
Chapter 2 - The Mayor of Casterbridge

The Mayor of Casterbridge likewise affirms the significance of human will despite the seemingly pessimistic view of human potential which is superimposed on the drama. As in The Return of the Native, pessimism is due not to Hardy's basic vision of man but to the literary genre upon which his novel is modeled. The characteristics of classical tragedies predominate in The Mayor of Casterbridge, and as a result, critics tend to neglect the optimistic vision of human existence underlying this novel.

John Paterson, for example, interprets this novel solely as an example of classical tragedy. He says, "Hardy here assumes...the existence of a moral order, an ethical substance, a standard of justice and rectitude, in terms of which man's experience can be rendered as the drama of his salvation as well as the drama of his damnation." Because Henchard's selling of his wife is a violation of the established moral order, Henchard deserves punishment; and his downfall thus can be interpreted as a reassertion of a universal moral order such as is characteristic of the classical tragedy. Paterson identifies Michael Henchard with tragic heroes like

7"The Mayor of Casterbridge" as Tragedy," Victorian Studies, III (December 1959), 152. Subsequent references to this article will appear in the text.
Oedipus, Faust, and Lear in that their "private and public deterioration...enact the indignation of the moral order whose serenity his act of impiety has violently affronted" (153). Frederick R. Karl likewise states that Henchard's downfall at the hands of "uncontrollable human forces" is due to the fact that he has "offended the order of the universe." The Mayor of Casterbridge thus reaffirms an ideal of justice and wisdom, instead of simply recognizing the existence of a brutal and insentient force bent upon the destruction of a human being.

Henchard's character also identifies this novel with classical tragedies. Ted R. Spivey in "Thomas Hardy's Tragic Hero" states that a tragic hero must have an attitude of both defiance and acceptance together with "some insight into and realization of the forces of evil which work to bring about his downfall." He sees these characteristics in Henchard.

Henchard can cry out in defiance at Elizabeth-Jane: "What do you say--Mr. Henchard? Don't, don't scourge me!" With his final realization that he has forfeited her love he also accepts with "proud superiority": "I'll never trouble 'ee again, Elizabeth-Jane--no, not to my dying day! Good-night. Good-bye!" His will reveals an attitude of both defiance and acceptance. In it is a deep realization of some ingrained evil in the scheme of things.


9Nineteenth-Century Fiction, IX (December 1954), 184.
Furthermore, Henchard's character, according to Paterson, is like that of traditional heroes because of his persistent defiance of ethical and religious order. Paterson notes that "founding itself upon an ancient psychology, The Mayor of Casterbridge celebrates, first of all, the subordination of the passions that link man with nature to the reason that unites him with God" (158). Henchard's wife-selling deed as well as all the "sudden angers and indignations that alienate Farfrae, Elizabeth, and Lucetta, among others, and eventually deprive him of the ordinary consolations of love and friendship" (159) represent his defiance of ethical and religious order by allowing passion to rule over reason. Similarly, Karl attributes the universality of the crime to the fact that it "derives not from reason, but from passion, the great motivator of all great crimes" (308).

Paterson further notes, "the novel rests, however, not only on the hierarchic psychology that enjoins the subordination of passion to reason but also on the hierarchic cosmology that enjoins the subordination of the human to the superhuman." Paterson sees Henchard's alienation from the human community as a subversion of the order that has placed man in "the middleground between God and nature."

Hence, his explicit identification with Dr. Faustus, the archetypal representative of human rebellion: Henchard could be described, Hardy writes, "as Faust has been described—as a vehement gloomy being who had quitted the ways of vulgar men without light to guide him
on a better way." Indeed, in selling his wife to a sailor who will later return to claim his due, in joining with Farfrae to make his damaged wheat whole again (that is, to manipulate and defraud nature), in approaching the conjuror Fall for illegitimate insights into the future course of the weather, Henchard is discovered in the attitudes and situations made legendary in the story of the diabolical doctor. (159)

Ray B. West and R. W. Stallman also see in Henchard a defiance of his rightful position and consider this to be his "tragic flaw" directly related to his downfall. 10

This defiance of order on ethical and religious levels is reflected, in the tradition of tragedy, on the natural and social levels. Paterson sees nature as "a force obedient and instrumental to a moral order whose rights and claims take priority over man's," and he believes that "the rains and tempests that control the world of The Mayor of Casterbridge... reflect, as the symptom of a demoralization in nature, the demoralization of the order that Henchard's unnatural act has, much in the manner of Lear's, produced" (161). In the same manner, Paterson attributes the corruption of Casterbridge society to Henchard's presence in that city.

Society is demoralized...by the outrage for which no atonement has been made. In receiving and rewarding a man whose ancient crime has gone unacknowledged and uncorrected, Hardy's city has invited, like the Thebes of Sophocles and the

Denmark of Shakespeare, the disapprobation of the gods—a plague, a profound social and political disturbance—from which it will not be released until the guilty party has been publicly identified and punished. (163)

D. A. Dike concurs in this belief that Henchard's presence in Casterbridge is the cause of disorder in the community. He believes that "Henchard, chastened by suffering, perceives that he must take himself off before the community can return to normal. Formerly its protector, he now bears the load of its collective sins. His voluntary death is thus required as a sacrifice upon which will be based the modus vivendi of his survivors." 11

Thus, on the basis of the grandeur of its defiant protagonist, the persistent movement toward the reassertion of a universal moral order through destruction of its violator, and the participation of nature, man, and society in the re-establishment of this moral order, The Mayor of Casterbridge can well be defined as a classical tragedy. Fundamental to such an interpretation, however, is the assumption that "a moral intelligence beyond man's power to control" is the power which defeats Michael Henchard. For without this assumption, Michael Henchard's defeat cannot be said to "enact the indignation of the moral order"; nor can nature be said to be "a force obedient and instrumental to a moral order"; nor can society be said to be suffering "the disapprobation

of the gods." The sole remaining cause of the downfall of the protagonist would then be the nature of his character.

A careful examination of what actually happens in this novel, and more significantly, of what are the actual causes of these events, reveals that there is no force more effective than those lying within the character himself. However, the fact that Michael Henchard is, in fact, responsible for his own fate is not at first obvious because it is so effectively shielded by a heavy layer of fatalistic philosophies; a belief in the subservience of humans to an omnipotent Providence permeates the novel through the major characters. Susan, for example, is described early in the novel as having the "half-apathetic expression of one who deems anything possible at the hands of Time and Chance, except, perhaps, fair play" (2); and after her sale Henchard recalls that when he had threatened to sell her on previous occasions, "she had replied that she would not hear him say that many times more before it happened, in the resigned tones of a fatalist" (17). Elizabeth-Jane expresses similar submissiveness to Providence when she refuses to indulge in luxuries she could well afford as the mayor's daughter. She tells herself, "I won't be too gay on any account....It would be tempting Providence to hurl mother and me down and afflict us again as He used to do" (101). And after the bitter, self-profaning death of Henchard she says, "O I would not have minded so much if it had not
been for my unkindness at that last parting!...But there's no altering--so it must be" (384). Although she feels a moment of remorse, it quickly passes because of her accustomed ready acceptance of whatever circumstances she may find herself in. Farfrae also betrays his belief in Providence by his willingness to let it determine the course of his life. He gives Providence responsibility for his decision to remain in Casterbridge: In response to Henchard's urgings, he says, "I never expected this--I did not!...It's Providence! Should anyone go against it? No; I'll not go to America; I'll stay and be your man!" (73). And when his impulse to leave Casterbridge to avoid Henchard and to please his wife is thwarted by his being unexpectedly elected mayor, he again feels as if his life is being controlled by some mysterious powers: "See now, how it's ourselves that are ruled by the Powers above us! We plan this, but we do that. If they want to make me Mayor I will stay, and Henchard must rave as he will" (280).

These fatalistic expressions indicate the pervasiveness of the belief among the characters in the novel in a superhuman power actively dictating human lives; however, these expressions do not justify such beliefs. For belief in such a power can be justified only when no other cause of events is evident, and even then, justification is only circumstantial. Thus, despite its frequent references to a power
beyond man's power to control. The Mayor of Casterbridge depicts a world not actually controlled by such a power; for the cause of events significant to the story of Michael Henchard is quite clearly human action.

Paterson supports his belief that this "moral intelligence" is an active force by giving as evidence not only the "rains and tempests which enforce, as agents of the superhuman, the powerful claims which Henchard's guilty humanity has flouted and abrogated" but also "the series of fatal reappearances that challenges and undermines Henchard's illegitimate power." He sees the reappearances of Lucetta, the furmity woman, Newson, and Susan as schematizing "the determined revenge of a supernatural authority for which a wrong left uncorrected and unpunished is intolerable" (162).

Far from representing the vengeful efforts of a "supernatural authority" to punish Henchard, these basic circumstances of the story are simply the donnees of this novel. The uncertainty of the weather and the appearances and reappearances of certain characters do not in themselves defeat Henchard. The power which determines the course of the plot is inherent not in these donnees but in the dramatized personality of the protagonist. The way in which he interacts with other characters and responds to the circumstances of his life determines more than any other force, the course of his life.
In addition to this tendency to interpret donnees as forces, is the tendency to overvalue the effect of events which seem fatal to Henchard's career. This is especially true of the reappearances of the furmity woman and Joshua Jopp. Though the shock value of their deeds is great, neither character actually influences the course of Henchard's life to any appreciable degree. The furmity woman appears suddenly in Casterbridge and spitefully discloses Henchard's secret. The primary effect of the disclosure is to hasten Lucetta's marriage to Farfrae. She explains to Henchard that although she had promised him her hand, after hearing that he had sold his first wife at a fair, she "could not risk [herself] in [his] hands" (243). In actuality, however, Lucetta had determined earlier, "I will love him [Farfrae]!...as for him [Henchard]—he's hot-tempered and stern, and it would be madness to bind myself to him knowing that. I won't be a slave to the past--I'll love where I choose!" (204). Even if the furmity woman had not provided her with the excuse she needed, Lucetta with all her wealth, beauty, and consequent influence, in all likelihood would have found some way to escape Henchard and to marry Farfrae.

Aside from the hastening of Lucetta's marriage, the effect of the furmity woman is not damaging to Henchard. Hardy says of her reappearance
Small as the police-court incident had been in itself, it formed the edge or turn in the incline of Henchard’s fortunes. On that day—almost at that minute—he passed the ridge of prosperity and honour, and began to descend rapidly on the other side. (251)

This incident had been the time of Henchard’s decline beginning but it is not the cause; for Henchard was already well on his way to financial and social failure. In fact, the fumity woman, by shedding light on the beginning of Henchard’s career, paradoxically arouses admiration for him.

Now that Henchard’s whole career was pictured distinctly to his neighbours, and they could see how admirably he had used his one talent of energy to create a position of affluence out of absolutely nothing—which was really all he could show when he came to the town as a journeyman hay-trusser, with his wimble and knife in his basket—they wondered and regretted his fall. (254)

In a similar fashion, Joshua Jopp’s bitter deed of disclosing Henchard’s former affair with Lucetta to the denizens of the disreputable Mixen Lane, seems to be a fateful event in Henchard’s life. However, although the “skimmity-ride” proves fatal to Lucetta, it does not deprive Henchard of the public sympathy and respect engendered at his fall. For shortly after the “skimmity-ride” the Town Council purchases a small seed and root business to give Henchard a new opening in life. Thus although these minor characters seem to be agents of powers determined to ruin Henchard, they actually do little besides add a touch of “the uncommon in human experi-
ence" to the narrative. The effect they have on Henchard's career is negligible.

Other events in this story are similarly powerless because they derive their significance not from the fact of their occurrences but from the ways in which Henchard reacts to them. Throughout the novel, the manner in which Henchard chooses to exert his will is the primary determinant of the course of his life.

Paterson and Spivey both indicate that Michael Henchard's descent is due in part to his defiance of moral laws. He allows passion to rule reason, he alienates himself from the human community by violating social laws, and he, unlike Elizabeth-Jane, indulges in luxuries with total disregard for the antagonism of Providence. His response to most of the circumstances of his life seems to be defiance; however, it is more complex than simple headstrong rebelliousness. Paradoxically, Michael Henchard's seemingly defiant behavior is actually a reflection of the degree to which the standards and mores of society are engrained in him.

For example, Henchard's degrading reception of Susan and his refusal to accept the responsibility and the consequences of having broken a social law is motivated by his pride in his social position. He meets her not in his home but in an out-of-the-way spot after nightfall because "as Mayor of the town, with a reputation to keep up, he could not invite her to come
to his house till some definite course had been decided on" (82-83). Also because of his social position, he tells Susan, "I don't see how you two can return openly to my house as the wife and daughter I once treated badly, and banished from me" (84). He proposes instead a fake courtship and second wedding so as to "leave my shady, headstrong, disgraceful life as a young man absolutely unopened" (84).

