Irony, the integrant in the art and philosophy of Thomas Hardy and Joseph Conrad

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IRONY
THE INTEGRANT IN THE ART AND PHILOSOPHY
of
THOMAS HARDY AND JOSEPH CONRAD

by

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Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts

State University of Montana

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Preface

All great literature has used irony at least occasionally. Irony is essential to the dramatist and satirist, useful to the novelist and story-teller, and convenient even to the lyric poet, if he have a tinge of clear-eyed melancholy. Modern writers find irony as necessary for plot construction and for conveyance of criticism as did ancient writers. The writings of some authors, such as Anatole France, James B. Cabell, and Edith Wharton, are impregnated with all types of irony. Among modern writers, Thomas Hardy and Joseph Conrad are notable for seeing irony basic in life, for building up philosophies in which irony is the integral component, and for writing fiction which artistically illustrates these philosophies. Their intuitions are similar, but their actual data from observation, their methods, and their life philosophies differ—but not to such a degree that a comparison will not throw much fresh light on each writer. Critics have discussed the plot, setting, characterization, autobiographical element, poetic feeling, style, psychology, philosophy . . . in Hardy and Conrad, and have made only cursory references to their irony, thus overlooking the most important aspect of the style and thought in their work. It is my thesis that irony is the key to an understanding of all that they wrote. In asserting that irony is integral in the art and philosophy of Hardy and Conrad I mean that it is a necessary part of a whole, necessary for completeness.

In Chapters I and III, on the irony in the novels, respectively, of Hardy and Conrad, I illustrate the ironies by brief extracts and
summarize them in synopses of the plots of the important novels, leaving for later chapters the synthesis of my conclusions about the basis and the effects of the irony. I treat Hardy's irony as developing through his first six novels, and, therefore, make two parts of the chapter on Hardy's novels. I find no notable development in Conrad's novels and treat them in one unbroken chapter. In each chapter I take up the novels in chronological order.

I use Conrad's essays and autobiographical books only to cast supplementary light upon his ironic satire, his methods, and his philosophy. Likewise, I employ the poetry of Hardy, including *The Dynasts*, only to throw additional commentary upon Hardy's methods of irony, ironic satire, and particularly upon his philosophy, of which *The Dynasts* is the most complete expression.

A moot question in Hardy criticism is whether all his coincidences are ironical chances or pure accidents. As I demonstrate in the last two chapters, Hardy has a philosophic vindication for all his ironies; so in treating his works I accept all his coincidences as valid ironies.

In discussing irony in Hardy and Conrad I aim to base my study as well as my conclusions on the matter stressed by the authors, and I refrain as far as possible from reading into neither. Neither is a systematic thinker, but each has certain leit-motifs of thought and method; these I endeavor to define and to summarize.

Missoula, Montana

R. G. L.

1 June, 1931
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Introduction: Irony

The basic nature of all irony is explained by the original Greek root of the word irony, which meant to dissemble or to pretend. The essence of irony is the suggestion that surface meaning and underlying meaning differ. Irony is overt concealment of purpose or idea behind words or actions; that is, the clue to the irony lies in the irony itself, but is always discovered too late. More is meant and said than meets the eye, for irony does not editorialize nor furnish explanatory notes.

All ironies can be divided into two great classes, verbal and circumstantial, each with the subcategories, conscious and unconscious. But to employ more generally used terms, ironies can be loosely classified under the headings Socratic irony, Sophoclean or dramatic irony, and irony of fate.

In the main currents of European thought, Socrates is notable for the systematic use of an ironical method of feigning ignorance of a subject in order to induce his antagonist to state his views and then to lead him on from one position to another until the inherent absurdity of his was seen. This irony of reserve is the simplest form of irony—to seem to support what actually you are denying, or to intend something different from what you say or additional to it. Socratic irony is a fatal literary weapon for the essayist or polemical writer, for it has a trick of making you uncomfortable if you take it as a joke and of getting you laughed at if you take it seriously.

Socratic irony is rhetorical. By analogy there is Sophoclean or
dramatic irony in action. Sophoclean irony is a speaker's using words or performing actions bearing to the audience, in addition to his own explicit meaning, an implicit meaning, a further and ominous sense hidden from the other persons on the stage or from himself. In the last respect, that the speaker may deceive himself, lies the essential distinction from Socratic irony. Sophoclean irony is indispensable to the playwright and the narrator for certain effects in treatment of dialog and action.

Irony of fate is a figurative application of Socratic and Sophoclean irony, a condition of affairs or events opposite to what was or might naturally be expected either by reason or by justice. The contradictory outcome may be due to an unexpected coincidence or juxtaposition of events with no cause apparent to man, at least not until the irony has occurred. Man is a mere agent for the irony of fate and the author, the dissembler, is circumstance, chance, destiny, or some Cause whose intentions are hidden. The irony of fate is an outside force that controls man. Writers may invest the subject matter or their plots with irony of fate as the ultimate justification of the course of the thought or action.

If the author of a novel has a sense of irony, although any irony in the book is the author's contrivance, the irony may logically seem to emanate from three sources: the author, the characters, and the plot.

The author may make ironic comments on life and manners in general, on his characters and the life and manners in the book, on the events in the book, or, by his method of story telling, he may be ironic toward
the reader by concealing the secret of some mystery in the plot or by
telling his story so that the climax and solution are not immediately
apparent. Irony relieves an author from the necessity of making a
direct comment which it might be difficult to achieve without heavi-
ness or lack of grace.

The characters may make ironic remarks about life and manners,
about their fellows, or about the actions taking place in their lives
or around them. They may be ironic in talking to their associates, de-
ceiving the reader, their associates, or themselves; similarly, their
actions may be ironic.