Further evidence that he is aware of having violated a social law is the guilt which accounts for his response to Susan's reappearance. His primary motive for taking her back is not necessity; for she tells him, "I am quite in your hands, Michael....I came here for the sake of Elizabeth; for myself, if you tell me to leave again tomorrow morning, and never come near you more, I am content to go" (84). Nor is his motive love, for "there was no amatory fire or pulse of romance acting as stimulant" to his marriage. His motive is instead the desire to punish himself for his unjust treatment of Susan; for he remarried Susan not only to make amends to her and to provide for Elizabeth-Jane but also "to castigate himself with the thorns which these restitutory acts brought in their train; among them the lowering of his dignity in public opinion by marrying so comparatively humble a woman" (95).

The course of Michael Henchard's life is affected most drastically, however, by responses motivated by pride, which
is a product of his awareness of social opinion. This awareness manifests itself in a more extreme form when circumstances threaten his stature in the eyes of society. Ironically, Henchard's pride results in behavior which does not win the acclaim of society but instead isolates him from the human community. The acuteness of the emotion of pride is revealed early in his abuse of Susan which he admits was "because of my cursed pride and mortification at being poor" (367). Henchard begins to experience anew the destructive power of his pride when he realizes his stature in Casterbridge is being threatened by his assistant, Donald Farfrae. Public sentiment is gradually drawn toward the good-natured Scotsman until Henchard suddenly realizes that he "who had hitherto been the most admired man in his circle, was the most admired no longer" (174). From that time, Henchard's life is dominated by the destructiveness of pride and becomes a desperate, compulsive battle to rebuild his social position.

The "day of public rejoicing...in celebration of a national event" (117) marks Henchard's first public defeat as a result of his pride-driven behavior. Because of his need to outshine Farfrae in the eyes of the public, Henchard plans a fair to compete with the entertainment conceived earlier by his assistant. Not only does he make his amusements more elaborate and more lucrative, but he refuses to charge admission, paying all the expenses himself. In addition, he
requests his Councilmen to let him "take upon his own shoulders the responsibility of organizing some amusements" (118). Thus when rain spoils his open fair and sends all the people to Farfrae's "gigantic tent ingeniously constructed without poles or ropes" (121), the failure is a failure not for Casterbridge but for Henchard alone.

Thus a natural and not totally unexpected phenomenon turns out to be a personal disaster, not because rain is "a force obedient and instrumental to a moral order," but because of Henchard's pride which compelled him to plan his fair as he did. One disaster leads to another, however, and the indignant Henchard, fearing that "he'll be honeycombed clean out of all the character he's built up in these eighteen year" (122), fires Farfrae. This act is disastrous to Henchard's business which "throve under the management of Donald Farfrae as it had never thriven before" (103) because not only does it deprive Henchard of his clever manager but it also frees Farfrae to set up a competing business of his own.

A similar disaster occurs when Henchard tries to outdo Farfrae in business by exploiting his superior financial resources. Acting on the advice of a weather prophet who predicts bad weather and a consequent bad harvest, Henchard invests virtually all his capital in grain remaining from the former harvest. When weather appears to promise a good
harvest, Henchard, believing he has gambled on the weather and lost, sells his grain at a considerable loss. The causes of this defeat are not, however, in the circumstances of the weather, but in Henchard's character. As in the fair incident, the desire to regain his former social stature had been so strong as to compel him to act incautiously and to commit himself too heavily. Thus when bad weather fails to materialize, Henchard's dealings had been "so extensive that settlement could not be long postponed, and to settle he was obliged to sell off corn that he had bought only a few weeks before at figures higher by many shillings a quarter" (216). In addition, he apparently could have avoided a loss by waiting until prices came up once more, but "the momentum of his character knew no patience" (219), and he incurs heavy, unnecessary losses. Thus, impatience coupled with the extremity of his pride determines the action which leads eventually to his bankruptcy. Weather alone has no inherent power as a determinant of the course of Henchard's life; but Henchard's responses to it bring disaster.

Financial ruin follows soon after, but Henchard's pride continues to evoke pathetic responses. For example, the bankrupt ex-mayor seeks lodging with Jopp, one of the lowliest citizens of Casterbridge, "because Jopp was the one man in Casterbridge, whose observation and opinion the fallen corn merchant despised to the point of indifference" (259). On
the occasion of a visit by a royal personage, Henchard, insisting that he is as good as any of the incumbent Council-men, determines, "I'll welcome his Royal Highness, or nobody shall!... I am not going to be sat upon by Parfrae, or any of the rest of the paltry crew!" (304). Primed with a glass of rum and dressed in the "fretted and weather-beaten garments of by-gone years," Henchard steps in front of the royal carriage in a final, pathetic attempt to win public recognition.

It was Henchard. He had unrolled his private flag, and removing his hat he staggered to the side of the slowing vehicle, waving the Union Jack to and fro with his left hand, while he blandly held out his right to the Illustrious Personage. (306) Farfrae handles the situation with "Mayoral authority" and the ceremony is completed as planned.

The defeat of Henchard's hope to regain his lost social stature is followed by the defeat of his hopes for regaining his sense of personal dignity. To avenge the disgrace he suffered at being spurned in public, he engages Farfrae in a desperate wrestling match, telling him, "I've stood your rivalry, which ruined me, and your snubbing, which humbled me; but your hustling that disgraced me, I won't stand" (313). But when he wins the match and has his enemy's life in his hands, he realizes that committing an act of murder is an impossibility; and this attempt to avenge his lost personal dignity ends in failure.
The course of Michael Henchard's life is determined not only by decisions motivated by his consciousness of social opinion but also by decisions he makes in response to a more personal emotion whose strength varies in inverse proportions with his feelings of pride. This emotion is loneliness or a need for personal affection. As long as his feeling of pride is satisfied, he is scarcely aware of this other more personal emotion. But with each new defeat in the eyes of the public, Henchard feels more acutely his need for satisfying personal relationships.

The presence of this emotion is revealed early in the novel. A friendly citizen describes Henchard as "a lonely widow man" (39), and Henchard in wondering at his strong attraction to Farfrae decides, "I suppose 'tis because I'm so lonely" (64). Later in telling Farfrae about his affair with Lucetta, Henchard says that he met her when he was ill and suffering "gloomy fits...on account o' the loneliness of my domestic life" (90).

As Henchard begins to feel himself falling in public opinion, his feeling of loneliness asserts itself more strongly and often conflicts with his still virile awareness of social standards. For example, upon hearing Elizabeth-Jane speak of Newson as "father," "Henchard's face settled into an expression of stolid loneliness," for his "wife was dis severed from him by death; his friend and helper
Farfrae by estrangement; Elizabeth-Jane by ignorance" (139). He cannot resist telling Elizabeth-Jane that he is her real father; for "he was the kind of man to whom some human object for pouring out his heat upon—were it emotive or were it choleric—was almost a necessity" (142). But his happiness at the "re-establishment of this tenderest human tie" (142) is short-lived for upon seeking documents of proof of Elizabeth-Jane's birth, he finds Susan's letter informing him that the girl is Newson's daughter after all. Because "he was far too self-willed to recede from a position, especially as it would involve humiliation" (146), he resolves to live with the lie he had unwittingly told to Elizabeth-Jane. He finds, however, that despite his loneliness and his affection for Elizabeth-Jane, he is unable to treat as a daughter a girl who is not recognized as such by natural or social law.

Henchard makes Elizabeth-Jane miserable by shaming her for her humble and unrefined manners. Unable to bear his cold, chiding manner any longer, she accepts Lucetta's offer of a position as companion. When Henchard sees Elizabeth-Jane ready to leave him, however, he realizes how hard she had been trying to please him and regrets his having abused her simply because he was not her real father. He asks her to stay, but she refuses; and Henchard is alone once more.

Henchard's responses to the reappearance of Lucetta are similarly motivated by the interaction of pride and loneli-
ness. When he learns she is in Casterbridge waiting for him to make good his promise of marriage, he is pleased at having another "human object for pouring out his heat upon"; for having lost all others, "by an almost mechanical transfer the sentiments which had run to waste since his estrangement from Elizabeth-Jane and Donald Farfrae gathered around Lucetta before they had grown dry" (171). Thus, instead of regarding the marriage as a duty, he regards it with interest and warmth. "His bitter disappointment at finding Elizabeth-Jane to be none of his, and himself a childless man, had left an emotional void in Henchard that he unconsciously craved to fill" (169).

When Henchard calls at her home, however, Lucetta refuses to see him saying, quite legitimately, that she is engaged for the evening. Henchard takes offense at what he calls Lucetta's giving herself airs, and though she had asked him to return the next day, he resolves not to do so. Henchard postpones the reunion for several days, thus not only making Lucetta feel he has grown indifferent but also allowing time for her to meet Farfrae. Farfrae's "hyperborean crispness, stringency, and charm, as of a well-braced musical instrument" (180-181) capture Lucetta's interest, and she in turn "enkindles the young man's enthusiasm till he is quite brimming over with sentiment" (187). When Henchard learns that Farfrae is the reason for Lucetta's refusal to marry him, his pride again goads him into action. "And the
sense of occult rivalry in suitvship was so much superadded to the palpable rivalry of their business lives. To the coarse materiality of that rivalry it added an inflaming soul" (209). The strength of Henchard's determination not to lose once more to Farfrae compels him to force Lucetta to accept him. He tells her, "You cannot in honour refuse me.... And unless you give me your promise this very night to be my wife, before a witness, I'll reveal our intimacy—in common fairness to other men!" (226).

Pride and loneliness continue to influence Henchard's behavior even after the loss of his money, social position, and family. For example, although his first impulse is to leave Casterbridge, the comforting ministrations of Elizabeth-Jane during an illness cause him to accept "with a sense that honest work was not a thing to be ashamed of" (263) Farfrae's offer of employment instead. Later when he notices the affection in the look on Elizabeth-Jane's face—"and above all things what he desired now was affection from anything that was good and pure" (331)—he asks her to return to him. In order to make a respectable life for himself and his step-daughter, Henchard "fettered his pride sufficiently to accept the small seed and root business which some of the Town Council, headed by Farfrae, had purchased to afford him a new opening" (347).
A combination of pride and loneliness causes Henchard to send Newson away believing his daughter to be dead.

The regard he had lately acquired for Elizabeth, the new-sprung hope of his loneliness that she would be to him a daughter of whom he could feel as proud of as the actual daughter she still believed herself to be, had been stimulated by the unexpected coming of Newson to a greedy exclusiveness in relation to her; so that the sudden prospect of her loss had caused him to speak mad lies like a child, in pure mockery of consequences. (338)

When Newson returns, Henchard, certain that Elizabeth-Jane would hate him when she learns his secret, resolves to leave Casterbridge since it would then no longer hold any attraction for him.

Henchard's impulse to re-establish ties of human affection, however, eventually masters his pride, and he decides to return to Elizabeth-Jane on the chance that he may still be welcome.

The remembrance would continually revive in him now that it was not Elizabeth and Farfrae who had driven him from them, but his own haughty sense that his presence was no longer desired. He had assumed the return of Newson without absolute proof that the Captain meant to return; still less that Elizabeth-Jane would welcome him; and with no proof whatever that if he did return he would stay. What if he had been mistaken in his views; if there had been no necessity that his own absolute separation from her he loved should be involved in these untoward incidents? To make one more attempt to be near her; to go back; to see her, to plead his cause before her, to ask forgiveness for his fraud, to endeavour strenuously to hold his own in her love; it was worth the risk of repulse, ay, of life itself. (370-371)
But after traveling forty-eight miles to her wedding, Henchard’s pride rather than his need for affection rules his action, and he loses his last chance to win Elizabeth-Jane’s affection. For Elizabeth-Jane, whose "craving for correctness of procedure was, indeed, almost vicious" (248), cruelly upbraids her stepfather for his deception declaring, "O how can I love as I once did a man who has served us like this!" (376). Henchard, unable to stoop to offering excuses for his actions, bids Elizabeth-Jane good-bye, "with proud superiority" (377).

Much of Henchard’s greatness is due to the strength of will such as was necessary to abide by the vow he had taken upon the loss of his wife. It is this same energy which he puts to work in fending off the defeats which come upon him during the course of the novel. Although in the action depicted in the novel Henchard is less successful in his use of will, he is an admirable character nonetheless because of his repeated insistence upon taking events into his own hands, manipulating and controlling the circumstances of his life to serve his own ends. Although his final act of returning to Casterbridge and then, finding himself unwelcome, refusing to submit himself to the mercy of another person’s will, is an example of this strength of will, it is less representative of the state of Henchard’s character at the end of the novel than is his last will and testament, which is a statement of
self-humiliation, self-denial, and self-damnation. Coming so soon after his scene of self-assertion with Elizabeth-Jane, it may seem to be a despairing plunge into annihilation; however, because of the growing attitude of fatalism which Henchard expresses in the later period of his life in Casterbridge, his final will is a natural culmination of the degeneration of his character.

Early in the novel Henchard expresses fatalistic ideas only in the form of retrospective wondering; by the end of the novel this attitude is strong enough to determine some of his action. For example, after reading Susan's letter informing him of Elizabeth-Jane's real parentage, Henchard "could not help thinking that the concatenation of events this evening had produced was the scheme of some sinister intelligence bent on punishing him." But at this relatively early stage of his downfall, he is not overly eager to admit that he alone is not in control of his life, and he realizes that "if he had not revealed his past history to Elizabeth he would not have searched the drawer for papers, and so on" (144). He is still aware of the effectiveness of his will.

On a later occasion when Henchard's heavy investments fail, "the movements of his mind seemed to tend to the thought that some power was working against him," and he wonders, "if it can be that somebody has been roasting a waxes image of me, or stirring an unholy brew to confound me!" Yet the greatness
of this defeat is not enough to make Henchard relinquish authority over his own life, and he declare, "I don't believe in such power" (219). In addition, Hardy explains Henchard's wonderings about a superhuman power as "isolated hours of superstition" which "came to Henchard in time of moody depression, when all his practical largeness of view had oozed out of him" (219).

Significantly, the incident which causes Henchard to submit himself finally to a superior power is one which seems to indicate that some redeeming power is watching over him. Intending to drown himself, Henchard walks down to a stream near Joshua Jopp's cottage. There he perceives "with a sense of horror" the "skimmity-ride" effigy of himself floating as if dead (342). The shock of the image of himself, lifeless, is enough to restore his will to avoid death; wondering at the coincidence which saved his life, he says, "Who is such a reprobate as I! And yet it seems that even I be in Somebody's hand!" (345).

After this incident Henchard submits more to fate and less to his own will: "he was not now the Henchard of former days. He schooled himself to accept her [Elizabeth-Jane's] will...as absolute and unquestionable" (358). And when the marriage of Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae seems imminent, "Henchard vowed that he would leave them to their own devices, put nothing in the way of their courses, whatever they
might mean. If he were doomed to be bereft of her, so it must be" (353). In a perverse moment, however, he thinks of discouraging Farfrae's attentions by telling him of Elizabeth-Jane's illegitimacy. But shocked at the idea, Henchard exclaims, "God forbid such a thing! Why should I still be subject to these visitations of the devil, when I try so hard to keep him away" (354). Impulses which Henchard formerly perceived as consequences of his own nature and will, he now perceives in the midst of his social and personal defeat, as workings of some superhuman force.

This degeneration of Henchard's confidence in his power of self-determination contributes significantly to his final defeat. In the earlier parts of the novel, Henchard's will was made ineffective because his vision was so badly distorted by excessive pride, loneliness, and concern for social opinion. By the end of the novel, Henchard's will is ineffective because he gives himself over to fate to rule his life as it will. His death is not inevitable; he is not a helpless victim of fate, an "indignant moral order," or any other power. His death is a result of his attitude toward himself in his later life—"he did not sufficiently value himself to lessen his sufferings" (377).
Chapter 3 - Jude the Obscure

Jude the Obscure shares with The Return of the Native and The Mayor of Casterbridge the fact that although human will is in actuality the greatest force in the novel, the efforts of the protagonist appear to be defeated by powers outside himself. For Clym Yeobright the principal power appears to be chance; for Michael Henchard it appears to be a "sinister intelligence" bent upon punishing him. For Jude Fawley, the ultimate enemy appears to be society. Because of this, Jude the Obscure is more closely akin to the social protest novel than to the traditional tale or the classical tragedy, both of which represent the world as governed by powers existing beyond the framework of human society. Albert J. Guerard calls this novel Hardy's "closest approach...to a sweeping satire and modern problem novel," and comments that in Jude the Obscure "the original cosmic idea has become a meaningful pervasive judgment on society rather than a meaningless and isolated judgment on the cosmos."\(^{12}\) The centrality of society was perceived much earlier by Henry C. Duffin who observes

> Hardy saw convention mounting to a place in society to which it had no right. He saw it becoming master where it should have been a servant...The misery of the two greater novels

\(^{12}\)Thomas Hardy: The Novels and Stories (Cambridge, 1949), p. 64.
[Tess and Jude] arises in both cases from narrow conventional views usurping the place of the one great law by which all others must be tested, the golden rule of love and happiness. The ordinances of society are administered with great neglect of this golden rule, in a rigid and unintelligent fashion.  

J. I. M. Stewart agrees with Guerard that in Jude the Obscure the center of Hardy's vision has shifted from the universe to society.

The regardlessness of the universe towards that which has tragically come to consciousness within it is now seen as miniaturized in the regardlessness of society towards the individual. Men collectively and for their material ease have decreed ordinances against which they see with complacency individuals break themselves and bleed; and to these ordinances they have baselessly ascribed supernatural sanction.

Hardy provides much evidence to support the view of these critics that Jude the Obscure is a novel intentionally indicting society, especially the social institutions of education and marriage, for the suffering of its members. Hardy's desire to reveal to the world the potential harmfulness inherent in the exclusiveness of universities was the germ of this novel. An entry in Hardy's journal on April 28, 1888, reads

A short story of a young man--'who could not go to Oxford'--His struggles and ultimate failure.


Suicide. There is something the world ought to be shown, and I am the one to show it to them.  

Furthermore, years later in a letter discussing reviews of *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy claims that the novel "is concerned first with the labours of a poor student to get a University degree, and secondly with the tragic issues of two bad marriages."  

Thus Hardy concedes retrospectively that *Jude the Obscure* is an indictment of marriage laws. In the letter mentioned above Hardy indicates he did not intend an attack on marriage laws; but he later acknowledges the centrality of this issue in the Preface written in 1912. He perceives that "the marriage laws [were] used in great part as the tragic machinery of the tale, and its general drift on the domestic side [tends] to show that...civil law should be only the enunciation of the law of nature." Furthermore, he reasserts the opinion so persistently expressed earlier in the novel that "a marriage should be dissolvable as soon as it becomes a cruelty to either of the parties--being then essentially and morally no marriage" (x).  

Hardy's conscious attempt to expose society as responsible for the failure of Jude's efforts can be found in the

novel itself. For example, despite Jude's ambitions toward obtaining a college education exhibited by his studies in Greek and Latin, the system of higher education is such that merit is unrecognized unless it is accompanied by wealth. Sue tells Jude, "You are one of the very men Christminster was intended for when the colleges were founded; a man with a passion for learning but no money, or opportunities, or friends. But you were elbowed off the pavement by the millionaires' sons" (180-181). Having been told by a master at a Christminster college, "You will have a much better chance of success in life by remaining in your own sphere and sticking to your trade than by adopting any other course" (138). Jude learns by the end of the novel that the master's advice was practical. Speaking to a curious Christminster crowd, Jude declares:

"It is a difficult question, my friends for any young man—that question I had to grapple with, and which thousands are weighing at the present moment in these uprising times—whether to follow uncritically the track he finds himself in, without considering his aptness for it, or to consider what his aptness or bent may be, and re-shape his course accordingly. I tried to do the latter, and I failed." (392-393)

The novel likewise provides much evidence that Hardy objects to laws governing marriages despite his claim that he had no intention of writing a manifesto on the marriage question. He objects in part to the essence of marriage
vows. Describing Jude's marriage to Arabella, Hardy says, "And so...the two swore that at every other time of their lives till death took them, they would assuredly believe, feel, and desire precisely as they had believed, felt, and desired during the few preceding weeks. What was as remarkable as the undertaking itself was the fact that nobody seemed at all surprised at what they swore" (65-66). Sue also feels that the essential meaning of marriage vows is a violation of the relation between the man and woman involved. Speaking of her marriage with Phillotson, Sue says, "What tortures me so much is the necessity of being responsive to this man whenever he wishes, good as he is morally;--the dreadful contract to feel in a particular way in a matter whose essence is its voluntariness!" (355).

In addition to objecting to the essence of marriage laws, Hardy also objects to their irrevocability. When Sue discovers her physical aversion to Phillotson, she believes that the tragedy of their relationship is not a natural tragedy, but a social one. "It is none of the natural tragedies of love that's love's usual tragedy in civilized life, but a tragedy artificially manufactured for people who in a natural state would find relief in parting!" (258). Phillotson also senses the unnaturalness of laws which would force Sue to live with him in "a daily, continuous tragedy" (278), and despite his assertion that he is "the most old-fashioned man in the
world on the question of marriage" (283), he gives Sue permission to live away from him and to go to Jude. Phillotson senses natural law and declares, "I have come to a conclusion: that it is wrong to so torture a fellow-creature any longer; and I won't be the inhuman wretch to do it, cost what it may!" (277). Yet despite the awareness of the major characters of the basic immorality of marriage laws, these laws continue to intrude themselves into Jude's life and contribute significantly to the "tragic machinery" which effects Jude's downfall. Hardy's dubbing of the hero as "the Predestinate Jude" (48) and his references to Jude's "evil star" (86), "ruling power" (156), "fate" (241), and "family curse" (9), seem only too appropriate. He seems indeed to have been "born to ache a good deal before the fall of the curtain upon his unnecessary life" (13).

There is no reason to dispute the validity of Hardy's representation of the rigidity of nineteenth-century university traditions or of the bigoted attitudes of nineteenth-century society toward those not conforming to the church's dogma regarding marriage. Similarly, there is no question that Jude and Sue were deeply affected by these traditions. However, to interpret the novel primarily as a document exposing the ills of these traditions by telling a tale of their victims is to fail to perceive Hardy's basic vision of man; as great as the forces of society may appear, the characters
In this novel, as in the two previously discussed, determine the course of their own lives by the ways in which they choose to react and interact with one another and with their environment. By the decisions they make, they determine the quality of their existences. The fact that they find misery and death despite their impulses to seek happiness is due not to the ineffectiveness of their wills but to the abuse of the potential power inherent in their wills.

*Jude the Obscure* is unique among the four novels, however in that it probes more deeply into the nature of man's abuse of his will. In his conception of Sue Bridehead, Hardy manifests a sympathetic understanding of a person whose perception is so strongly dominated by an anxiety which she is totally incapable of defining, understanding, and correcting that a truthful confrontation with herself and her world is not possible simply by an exertion of will. Hardy reveals that until a person of this type is rid of the dominating anxiety, he cannot effectively control his own life; any semblance of happiness or fulfillment achieved by such people without first resolving the anxiety is precarious and dangerous in its deceptiveness.

Jude is more typical of Hardy's characters than is Sue in that his misperceptions are more within his power to correct, as he demonstrates in the course of the novel. As a result of his misperceptions, Jude misuses his will; that is,
bases his actions on illusion, idealism, or rationalization instead of on a clear perception of reality. Jude disuses his will because even after he has learned to perceive and accept reality, he does not seize his opportunities to control his life, but instead relinquishes his ability to act upon his own impulses by choosing to act upon Sue's instead. Had he chosen to act upon his own impulses in his later life, he conceivably could have averted the disastrous outcomes of his own and Sue's lives.

Jude's failure to base his actions upon a clear perception of reality is most evident in his academic activities. He understands neither the task he has chosen nor his own true nature. His decision to pursue a university education is not made after careful consideration of the abilities and resources required, but is made instead because of his desire to be a part of the world chosen by Phillotson, who inspired Jude's adoration because he was the only man who seemed to care a little for him. For Jude was painfully aware that he was much like the rooks who steal farmers' corn—"living in a world which did not want them" (11)—and when he sets his heart for Christminster, he realizes, "It had been the yearning of his heart to find something to anchor on, to cling to—for some place which he could call admirable" (24). And he wonders whether Christminster would be such a place. Jude resolves to follow his schoolmaster to
Christminster more because the city might offer him relief from the sordidness of his life of rejection and degradation than because of a genuine desire to devote himself to a scholarly life.

The mirage-like quality of Jude's concept of his goal is evident in an early scene. Seeking a glimpse of the city twenty miles from his home, Jude fancies he sees the lights of Christminster like "a halo or glow-fog"; he opens his lips and draws in the wind "as if it were a sweet liquor," and he addresses the breeze "caressingly." You were in Christminster city...touching Mr. Phillotson's face, being breathed by him and now you are here, breathed by me—you, the very same."

Then he hears what he believes to be "the sound of bells, the voice of the city, faint and musical, calling to him, "We are happy here!" (21-22). It is evident that to Jude dreams of going to Christminster are dreams of escaping unhappiness at least as much as they are dreams of achieving a goal which appeals to his nature.

Jude makes this choice early in his life before he has become aware of the vast number of ways in which a young man can find happiness in life and before he has become aware of the complexity of his own nature. As Jude's awareness of his world and of himself widens, the desirability of a university education weakens. For example, as soon as Jude is made aware of his desire for sexual fulfillment, he completely neg-
lects his studies, seeking instead to satisfy the newly discovered "void...in his heart" (54). After his first walk with Arabella, he feels that "utter annihilation of the six days which must elapse before he could see her again...would have been his intensest wish if he had had only the week to live" (54). His view of life and himself is completely altered by the entrance of Arabella into his life.

He walked as if he felt himself to be another man from the Jude of yesterday. What were his books to him? what were his intentions hither-to adhered to so strictly, as to not wasting a single minute of time day by day? "Wasting!" It depended on your point of view to define that: he was just living for the first time; not wasting life. It was better to love a woman than to be a graduate, or a parson; ay, or a pope! (53)

After Jude loses Arabella he resumes his studies, and finally arrives in Christminster; but his determination and desire to complete his education seem to have dwindled. Hardy comments that "the ultimate impulse to come had had a curious origin—one more nearly related to the emotional side of him than to the intellectual." Seeing a photograph of his cousin, Sue Bridehead, and learning that she lived in Christminster had "ultimately formed a quickening ingredient in his latent intent of following his friend the schoolmaster thither" (90).

After his arrival, Jude's main activities aside from his work and studies are those involved in watching his cousin from afar, and before long "the emotion which had been ac-
cumulating in his heart as the bottled-up effect of solitude and the poetized locality he dwelt in, insensibly began to precipitate itself on this [Sue's] half-visionary form; and he perceived that...he would soon be unable to resist the desire to make himself known to her" (105). Although he tries to convince himself that his attraction to Sue is that of a blood relation, and although he tells himself, "It can't be! I, a man with a wife, must not know her!" (108), he becomes more and more aware that he "wanted something to love" and desired to indulge "this unexpected and unauthorized passion" (114) aroused by Sue.

At the same time that Jude's attraction to Sue is growing, the attractiveness of the universities is diminishing. After the enchantment of Jude's first night in Christminster is over, he sees the colleges more realistically.

He found that the colleges had treacherously changed their sympathetic countenances: some were pompous; some had put on the look of family vaults above ground; something barbaric loomed in the masonries of all. The spirits of the great men had disappeared. (97)

That same day while Jude is seeking a job in a stone yard, he experiences another "true illumination." He realizes that here in the stone yard was a centre of effort as worthy as that dignified by the name of scholarly study within the noblest of the colleges. (98)
Finally, Jude encounters the reality of the goal he has set for himself when he learns from Sue that Phillotson is still only a schoolmaster. Jude wonders, "How could he succeed in an enterprise wherein the great Phillotson had failed?" (118). Jude finally realizes, "It would have been better never to have embarked in the scheme at all than to do it without seeing clearly where I was going, or what I was aiming at" (134). He perceives and accepts the reality he should have sought over ten years earlier—"the undertaking was hopeless" (136).

There is no question that an educational system which discriminates against those without wealth is an unfair system which undoubtedly prevents many poor students from fully developing their intellectual potentials. However, in Jude's case much more is involved. Beneath the veneer of the indictment of universities is Hardy's implied statement that any man is "a fool indeed" (141) if he embarks upon a goal and devotes countless hours to its achievement without "giving an outlook on practicabilities" (134). In order to make decisions which will lead to fulfillment, one must consider both himself and his world realistically.

The same failure to accept reality is responsible for the failure of Jude's marriage to Arabella. This episode in Jude's life closely parallels his dedication to educational goals. In both cases Jude acts in response to an emotional
need—the need to belong, in the first case, and the need for sexual gratification in the second. Jude goes about his courtship with as little awareness of love, sex, and marriage as he had of education. For until his meeting with Arabella, "Jude had never looked at a woman to consider her as such, but had vaguely regarded the sex as beings outside his life and purposes" (44). And this naivete in both cases leads him to burden himself needlessly for many years, with books in one case and with a wife in the other.

Much of Jude's difficulty in his relationship with Arabella stems from his ambivalent attitude toward himself and his purposes in life. When he first meets her, he thinks it is "better to love a woman than to be a graduate, or a parson...or a pope," and his "intentions as to reading, working, and learning...were suffering a curious collapse into a corner" (45). Yet at the same time he is aware that loving a woman, especially this woman is inconsistent with his former plans. He is "faintly conscious that to common sense there was something lacking, and still more obviously redundant, in the nature of this girl who had drawn him to her, which made it necessary that he should assert mere sportiveness on his part as his reason in seeking her—something in her quite antipathetic to that side of him which had been occupied with literary study and the magnificent Christminster dream" (45-46). However, this awareness comes
to him "just for a short fleeting while" through his "intellectual eye" before Jude is hopelessly "lost to all conditions of things in the advent of a fresh and wild pleasure, that of having found a new channel for emotional interest hitherto unsuspected" (46). "The unvoiced call of woman to man" (44) offers such emotional satisfaction to Jude that "for weeks [he] ceased to look into a book of Greek, Latin, or any other tongue" (61).

The ambivalent attitude is to some extent responsible for the breaking up of his marriage. When he promises to marry Arabella, he tells her, "it is a complete smashing up of my plans—I mean my plans before I knew you, my dear. But what are they, after all! Dreams about books, and degrees, and impossible fellowships, and all that" (65). In effect he is giving up his former scholarly pursuits knowing that they are not congruous with the kind of life he will lead with a wife and child to support. Arabella feels that Jude would make a satisfactory husband if he would "stick to his trade, and throw aside those stupid books for practical undertakings" (66). But Jude cannot quite reconcile himself to a life with no scholarly ambitions, and he continues his reading. On the morning of his last quarrel with Arabella, Jude places his books on the kitchen table. As her temper mounts, Arabella takes her wrath out on the books, throwing them on the floor with her grease-smeared hands. When Arabella writes to tell
Jude she is leaving him, she explains that "she had gone
tired of him...He was such a slow old coach, and she did not
care for the sort of life he led. There was no prospect of
his ever bettering himself or her" (83). Thus in both the
development and the conclusion of Jude's relationship with
Arabella, a more accurate and realistic concept of himself
could have led to more satisfactory outcomes.

Jude, however, is not yet ready to accept himself as the
complex being he is; he is not yet ready to accept responsi-
bility for whatever happens to him. When he discovers
Arabella had tricked him into marriage, he morosely ponders
over the cruelty of "social ritual."

There seemed to him, vaguely and dimly, some-
thing wrong in a social ritual which made neces-
sary a cancelling of well-formed schemes in-
volving many years of thought and labour, of
foleging a man's one opportunity of showing
himself superior to the lower animals, and of
contributing his units of work to the general
progress of his generation, because of a mo-
mentary surprise by a new and transitory in-
stinct which had nothing in it of the nature
of vice, and could be only at the most called
weakness. He was inclined to inquire what he
had done, or she lost, for that matter, that
he deserved to be caught in a gin which would
cripple him, if not her also, for the rest of
a lifetime? (70-71)

The fundamental weakness of this protest is that what Jude
chooses to regard as a "new and transitory instinct" is a
natural and realistic part of his own nature. In actuality
he was "caught in a gin" and "cripple[d] for the rest of a
lifetime" by his need for sexual fulfillment and not by "social ritual." His intellect—that quality which makes man "superior to the lower animals"—had simply failed to hold in check, or even in balance, his instinct to seek a "fresh and wild pleasure."

Before Jude can hope to find a satisfying and fulfilling life for himself, he must accept the fact that sexual and emotional satisfaction is as necessary to himself as are intellectual activities. It is Jude's failure to understand this fact that is responsible for sorrow brought about by his marriage to Arabella; social ritual or marriage laws are only obliquely responsible. If he had understood his need for intellectual stimulation before his marriage, he would not have been so eager to dismiss all his studies in an overzealous pursuit of Arabella; if he had understood his need for sexual satisfaction after his marriage, he would not have been so eager to dismiss his marriage as the mistake of "having based a permanent contract on a temporary feeling" (80). For there is a great deal of mutual attraction between Jude and Arabella; a second attempt may have saved a marriage too easily given up.

By the time Jude arrives in Christminster, he has progressed considerably toward a willingness to accept himself and his world realistically. For example, he has learned that despite impulses to deny by rationalization any sexual
interest in Sue, he must admit to whatever feelings he genu-
inely experiences. After having watched Sue during a church
service, for example, Jude forces himself to resist approaching
her because he feels he ought not to do so "with the kind of
feeling that was awakening in him" (108).

For though it had seemed to have an ecclesi-
astical basis during the service, and he had
persuaded himself that such was the case, he
could not altogether be blind to the real
nature of the magnetism. (108)

Later he tries to give himself an excuse for making Sue's ac-
quaintance, thinking "perhaps to know her would be to cure
himself of unexpected and unauthorized passion." But he
quickly dismisses that idea because "a voice whispered that,
although he desired to know her, he did not desire to be
cured" (114). He then attempts to persuade himself that his
attraction to her is "partly a wish for intellectual sympathy,
and a craving for loving-kindness in my solitude." Yet he
knows immediately that "whatever Sue's virtues, talents, or
ecclesiastical saturation, it was certain that those items
were not at all the cause of his affection for her" (115).

Similarly, Jude is now ready to seek and face the facts
concerning his educational goals.

It was decidedly necessary to consider facts a
little more closely than he had done of late.
What was the good, after all, of using up his
spare hours in a vague labour called "private
study" without giving an outlook on practica-
ilities?..."This hovering outside the walls
of the colleges as if expecting some arm to be
stretched out from them to lift me inside, won't
do!" (134)
He sees for the first time that Christminster had exercised "a curious and cunning glamour" over his "dreaming youth" and now that he had shaken off its charms, "the whole scheme had burst up, like an iridescent soap-bubble, under the touch of reasoned inquiry" (136).

A significant indication of Jude's changed attitude toward himself is provided by a comparison of his thoughts after his "abandonment to the society of Arabella for twelve hours" with his thoughts after the break-up of his marriage to her. In the earlier incident, he thinks to himself that the failure of his marriage is due to "social ritual" and the permanent contract which he had made with her. After the later incident Jude admits, "taken all round, he was a man of too many passions to make a good clergyman; and the utmost he could hope for was that in a life of constant internal warfare between flesh and spirit the former might not always be victorious" (231-232). Soon after, he is convinced he will never make a clergyman, and he burns all his books.

Now that Jude sees and feels clearly, he is in a position to control his life effectively. However, his life becomes complicated by the development of his love for Sue. Because of this relationship, he relinquishes his will to Sue; that is, he acts more in obedience to her impulses than to his own. This proves disastrous for Sue is far from able to achieve a satisfying and fulfilling life for herself or for anyone involved in her life.
As Hardy concedes in his Preface, Sue Bridehead seems to be modeled after the "woman of the feminist movement—the slight, pale "bachelor" girl—the intellectualized, emancipated bundle of nerves that modern conditions were producing" (xii). When Jude first sees her, he fears to approach her because "she seemed so dainty beside himself" (103). Early in the novel she is described as being "all nervous motion" (105) and "of a nervous temperament" (109). When Jude first meets her he is impressed with her excitability: "she was so vibrant that everything she did seemed to have its source in feeling" (120). She claims she has read "most of the Greek and Latin classics through translations, and other books too" (176). And when she reveals that she had "shared a sitting-room for fifteen months" (177) with a Christminster undergraduate, Jude observes Sue's "curious unconsciousness of gender" (179). Yet Hardy's portrayal of Sue goes beyond the stereotype suggested by the description in the Preface. Sue may appear to be the typical "woman of the feminist movement," but in reality she is far more complex.

Implicit in Hardy's conception of Sue Bridehead is the awareness that even people who believe themselves to be intellectualized and emancipated often fail to find satisfying and fulfilling lives because they do not realize that a person can just as easily be a slave to a philosophy of freedom or emancipation as to a philosophy of restriction or inhibition.
For a person who is committed to any philosophy is obligated to act according to that philosophy, the dictates of which may not always be in accordance with his own impulses.

Sue Bridehead, however, needs an obligation of this sort upon which to base her actions; for because she experiences a strong conflict between her normal, feminine physical and emotional impulses and a deeply engrained anxiety related to the expression of these impulses, she is incapable of identifying and enforcing a will which can provide a sense of fulfillment. The result of this conflict is her compulsive adherence to a philosophy which will relieve her of the necessity of expressing her impulses. She adopts the philosophy of the emancipated woman who considers herself a comrade and equal of men, and thus she succeeds in avoiding rather than confronting the conflict between her innate impulses and her anxieties.

Sue's anxiety about marriage and the free expression of her sexual impulses is evident in her behavior as an adult and can also be accounted for in part by what Hardy reveals about her earlier life. Aunt Drusilla reveals that Sue's parents had been unsuccessful in their marriage, explaining that having been offended by her husband, Sue's mother "so disliked living with him afterwards that she went away to London with her little maid [Sue]" (81). Sue apparently lived with her father for a while and also felt the force of
his vindictive feelings toward his wife. Aunt Drusilla comments, "She was brought up by her father to hate her mother's family" (130-131); and earlier she had declared about the conflicts between Sue's parents, "Ah, that a little maid should know such changes!" (9). Sue apparently had been old enough to be aware of her parents' aversion toward each other; it is possible that this child "with her tight-strained nerves" (131) felt deeply and emotionally the painfulness of unsuccessful love and marriage.

In addition, Sue may have been affected on a more conscious level by the idea of the marriage curse suffered by all Fawleys. As Aunt Drusilla explains to Jude, "The Fawleys were not made for wedlock; it never seemed to sit well upon us. There's sommat in our blood that won't take kindly to the notion of being bound to do what we do readily enough if not bound" (81). Sue's temperament is such that the idea of a curse of this sort may have made a deep impression on her; for even as a child she showed a tendency to relish the supernatural. Drusilla's companion tells Jude:

how she [Sue] recited "Excelsior," "There was a sound of revelry by night," and "The Raven"; how during the delivery she would knit her little brows and glare round tragically...as if some real creature stood there (132).

As an adult Sue has retained some of this reverence for the supernatural; she seems to fear evil omens. When Jude asks her to meet him "at the cross in the pavement which marked the spot of the Martyrdoms" (116), she declares, "I am not
going to meet you just there, for the first time in my life!" She explains, "The place you chose was so horrid—I suppose I ought not to say horrid—I mean gloomy and inauspicious in its associations" (117). Later, when the subject of the family curse comes up between Jude and Sue, she admits that her family used to tell her that she "ought not to marry" because she belonged to "an odd and peculiar family—the wrong breed for marriage." She tries to dismiss its importance "with nervous lightness" saying, "Oh, but there can't be anything in it!...Our family have been unlucky of late years in choosing mates—that's all" (201). It is evident, in view of Sue's attitude toward the supernatural and her agitation in speaking of the marriage curse, that some of her fear of marriage may be rooted in having been unduly impressed with the significance of the curse.

Although Hardy's portrayal of Sue's early life is sketchy, these influences are probable causes of Sue's anxiety and doubt about her ability to sustain normal relationships with men. Her anxiety is so great that it compels her to withhold expression of any feminine interest in men and to play the role of the emancipated woman instead.

Sue persists in refusing to involve herself in relationships with men beyond the intellectual level. Her "friendly intimacy" with the Christminster undergraduate is the kind of relationship in which she feels most secure; they enjoyed
each other's company "like two men almost." And although
the relationship ends with the death of the young man who
claimed he was dying because Sue "was breaking his heart by
holding out against him so long at such close quarters." Sue
can speak of the incident lightly and with "a silvery voice"
(177-178). She is unaffected by the incident because she had
not been guilty of indulging her own impulses or of asserting
her own will; she was merely following the dictates of an un-
conventional philosophy which acted as a substitute for her
will. She feels comfortable and secure in such a relationship
because as long as she is protected by a philosophy, she does
not have to struggle with the anxiety she feels about ex-
pressing her feminine impulses; as long as she adheres to a
philosophy, she need not determine and obey her own will, and
she can thus feel free of responsibility for whatever happens
to herself or to others involved in her life.

Sue tries to keep her relationship with Phillotson on
the same basis, but when circumstances bring about their mar-
riage, she is forced to confront her anxieties about express-
ing sexual impulses; as a result, she lives in a "daily, con-
tinuous tragedy" (278). She tells Jude, Phillotson is "con-
siderate to me in everything; and he is very interesting,
from the amount of general knowledge he has acquired by
reading everything that comes in his way....though I like
Mr. Phillotson as a friend, I don't like him--it is a torture
to me to--live with him as a husband!" (255). Her anxiety is so great that on one occasion upon being surprised by Phillotson in her bedroom, Sue jumps out of a second-story window (272-273). Thus, it is obvious that her anxiety is so deep-seated that it cannot be controlled by reason.

Sue's torture is so great that she cannot live with the pressure of having to sustain a physical relationship with her husband, and she asks permission to live away from him. On parting she tells him, "It is a curious thing that directly I have begun to regard you as not my husband, but as my old teacher, I like you. I won't be so affected as to say I love you, because you know I don't, except as a friend. But you do seem that to me!" (282). Sue is comfortable with Phillotson as long as he does not arouse her anxieties regarding the expression of physical and emotional impulses.

Sue's attitude toward marriage may also be a result of the influence of her early awareness of unsuccessful matches. She apparently does not trust her ability to choose a marriage partner and to sustain a satisfying marriage relationship. This doubt is so deeply engrained in her consciousness that it manifests itself frequently as anxiety. Jude notes that Sue's behavior in the days before her marriage to Phillotson was "something like that of a scared child" (205). The morning of her marriage she "talked incessantly" (206), and during the service, "her face was nervously set, and when
they reached the trying ordeal of Jude giving her to Phillotson, she could hardly command herself" (209).

Depression, a form of anxiety expression, is evident in Sue when she first approaches the legalization of her marriage with Jude (321). She makes an effort to rationalize her anxiety and her desire to postpone the marriage by blaming Arabella; "What Arabella has been saying to me has made me feel more than ever how hopelessly vulgar an institution legal marriage is—a sort of trap to catch a man—I can't bear to think of it. I wish I hadn't promised to let you put up the banns this morning!" (326). On the second occasion, Sue, "whose nervousness intensified with the hours" (340), convinces herself that their decision to marry is "awful temerity."

"It seems awful temerity in us two to go marrying! I am going to vow to you in the same words I vowed in to my other husband, and you to me in the same as you used to your other wife; regardless of the deterrent lesson we were taught by those experiments!" (341)

In addition, she objects to the dreariness of the office in which the marriage was to take place saying, "It seems so unnatural as the climax of our love!" (342). And finally she convinces Jude that marriage is not intended for them, "because we are the queer sort of people we are—folk in whom domestic ties of a forced kind snuff out cordiality and spontaneousness....an irrevocable oath is risky" (345).
In view of Sue's reluctance to commit herself in marriage to Jude, her earlier marriage to Phillotson reveals an aspect of great significance in her character; that is, despite the strength of her anxieties regarding marriage and sex, Sue has one fear which is strong enough to overcome them. Despite the unconventionality of her philosophy, Sue exhibits a great fear of social criticism. She admits to Phillotson that she married him to escape the criticism resulting from the training school scandal.

"Of course I, of all people, ought not to have cared what was said, for it was just what I fancied I never did care for. But I was a coward—as so many women are—and my theoretic unconventionality broke down" (367).

In fact, as Sue's tensions mount, she makes it quite evident that beneath the armor of the intellectualized, emancipated woman is a woman who experiences highly conventional impulses; Jude soon realizes this and accuses Sue, "Under the affectation of independent views you are as enslaved to the social code as any woman I know!" (290). Under the stress of threats upon her "theoretic unconventionality" Sue's conventional impulses express themselves in compulsive behavior, such as her marrying Phillotson, despite her desire to suppress them. She can maintain her "theoretic unconventionality" only as long as it remains unchallenged by society; and she can control her practical conventionality as long as she is not under the stress of the arousal of her conventional sexual and emotional impulses.
One of the characteristics of her practical conventionality which Sue indulges is "a woman's love of being loved." She explains, "Sometimes a woman's love of being loved gets the better of her conscience, and though she is agonized at the thought of treating a man cruelly, she encourages him to love her while she doesn't love him at all" (290). With the undergraduate and Phillotson, Sue could gratify this love without losing control of herself and suffering ill consequences of her behavior. For in both cases, aside from the consequences of her unintended marriage to Phillotson, she could remain uninvolved because she was in no danger of loving either of them. With Jude, however, this conventional impulse is aroused beyond her control when she finds that she has become emotionally involved with him; her game of being loved without loving in return does not work with Jude. Sue tells him

"When I first knew you I merely wanted you to love me. I did not exactly flirt with you; but that inborn craving which undermines some women's morals almost more than unbridled passion—the craving to attract and captivate regardless of the injury it may do the man—was in me; and when I found I had caught you, I was frightened. And then--I don't know how it was --I couldn't bear to let you go." (426)

Sue tries to maintain her distant position with Jude, despite her growing awareness of her love for him. But as her tension mounts, she feels more and more compelled to express her true feelings for him. On one occasion Jude visits Sue
in the Shaston schoolhouse, and Jude in exasperation calls
Sue a flirt. She responds

"It was cruel to say that! Yet I can't tell you the truth—I should shock you by letting you know how I give way to my impulses.... Some women's love of being loved is insatiable; and so, often, is their love of loving; and in the last case they may find that they can't give it continuously to the chamber-officer appointed by the bishop's license to receive it. But you are so straight-forward, Jude, that you can't understand me!" (245-246)

Realizing that she has come too close to expressing those feelings which she desires to suppress, she sends Jude out; but immediately after, she hails him from the window, and they patch their quarrel. Hardy comments, "Now that the high window sill was between them, so that he could not get at her, she seemed not to mind indulging in a frankness she had feared at close quarters" (246).

In another scene Jude is aroused to compassion by Sue's confessions of her miserable existence with Phillotson, but Sue warns him

"Don't come near me, Jude, because you mustn't. Don't--don't!"

But he had jumped up and put his face against hers—or rather against her ear, her face being inaccessible.

"I told you not to, Jude!" (256)
And instead of speaking again, Sue rises and leaves the house.

Finally, however, in their parting after their aunt's death, Sue's resistance breaks down, and she reveals her love to Jude.
She denies Jude a kiss because he would not give it in the spirit of a cousin.

And then they had turned from each other in estrangement, and gone their several ways, till at a distance of twenty or thirty yards both had looked round simultaneously. That look behind was fatal to the reserve hitherto more or less maintained. They had quickly run back, and met, and embracing most unpremeditatedly, kissed close and long. When they parted for good it was with flushed cheeks on her side, and a beating heart on his. (260-261)

Jealousy, another characteristic of the conventional woman, is also evident in Sue's attitude toward Jude. When Jude first tells Sue of his marriage to Arabella, Sue asks Jude, "I suppose she--your first wife--is--a very pretty woman, even if she's wicked?...Prettier than I am, no doubt!" (199). Later when she learns that Jude had slept with Arabella since her return from Australia, Sue accuses Jude, "You've been false to me; you, my last hope! And I shall never forget it, never!" She emphatically reminds Jude twice that she jumped out of a window at the thought of sleeping with Phillotson, and apparently she feels that Jude should have gone to equal extremes to avoid Arabella even though, as Jude reminds Sue, "by your own wish, dear Sue, we are only to be friends, not lovers! It is so very inconsistent of you" (292).

As her emotional involvement with Jude increases and the stress of the conflict between her innate impulses and
her anxieties becomes more intense, Sue is less and less able to control her expression of conventional impulses. Her jealousy becomes so extreme that it ultimately causes her to give up the last of her intellectual armor and give way to her emotions. When Arabella appeals to Jude for help, Sue objects; but she finds she cannot influence him without revealing to him the full depth of her feelings for him:

"I can't say any more!—Oh, if you must, you must!" she said, bursting out into sobs that seemed to tear her heart. "I have nobody but you, Jude, and you are deserting me! I didn't know you were like this—! I can't bear it, I can't! If she were yours it would be different!"

"Or if you were."

"Very well then—if I must I must. Since you will have it so, I agree! I will be. Only I didn't mean to! And I didn't want to marry again, either! ...But, yes—I agree! I do love you. I ought to have known that you would conquer in the long run, living like this!" (320-321)

It is after this scene in which Sue finally gives way to the impulses which she had felt so strongly but had so feared to express that she experiences what seems to be a satisfying and fulfilling life.

At the Great Wessex Agricultural Show, Arabella's second husband observes after one look at Jude, Sue, and Father Time, "They are rather fond of one another and their child, seemingly" (351). Hardy describes Jude and Sue as experiencing a "complete mutual understanding."
[Jude and Sue] went along with that tender attention to each other which the shyest can scarcely disguise, and which these, among entire strangers as they imagined, took less trouble to disguise than they might have done at home....That complete mutual understanding, in which every glance and movement was as effectual as speech for conveying intelligence between them, made them almost the two parts of a single whole (352).

Despite appearances, however, Sue's happiness is superficial and extremely precarious. Although she is finally living according to her natural impulses and is indulging her love for Jude, Sue's happiness cannot provide her a genuine sense of fulfillment because she has not developed the insight which must underlie the exertion of will in an effective manner; that is, she has not developed a realistic understanding of her environment and her society; she has not developed greater self-awareness or greater self-acceptance. She is living with Jude not because she has understood and resolved her fear of indulging her sexual impulses, but because of Arabella's threat to her claim to Jude. She has suppressed her anxieties; but they lurk beneath her consciousness, manifesting themselves primarily in her irrational intolerance of legalizing her marriage. An experience of extreme stress is all that is required to bring her anxieties to the fore once again.

The experience is the murder-suicide committed by Father Time in Christminster. The shock of this disaster causes the collapse of all Sue's confidence in the virtue of
living according to innate impulses, and Sue begins to search frantically for another philosophy, another set of beliefs to protect herself from reliance upon impulses alone.

Sue's belief is that she is the cause of Father Time's gross deed.

"It was I who incited him really, though I didn't know I was doing it! I talked to the child as one should only talk to people of mature age. I said the world was against us, that it was better to be out of life than in it at this price; and he took it literally." (408)

The responsibility of the guilt proves to be too much for Sue to bear, however, and she seeks a power other than her own to take the responsibility. She first clutches at a vague fatalistic explanation:

"We went about loving each other too much—indulging ourselves to utter selfishness with each other! We said—do you remember?—that we would make a virtue of joy. I said it was Nature's intention, Nature's law, and raison d'être that we should be joyful in what instincts she afforded us—instincts which civilization had taken upon itself to thwart. What dreadful things I said! And now Fate has given us this stab in the back for being such fools as to take Nature at her word!" (408-409)

Later Sue moves to a more orthodox explanation saying to Jude, "We must conform!...All the ancient wrath of the Power above us has been vented upon us. His poor creatures, and we must submit. There is no choice. We must. It is no use fighting God!" (413). And she tells Phillotson, "My children—are dead—and it is right that they should be! I am glad—
almost. They were sin-begotten. They were sacrificed to teach me how to live! Their death was the first stage of my purification" (439). She returns to Phillotson determined to cease her indulgence in her own impulses, to cease her search for self-delight. She claims her life has been a "vain attempt at self-delight. But self-abnegation is the higher road. We should mortify the flesh—the terrible flesh—the curse of Adam!" (416).

Thus Hardy shows through Sue Bridehead his awareness that in some persons anxieties are so deeply engrained that they are beyond control; as a result, a satisfying and fulfilling life cannot be achieved simply by realistic insight and assertion of self. Sue Bridehead is totally incapable of either insight or will; her life is a series of reactions to stress. She moves from compulsive reliance upon philosophy to compulsive expression of impulses and back to reliance upon philosophy; and she understands neither her actions nor the reasons behind them.

Jude, in the meantime, had been living more in accordance with Sue's will than his own. Although she finally agrees to his desire that they live as lovers and not just friends, he still indulges her even against his own better judgment as in the matter of legalizing their marriage. He nevertheless has not changed basically in that he still is capable of seeing and accepting life and himself realistically. His reaction to the death of his children reflects his ability to accept
the situation rationally and realistically without denying himself expression of his true feelings. Jude explains to Sue:

"It was in his nature to do it. The doctor says there are such boys springing up amongst us --boys of a sort unknown in the last generation --the outcome of new views of life. They seem to see all its terrors before they are old enough to have staying power to resist them. He says it is the beginning of the coming universal wish not to live. He's an advanced man, the doctor, but he can give no consolation to—"

Jude had kept back his own grief on account of her; but he now broke down. (406)

After Sue leaves him, however, Jude becomes demoralized and gives up trying to control his life according to a realistic understanding. Had he made one more attempt, he might have succeeded in diverting the miserable outcomes of his own and Sue's lives.

Knowing as he does that Phillotson is a compassionate man who cannot bear to be cruel to anyone, and that Sue is going back to him purely out of a sense of obligation to obey him once he has summoned her, Jude could have made Phillotson aware of the agony that Sue was experiencing in returning to him. For if he could have convinced Phillotson to refuse to receive Sue, she would not have remarried him. Sue tells Mrs. Edlin, "Richard says he'll have me back, and I'm bound to go! If he had refused, it might not have been so much my duty to--give up Jude" (441).
In addition, Jude knows how deeply Sue still loves him. Even after Sue's remarriage, when Jude goes to her from his sickbed, she gives much evidence of her still strong love. After Jude declares that Sue is not worth a man's love, she turns to him saying, "Don't, don't scorn me! Kiss me, O kiss me lots of times, and say I am not a coward and a contemptible humbug—I can't bear it!" She confesses her love for him, but being still "creed-drunk" Sue obeys her conscience rather than her instinct, and she sends Jude away.

She heard his coughs mingling with the rain on the windows, and in a last instinct of human affection, even now unsubdued by her fetters, she sprang up as if to go and succour him. But she knelt down again, and stopped her ears with her hands till all possible sound of him had passed away. (472-473)

Despite Sue's proclamations of love, Jude makes no further attempts to seek fulfillment for himself and Sue, but ends his life in a demoralized abandonment to illness and the company of Arabella. Jude is defeated by apathy, not society or religion or laws. He is defeated because he fails to use the opportunities that are his to control the course of his own life.
Chapter 4 - Tess of the d'Urbervilles

Tess Durbeyfield is similar to the other major characters in that she seems to be victimized by powers beyond her control while in actuality the primary force controlling her life is inherent in her own will. At times, she seems to be a victim of chance. It is by chance that her father learns of his d'Urberville heritage; that Alec appears to save her from a fight with Car Darch; that she is employed at the same dairy as is Angel; that her letter of confession slips under a carpet; and that she overhears the conversation of Angel's brothers and Mercy Chant. At times she seems a victim of society, a society which judges a person by his outward actions without consideration of circumstances or inward motives. At times she seems a victim of a superhuman power; she hears the sounds of the non-existent d'Urberville carriage and is thus supposedly doomed to be involved in a murder; and when she meets her death, Hardy comments, "The President of the Immortals...had ended his sport with Tess" (507).

So many powers seem to tower over Tess that many critics consider her primarily a victim of both social and universal forces which it is Hardy's purpose to expose and to criticize. In an early study of Hardy's novels, Harold Child observes the novels, taken as a whole, are an expression of the belief that the world is governed by a
force neither good nor evil, and indifferent to man's feelings...a world in which human individuality and desire are always in conflict with the indifferent governing powers.

Despite the fact that Child acknowledges Hardy's vision of man's greatness, he feels that Hardy depicts an image of man's futility as well. Child feels that one of the primary tools used by the "indifferent governing powers" to effect Tess's futility is social convention.

Tess might have lived a happy and beneficent life, had it not been for the sense of sin created in her by the collective timidity of society, and for the conventions that proclaimed her an outcast...In Tess of the d'Urbervilles...he brings definite charges against the collective judgment of society. 17

Albert Pettigrew Elliott, a more recent critic, concurs in the judgment passed much earlier by Child in that he also interprets Tess as a character whose actions are futile; he feels that Hardy's last two novels express a strong deterministic or fatalistic philosophy.

Hardy's fatalistic philosophy finds its supreme and final prose expression in Tess of the d'Urbervilles, 1891, and Jude the Obscure, 1896. The progress from ungoverned Chance to cruel determinism...are in these two tragedies united in a positive way....Tess and Jude give us an entirely different problem; the immortals are united; they have elected a President and man is faced with a system.

Elliott feels that Tess is a victim of "Fateful Incident"

rather than Chance. "Nothing here is done by Chance. Tess, like Romeo and Juliet, is doomed from the beginning."\(^{18}\)

Harvey Curtis Webster believes *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* illustrates Hardy's pessimistic view of the world in that Tess is a victim of powers beyond her control--fate, her own heritage, chance, and society. Webster feels that Hardy sees man as having no control over his own life; man, like all other forms of life, must live with the relentless rhythm of the world. He cites Hardy's statement, "So flux and reflux--the rhythm of change--alternate and persist in everything under the sky," and observes that man's fate is to bow "willy nilly" to the "rhythm of change."

Webster also interprets Tess's heritage as contributing significantly to her helplessness. He observes

From her mother Tess inherits her prettiness and her early womanly fulness. The race from which she is descended transmitted to her a slight incautiousness of character. The latter quality partially accounts for her seduction. The former qualities account for the seducer's interest....Because she is physically attractive, she and Angel converge as if subjected to an irresistible law. They gravitate into one. Angel is driven toward her "by every heave of his pulse," and the same might equally well be said of Tess.

Similarly, Webster feels that numerous chance incidents have played a "significant part in bringing about Tess's seduction\(^{18}\)

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and subsequent misery." He feels that much of her misery was due to chance, and she might have had a much happier life if events had not chanced to occur as they did.

Although Webster sees Hardy's use of social convention as a tool in Tess's destruction as a sign of optimism, since the ills of society unlike those of nature are "remediable," he nevertheless persists in absolving Tess from responsibility for her misery.

If Tess could have avoided mankind...neither her child nor her loss of maidenhood would have been cause for unhappiness, and the undying appetite for joy might have asserted itself freely again. But it seems that society believes maidenhood the only thing in nature denied recuperative powers; so Tess suffers. (173-180)

Critics such as these who are eager to justify Hardy's use of the subtitle, "a pure woman," are right to the extent that Tess is not an evil woman; that is, despite her many socially unacceptable acts, she is essentially a moral woman who commits immoral acts under the overwhelming pressure of circumstances. To absolve Tess of all responsibility for her misery, however, is to fail to observe that beneath the obviously intentional drama of a woman victimized by forces too great for any human to overcome, is a more sensitively drawn drama of a simple human being discovering and using the full potential of the human will. Through the experiences of her short lifetime, Tess learns to exert her will so as to achieve a satisfying and fulfilling life. Although Hardy's
vision of ideal human conduct is expressed through the other novels discussed, Tess is the only character who achieves this ideal; for she alone overcomes misery, anguish, and despair; she alone achieves the serenity that accompanies genuine insight and vision. For this reason Tess of the d'Urbervilles is being considered last in this study even though it was written before Jude the Obscure.

Although Tess suffers as much as do the other major characters, she is, nevertheless, greater because she experiences satisfaction and fulfillment during periods of her life as well as at the end of her life. These experiences come as a result of her using her will effectively; that is, when she acts without self-delusion in response to the impulses of her composite being, or as she realizes later, when she acts in obedience to her "innate sensations" (115). Unlike the other characters, Tess achieves the satisfaction of directing the course of her own life at moments when she acts upon a realistic understanding not only of the world but also of all the aspects of her own nature. When she does this, she is acting upon her composite will, a will which responds to her whole being, not just to a single aspect such as reason, emotion, or impulse.

The greatness of Tess's character derives from several aspects of her personality. First, she has greater self-awareness from beginning to end than any other character. She
is instinctively aware of her own true impulses and is conscious of her own potential for rising above whatever circumstances she may encounter in her life. In addition, she has more resilience than other characters; she has the ability to recover from the consequences of her mistakes, to rediscover and to reassert her own true nature. Furthermore, she has imagination. Regardless of how hopeless prospects for happiness appear, she is able to conceive of the best remaining course by which she may overcome her unfortunate circumstances. And finally, she has the capacity for serenity; once she has performed an act in response to her "innate sensations" she is able to accept responsibility for the consequences. When at the end of the novel she says, "I am ready," she is in effect indicating that she has totally reconciled herself to an acceptance of the reality of her own nature and the reality of the world; she has acted upon genuine understanding, and she is ready to accept the consequences.

Tess reveals her self-awareness early in the novel in the incident of the death of Prince. Her brother Abraham surmises that the death occurred "because we live on a blighted star" (36). Disastrous as the event is to the future comfort of the family, Tess will not concur in Abraham's interpretation of the incident. Instead she "continues to heap [self-reproach] upon herself" (37) refusing to believe that any power other than her own negligence was responsible for the accident. Be-
cause she believes in the power of her will to rise above circumstances as well as to create them, she asserts her will to overcome the hardship created by the death of the family "bread-winner" (38).

Tess's decision to earn money to buy a new horse is evidence of her insistence upon using her will to face reality; for this decision is based upon her own true impulses as well as upon a realistic appraisal of the situation. For loss of Prince means financial ruin and consequent physical privation for the Durbeyfield family, and Tess could not tolerate knowing that the suffering was due to her negligence. Thus she makes a genuine effort to find employment for herself to evade the consequences which must inevitably come if she did nothing.

Tess does not always act in obedience to her own impulses; at times, she becomes indifferent and acts in obedience to another person's impulses instead of to her own. For example, when Tess is offered a job at The Slopes in Trantridge, the impulse of her composite being forbids her accepting. She is unable to explain her will intellectually, for it finds its basis not in the intellect or reason alone but in her total being. She tells her mother, "I'd rather not tell you why, Mother; indeed, I don't quite know why" (52). Perhaps her aversion to accepting is an aversion to trying to get something for nothing; perhaps it is a physical aversion to Alec; or perhaps it is an unwillingness to compromise herself by
playing the role of "poor relations." Whatever the reason, she knows at the pit of her stomach that she would rather not go. Eventually, however, under the pressure of poverty, Tess relinquishes her will to her mother and agrees to go. As if in testimony to the fact that she is no longer acting on her own impulses, Tess gives herself over to her mother on the morning of her departure saying, "Do what you like with me, Mother" (56).

The consequence of Tess's going to The Slopes in accordance with her mother's will is Tess's seduction by Alec and her eventual submission to doing his will. Soon, however, Tess begins to "loathe and hate" (97) herself for her weakness in giving in to Alec, and she begins to recover from this error when she decides to leave him. However, even at her departure she has not succeeded in completely reasserting herself. She tells Alec, "See how you've mastered me!" as she turns to his kiss "as one might turn at the request of a sketcher or hair-dresser" (99).

Tess suffers deep feelings of remorse for having become indifferent to her own will. She suffers from her hatred of life. "Her depression was then terrible, and she could have hidden herself in a tomb" (106). She suffers also from the condemnation in the minds of the villagers. At church she feels the cruelty of gossipers. "The people who had turned their heads turned them again as the service proceeded; and
at last observing her, they whispered to each other. She knew what their whispers were about, grew sick at heart, and felt she could come to church no more" (107).

Tess, however, responds to remorse in a manner unique among Hardy's major characters. She exhibits a resilience, an ability to recover from her misfortunes and continue to build upon and strengthen her true character. Her mother, for example, suffers remorse after she sends Tess to The Slopes because that act had been based solely upon her desire for wealth and position and had been in total neglect of her will to do what is best for her daughter. She tells her husband, "I was thinking that perhaps it would ha' been better if Tess had not gone....if 'twere the doing again, I wouldn't let her go till I had found out whether the gentleman is really a good-hearted young man and choice over her as his kinswoman" (60). However, despite her having experienced this remorse, Joan Durbeyfield does not learn to avoid remorse by acting upon a more realistic appraisal of her will; instead she repeats her first injustice to Tess. Years later when her family is again threatened with physical need, the encourages Tess to become the mistress of Alec to provide for her family.

Alec, too, suffers remorse when he realizes the consequences of Tess's having given in to him. He tells her, "Yours was the very worst case I ever was concerned in! I had no idea of what had resulted till you told me. Scamp that I was
to foul that innocent life! The whole blame was mine—the whole unconventional business of our time at Trantridge" (402). He offers to marry Tess feeling that it is his duty to help her regain her reputation. However, like Joan's, Alec's remorse soon dies and his old passion returns. After his duteous proposal of marriage has been refused, he asks

"You will not? Why is that?"

And as he asked the question a disappointment which was not entirely the disappointment of thwarted duty crossed d'Urber-ville's face. It was unmistakably a symptom that something of his old passion for her had been revived; duty and desire ran hand in hand. (402-403)

Unlike that of Joan and Alec, Tess's remorse for having misused her will leads her to try even harder to assert her impulses against those of the people involved in her life. Invariably her suffering, instead of causing her to submit to misfortune, effects the rekindling of her spirit to rise above circumstances.

Out of her remorse, Tess becomes a recluse until her baby is born, but soon after, she begins to assert herself once again. She realizes that "most of the misery had been generated by her conventional aspect, and not by her innate sensations" (115). Thus, acting upon her "innate sensations"—that is, using her composite being instead of convention as the guide to her actions—she goes to work at harvest time. After considering her past actions according to her "innate sensa-
Tess learns to bear "herself in dignity and look people calmly in the face at times, even when holding the baby in her arms" (115). Her "innate sensations" lead her to baptize her own baby "reasoning that if Providence would not ratify such an act of approximation, she for one did not value the kind of heaven lost by the irregularity—either for herself or for her child" (120). By the time Tess leaves for Talboythays dairy, she has regained her true nature. Hardy writes, "Some spirit within her rose automatically as the sap in the twigs. It was unexpended youth, surging up anew after its temporary check and bringing with it hope and the invincible instinct towards self-delight" (127).

Tess's "invincible instinct towards self-delight" was certainly right, for at the dairy she finds true happiness in an ideal "community."

Dairyman Crick's household of maids and men lived on comfortably, placidly, even merrily. Their position was perhaps the happiest of all positions in the social scale, being above the line at which neediness ends, and below the line at which the conveniences begin to cramp natural feeling and the stress of threadbare modishness makes too little of enough. (165)

Tess also finds happiness in herself.

Tess had never in her recent life been so happy as she was now, possibly never would be so happy again. She was, for one thing, physically and mentally suited among these new surroundings. The sapling which had rooted down to a poisonous stratus on the spot of its sowing had been transplanted to a deeper soil. (165)
Tess had left home, however, after having made a decision never to marry; this decision is an abuse of her will for it is a decision made primarily in response to social convention and judgment and not in response to her "innate sensations." This decision reflects a mood of self-abnegation rather than a realistic awareness of her true nature. Her experience of recovering from the humiliation of her relationship with Alec has taught Tess that she has an innate desire for self-delight; she has a life surge which will not be repressed. And she has known at least since her first encounter with Angel that there are men in the world who do appeal to her. For after his departure from the village dance, Tess suffers deep disappointment at not having been chosen by him.

She had no spirit to dance again for a long time, though she might have had plenty of partners; but, ah! they did not speak so nicely as the strange young man had done. It was not till the rays of the sun had absorbed the young stranger's retreating figure on the hill that she shook off her temporary sadness. (18)

Thus Tess's opinion that "on no account could she agree to a step which might afterwards cause bitter rueing to her husband for his blindness in wedding her" (226) may have been most sensible and correct, but it fails to consider the importance of making a realistic appraisal of oneself the basis of opinions or decisions.
Thus, when Tess finds herself attracted to Angel once again, she suffers the agonies of trying to live with a decision not compatible with her composite being. She strives to answer Angel's proposals with a "phlegmatic negative," but after these tender contests and her victory she would go away by herself under the remotest cow if at milking-time, or into the sedge or into her room if at a leisure interval, and mourn silently....The struggle was so fearful; her own heart was so strongly on the side of his—two ardent hearts against one poor little conscience. (225-226)

Gradually, the unrealistic nature of Tess's resolve becomes evident, for the life surge in Tess is too strong. "Tess was trying to lead a repressed life, but she little divined the strength of her own vitality" (161). Despite her efforts, Tess's "instinct towards self-delight" wins. When she finally consents to marry Angel, it is with the realization that, "the 'appetite for joy' which pervades all creation, that tremendous force which sways humanity to its purpose, as the tide sways the helpless weed, was not to be controlled by vague lucubrations over the social rubric" (244).

This decision to marry does not bring happiness either, however; for in making it, Tess has gone to the opposite extreme in the abuse of her will. She is ignoring completely her reason which urges her not to withhold from Angel the details of her past not only because the likelihood of his learning them eventually are too great, but also because she
feels she does not deserve his love for he loves a person who he believes to be "true, and honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report" (230). Instead of obeying her reason, Tess acts completely upon her desire for pleasure. Her decision is a "revolt against her scrupulousness," a desire to "snatch ripe pleasure before the iron teeth of pain could have time to shut upon her" (228). Because Tess's composite will is not involved in her decision, her pleasure is never completely satisfying and fulfilling—"doubt, fear, moodiness, care, shame. She knew that they were waiting like wolves just outside the circumscribing light....She walked in brightness, but she knew that in the background those shapes of darkness were always spread" (249-250). She is aware of the reason for the incompleteness of her joy; she knows that until Angel knows and accepts her past, she cannot be completely happy in either giving or receiving the joy of their love.

She tries repeatedly to tell, but she finds each time that she cannot do so. Tess cannot tell because, as Hardy observes, "her instinct of self-preservation was stronger than her candour" (242). In addition, however, Tess cannot tell because she has given herself up to the will of others as she did when she went to Trantridge, but this time out of fear, not indifference. Tess is afraid to accept the responsibility for an act which she knows to be wrong.
This fear of responsibility is evident in the anxiety Tess expresses immediately after accepting Angel's proposal; she makes every effort to emphasize to him that she is doing his will, not her own. She tells him

"If it is sure to make you happy to have me as your wife, and you feel that you do wish to marry me, very, very much—"

"I mean, that it is only your wanting me very much and being hardly able to keep alive without me, whatever my offences, that would make me feel I ought to say I will." (243)

Similarly, Tess feels relieved after her mother reminds her of her promise to keep silent regarding the past. "Thus steadied by a command from the only person in the world who had any shadow of right to control her action, Tess grew calmer. The responsibility had been shifted and her heart was lighter than it had been for weeks" (246).

In giving in to Angel, Tess has allowed herself to be seduced intellectually and spiritually by Angel as she had been seduced physically by Alec; because Tess is awed by Angel's intellect and spirit, which are far finer than any she had known before. Angel easily overwhelms Tess and takes possession of her mind and spirit. Appalled by the discrepancy between herself and Angel, Tess cries dejectedly. "I feel what a nothing I am!...There is no more spirit in me!" (161). She is so awed by his spiritualism that she "swerved to excess of honour for Clare" (247).
To her sublime trustfulness he was all that
goodness could be—knew all that a guide,
philosopher, and friend should know. She
thought every line in the contour of his
person the perfection of masculine beauty,
his soul the soul of a saint, his intellect
of a seer. (246)

On their wedding day, "she tried to pray to God, but it was
her husband who really had her supplications" (273).

When Tess finally tells Angel of her past, his feelings
for her change. He responds to Tess's plea for forgiveness
by saying, "Oh, Tess, forgiveness does not apply to the case!
You were one person; now you are another. My God—how can
forgiveness meet such a grotesque—prestidigitation as that!"
(292). He agrees with her that she was "more sinned against
than sinning" (297) and that she is probably more respectable
than half the women in England; but he persists in arguing,
"It isn't a question of respectability, but one of principle"
(308). He is unreceptive to her primarily because he feels
he has been fooled, that his "vision had been mocked by
appearances" (308). And Tess soon realizes that "he looked
upon her as a species of imposter, a guilty woman in the guise
of an innocent one" (293). Angel cannot accept Tess because
she appears to him to be not the same woman he had fallen in
love with, and he sends her away from him.

Thus, Tess suffers greatly for having abused her will; however, once she is free from the influence of Angel's will, she begins to reassert herself; she begins to live once again
by her "innate sensations." By now she has learned that it is her true nature to love Angel, that she had been deluding herself when she tried to live a life without emotional commitment; in fact, she has learned that her need to love is so great that her love for Angel had become "the breath and life of her being" (249). Ironically, this commitment to Angel, which had been responsible for her loss of selfhood earlier, proves to be her redeeming quality once Angel ceases to exploit her will. Her commitment is what saves Tess from despair; for her determination to remain faithful to Angel and to preserve herself for him is a manifestation of her innate sensations; it reflects her own true nature.

Because of her love she sustains her sense of self-respect by refusing to let her family or his know that she is in need of money. Because of her love, she preserves her body by wrapping herself in old field gowns and scarves and cutting off her eyebrows. And because of her love her spirit grows strong enough to sustain hopes of his return. The strength of will which Tess must exert to keep herself from despair is evident in Hardy's description of Tess practicing ballads with which to please Angel upon his return:

To perfect these ballads was now her whimsical desire. She practiced them privately at odd moments, especially "The Break o' the Day:"

Arise, arise, arise!
And pick your love a posy,
All o' the sweetest flowers
That in the garden grow,
The turtle-doves and sma' birds
In every bough a-building,
So early in the May-time
At the break o'day!

It would have melted the heart of a stone to hear her singing these ditties whenever she worked apart from the rest of the girls in this cold dry time; the tears running down her cheeks all the while at the thought that perhaps he would not, after all, come to hear her, and the simple silly words of the songs resounding in painful mockery of the aching heart of the singer. (437)

It is by sheer strength of will that Tess escapes despair as a result of her physical and emotional torments. To her the suffering is insignificant because she has succeeded in living according to her innate sensations. Her suffering for the sake of love is not quixotic since this is the only way she can come to terms with the reality that her love for Angel is "the breath and life of her being." To sustain her love is to sustain her selfhood.

Once again the physical needs of her family impel her to act against her will, however. She abandons her life of honorable self-sufficiency to become the mistress of Alec. But Hardy implies that the act is not really a violation of her composite will. For though when she is confronted by Angel she says, "He has won me back to him" even Angel could see that Tess had not really prostituted herself.

He had a vague consciousness of one thing... that his original Tess had spiritually ceased to recognize the body before him as hers—allowing it to drift, like a corpse upon the current, in a direction dissociated from its living will. (484)
In contrast to the spirit of life which Tess sustains even under the most trying situations is Angel's behavior after his separation from Tess. Angel suffers remorse because his act of leaving Tess is not compatible with the impulses of his true nature. He is guilty of exalting reason over all other aspects of his personality. Like Sue Bridehead, Angel tends to believe his actions to be justified if they have a basis of reason. When he finds himself "driven ...by every heave of his pulse" (199) toward Tess, a mere milkmaid, he cannot accept his attraction as the natural, physical phenomenon that it is; he must find a basis of reason. He convinces himself of the wisdom of his marrying someone like Tess, for "what would be the use of his marrying a fine lady, and all the while ten thousand acres of colonial pasture to feed and cattle to rear and corn to reap. A farm-woman would be the only sensible kind of wife for him" (176). Furthermore, he tries to equate Tess with an intellectual image or ideal by telling his parents, "She lives what paper-poets only write" (210). Because his love for Tess was "inclined to the imaginative and ethereal" (247) on his wedding night when his imaginative concept of her is shattered, he is left with nothing; for he was not yet ready to believe that his idea of Tess is less important than her physical reality.

As Angel attempts to live away from Tess, he becomes more and more aware that he needs her far more than he needs the idea he had had of her. His physical will asserts itself
more strongly, but he attempts to suppress it with his intellect. With great determination Angel asserts his "will to subdue the grosser to the subtler emotions, the substance to the conception, the flesh to the spirit" (313). He ignores the will that urges him to be kind to Tess. After he had spurned her affection, he "wished for a moment that he had responded yet more kindly, and kissed her once at least" (309). But he does not kiss her even once. After their parting he is so physically torn by her absence that he arrives at Emminster "like a ghost" (331). But he does not acknowledge his loneliness for Tess. He imagines the sweetness of her presence—"And then her cooing voice, plaintive in expostulation, disturbed the darkness, the velvet touch of her lips passed over his brow, and he could distinguish in the air the warmth of her breath" (337)—but he does not go to her. He learns from Izz that "Tess would have laid down her life for 'ee" (344), and "wrought to aching thoughts and quivering lips... was within a featherweight's turn of abandoning his road to the nearest station and driving across that elevated dorsal line of South Wessex, which divided him from his Tess's home." But he exalts his reason over his impulse, for "the facts had not changed. If he was right at first, he was right now" (346). And still he does not go.

It is only after spending months in Brazil that Angel finally begins to admit having feelings of remorse for treating
Tess so harshly. Typically, however, Angel must find a rational basis for his impulse to return to her. He finally realizes

Who was the moral man? Still more pertinently, who was the moral woman? The beauty or ugliness of a character lay not only in its achievements, but in its aims and impulses; its true history lay, not among things done, but among things willed. (433)

Viewing Tess in these lights, "a regret for his hasty judgment began to oppress him" (433-434).

Angel responds to his remorse as the lesser of Hardy's characters do; he responds to remorse by returning to his former abuse of the will. He rallies for a brief while and determines to return to Tess. But once he finds that she has returned to Alec, even though he realizes that she has not truly given herself to him in spirit, he goes away from her, more obedient to reason and convention and what he believes to be her will than he is to his composite will which had brought him to her. If Angel's act had been the final one of the novel, Tess of the d'Urbervilles would have ended much like Jude the Obscure with Tess living in misery with an undesired partner, and Angel continuing the dejected miserable existence he had experienced in Brazil.

Tess, however, has more imagination than Jude or than any of the other major characters. Like most of Hardy's protagonists, Tess is an essentially good person who either through a fault in character or an unfortunate order of
events has failed to achieve her goals in life. Yet Tess shows her magnificence of character when she is contrasted in her final scene with Hardy's other characters. Clym Yeobright, for example, shows a glimmer of brilliance when he writes his letter asking Eustacia to return to him. But when events turn against him, he also turns against himself and ends his life punishing himself for his actions. Michael Henchard shows a similar moment of brilliance when he confronts Elizabeth-Jane for the last time, refusing to be patronized by her. But this spirit quickly dies, and he ends his life in a miserable hovel attended by the village fool. Jude has a similar experience when he meets Sue in the Marygreen church and discovers that despite her conversion and her penitent remarriage to Phillotson, she cannot help herself from revealing her love for Jude. Yet Jude, too, turns away from life and dies cursing the day he was born.

Tess alone has enough imagination to see that there is a course remaining by which she may attain her goals in life. "As a shining light" (492) it comes to her that by killing Alec she can triumph over circumstances. This act is the one way by which she can come to terms with the reality of her own nature and the reality of the world and her particular situation. For Angel had once said to her, "If he [Alec] were dead it might be different" (260). In addition, Tess
knows that a long and happy marriage with Angel is no longer a possibility for even if he had forgiven her for her first experience with Alec, he had come too late; she had returned to Alec, and Angel could never accept her now.

The ending is thus a triumph of Tess's will over circumstances. For by killing Alec and thus choosing an early death, she gets her wish to "be dead and buried when the time comes for you [Angel] to despise me" (498) as she knew it inevitably would come. Also she gets her wish that Angel look after Liza-Lu for at the end of the novel, the two "joined hands again" (508) as they walked away from the gallows. Neither of these desires could have been realized if Tess had remained living.

Because she has totally reconciled herself to the world as it is and to herself as she is, because she has achieved greater wisdom and understanding, she unlike Hardy's other major characters, also achieves serenity. When the time for death comes, she says, "It is as it should be....Angel, I am almost glad--yes, glad! This happiness could not have lasted. It was too much. I have had enough, and now I shall not live for you to despise me!...I am ready" (505).
Conclusion

That Thomas Hardy consistently expresses a theory of human will in the novels considered in this study is evident. He believes that man has the potential within his will to achieve a quality of existence which is satisfying and fulfilling and that the impulse toward self-castigation with which Clym, Eustacia, Henchard, Jude, and Sue end their lives is the result of the abuse of this potential. Although Tess alone achieves fulfillment, all the major characters achieve to some degree the ideal of human conduct which is implicit in the theory of human will expressed in these novels.

Critics who do not acknowledge Hardy's belief in human will conclude that his ideal of human conduct excludes the expression of a forceful will or strong personal impulses because characters who exhibit these qualities always meet with disastrous ends. Frederick R. Karl observes that in Hardy's novels "common sense" is more effective than "force of will."

Hardy indicates that if one is an idealist—that is, one who tries to impose his will upon an antagonistic or indifferent world—then his exertions create a Promethean conflict leading to his destruction; if, however, one is a realist and does not attempt to change himself or the world, his chances of destruction are minimized. (319)

Leonard Deen similarly implies that Hardy disapproves of characters who don't recognize "their hopeless plight as
sensitive and emotionally vulnerable beings in an unconscious and indifferent but seemingly malignant universe." For this is the condition of life, and "one can only stoically adapt himself to it, as the animal who survives in the struggle for existence must adapt himself to his environment. In Hardy's tragedies impulse, energy, elan are almost always punished" (218-219).

Holloway expresses a parallel view of Hardy's characters except he sees Hardy as exalting nature as a force to which submission is advisable. According to Holloway, "the single abstraction which does most to summarize Hardy's view is simple enough: it is right to live naturally" (281).

It is true that the whole trend of one novel after another portrays this same scale of values. To adapt one's life to one's traditional situation is good, to uproot oneself for material ends is bad, to do so for romantic passion or an abstract ideal is if anything worse. (286)

Holloway feels that Hardy is most sympathetic to characters like Diggory Venn, "sterling characters completely satisfied with their position in life and at one with it. Their only misfortunes are love, and they endure them with resignation and calm" (282).

Awareness of Hardy's theory that fulfillment of self is a result of assertion of one's composite will, however, makes necessary a rejection of the belief that Hardy approved of
characters who are "completely satisfied with their position in life," for these characters usually achieve satisfaction at the cost of the negation of their true natures. They have trained themselves never to feel intensely and always to accept readily whatever comes their way. Therefore, they never struggle and they never experience dejection. They avoid suffering by avoiding feeling. But because they never feel intensely, they never assert themselves and they never (except by chance, not will) experience fulfillment of their own natures. Because understanding, accepting, and expressing one's composite will is fundamental to achieving fulfillment, Hardy could never approve of characters who have no "impulse, energy [or] elan."

On the contrary, as this study illustrates, Hardy approves most the characters who not only can achieve realistic vision and insight but can sustain it despite adversity. Clym Yeobright approaches the stage of achieving realistic vision and insight, but he fails to sustain himself after events begin to turn against him. He fails to use his will to achieve fulfillment because his vision is distorted by excessive guilt masquerading as idealism. He comes near to acting upon a clear perception of himself when he asks Eustacia to return to him, but circumstances created by the combined characters of Clym and Eustacia result in Eustacia's death rather than
their reconciliation. Instead of becoming more intensely aware of the greatness of his need for the emotional gratification and expression he had experienced with Eustacia, Clym reverts to nurturing his feeling of guilt and to the consequent unfulfilled life as a result of distorted vision. Although this novel appears to be controlled by improbabilities, the disasters are caused primarily by the misperceptions of the characters and by their failure to use their opportunities to exert their wills in an effective and meaningful manner.

Michael Henchard begins as an admirable character. The passion and energy which he exhibits in the opening chapters serve him well, and he achieves fulfillment of one aspect of his character; because of his strength of will, he becomes a successful businessman and respected citizen. But he lacks sufficient insight to understand, accept, and express his loneliness—a very real and vital aspect of his character. The intensity of Henchard's loneliness combined with his pride and social consciousness succeed in distorting his vision to the extent that he becomes his own worst enemy; his every effort at achieving fulfillment contributes to his downfall because every attempt is based on a misperception or a denial of reality. As a result of repeated failures, Henchard loses his confidence in his power of self-determination, and he meets his death primarily because of his abandonment to a fatalistic
attitude toward himself. Henchard's downfall and death are thus not evidence that a "sinister intelligence bent on punishing him," but rather that lack of realistic insight and vision results in ineffective action.

Jude Fawley is somewhat more successful in achieving a satisfying and fulfilling life. For in giving up his unrealistic dream of a life dedicated to scholastic achievement and turning instead to satisfying his attraction to Sue who represents intellectual, physical, and emotional gratification, Jude shows an understanding of reality which is fundamental to the effective use of will. Jude makes the mistake, however, of relinquishing his will to Sue for whom resolution of conflicts causing misperception is impossible. When Sue abandons him, Jude, like Clym and Henchard shows that he lacks the resilience to recover from his misfortunes by rediscovering and reasserting his control over his own life. His death comes not as a result of the power of society, religion, or laws, but as a result of his inability to overcome apathy and despair.

Tess suffers as much as any Hardy character, and with Tess as with the others, suffering is a result of the abuse of the power of human will. When Tess is apathetic or unrealistic, she meets with misfortune and personal anguish. In the face of the greatest disaster of her life, however, she distinguishes herself from other characters by recovering her will and by its strength saving herself from despair. In addition,
she distinguishes herself by her imaginative defiance of the irony of the probability of her patience and virtue going un.rewarded because Angel returned too late. Because Tess has sustained herself despite overwhelming adversities, because she has been true to her composite will, she alone achieves the serenity of genuine insight and vision.
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