The fate of the novel may be ironic by concealing the outcome from
the reader or from the characters, leading the characters on from one
action to another until the futility of their whole effort is trans-
parent and the result is either comic or tragic. The fate may be
responsible for all the ironies that seem to originate in the char-
acters. The general fate of the novel may be evident in separate epi-
sodes, the climax, or in the theme or plot as a whole.

In the Iliad the Gods are an objective presentation of the irony
of fate. Hence the phrase deus ex machina applied to arbitrary manip-
ulations of plot action in Euripides and applicable to countless plays
and novels. Deus ex machina coincidences are questionable ironies, for
the characters and the fate of the novel should seem to be entirely
responsible for the ironies in plot, and the author's hand be covertly
hidden.

Ironic has limitable characteristics. It is moderate. It fails
between sheer seriousness and complete lightness. At one end of the ironic gradation is light irony, which is a tempered humor, and at the other end is ironic satire, which may be tempered brutality. Humor is frank and spontaneous; irony always has a suggestion of cunning and sinister reserve. Humor is much less akin to irony than is wit, and pure satire, which is immoderate, is equally incompatible with irony. Cleverness and spitefulness are the Scylla and Charybdis of irony.

Irony attempts to be objective, to blend mind and emotion. It sees life clearly because it sees it from two sides, the good and the bad. It has no program, no thesis, no preconceived theory. It observes and compares with impersonality, and leaves not only judgment to others but also the detection of the irony itself. Hence it is that irony is the perfect vehicle for criticism.

Ironic is not unmixed with sympathy—for both sides. It springs from the imagination that understands what it dislikes. The pleasures in life and art lie in recognition and surprise: irony satisfies both by showing familiar things where they are not expected. Irony places ridiculous things among the dignified, bad among the good, false among true; gives rewards where they seem unmerited, no rewards where they seem merited. But it does not explain what it is doing. It leaves these juxtapositions without comment, hoping to awaken sudden clarity in our intuitions. Irony comes in quick, trenchant flashes of this clarity. Relative values of the incongruous are spontaneously vivid.

Ironic does not scourge or lash; it simply lays bare the nature of men or their creations or of fate. It accepts nothing on faith; it
probes everything, dead or alive. It punctures bags of wind and stimulates thought and action. Thus irony may find material in anything—physical and organic nature, history, war, religion, love, marriage, ambition, aspiration. In dealing with these it may blend with kindred locutions: epigram, paradox, parody, humor, banter, wit, innumendo, litotes, allegory, which are kindred at least in respect to having reserve.

But satire, sarcasm, and cynicism are more difficult to distinguish from irony because of their resemblance in form, though in method and attitude they differ greatly. Irony is impartial. Satire is partial, militant, destructively critical. Satire is the use in speaking or writing of sarcasm, irony, ridicule, parody, epithet, in exposing, denouncing, deriding, or ridiculing vice, folly, indecorum, abuse, or evils of any kind. Satire uses irony only as one of several means to an end; it uses irony to make brutal criticism more subtle and indirect. Satire is pervaded by the author’s feeling; it takes sides and judges where irony will listen to both sides and neither compromise nor become partisan. Both satire and irony sense illogical disparities. Satire exposes with an immediate and personal purpose; irony exposes purely in the interests of truth. Satire appeals to antagonisms and prejudices and loss of temper, irony to fairness and common-sense, and equanimity.

Satire loves to attack personalities and specific things. But the more it broadens, to attack the type and the general idea rather than the individual, the more truth becomes its only purpose, the
more it says "we" instead of "you", the more ironic it becomes.

An author normally aloof from controversies and partisan attitudes may from time to time ironize manners and institutions, often not even so much as to suggest reform or change as to express an ironic stricture or to smile at someone's expense. Such comments may be intended only for wit and entertainment; nevertheless, the fact that certain matters are chosen indicates that the writer has the personal feelings, minute though they may be, which are the essence of satire. These comments in an author not generally satiric may be called ironic satires.

Sarcasm with its sheer obviousness and brutality is one step further removed from irony than satire is, for it is not at all concerned with the truth. The same is true of cynicism, which generally springs from failure and which always expresses itself with decided partiality, usually by saying that all is bad and hopeless. Likewise, the contrasting extremes, humanitarianism and romanticism with one-sided enthusiasms, seeing all as kindly and hopeful, are by their very natures irreconcilable with irony and can only invite it to investigate them.

Pure irony is rare. Irony has no convictions, and no man can remain aloof from his personal convictions forever, especially the thinker; and, ironically enough, only the thinker can be the successful ironist. The classicist, who blends intellect, emotion, imagination, and form into a perfect whole, can master sustained irony. The pure romanticist, who stresses imagination and emotion, can use irony only incidentally; only a tempered romanticist, like Conrad, who is also a strong thinker,
can employ irony integrally. The realist and the satirist, who stress
the intellectual, use irony as an effective device. Only the classi-
cists—rare persons except in ancient Greece—, then, with their almost
perfect proportions, can make a continual habit of irony. Not even
such unusual ironists as Conrad and Hardy are able to attain classic
form. Romanticism affects Conrad’s irony, realism Hardy’s, and the
distinctive ironies of the two men resulted.
Chapter I Thomas Hardy: Irony in the Novels

Hardy's philosophy of irony, like Conrad's, was fully developed from the first, and his early novels were ironic in plot conception. But where Conrad's method of using irony and blending it with his philosophy was also developed from the first and his stylistic irony changed very little throughout the novels, Hardy's methods of using irony were at first but weakly developed to express his philosophy, and he experimented in his first five novels, trying to paint the canvas of life with the brush of irony. In his sixth attempt he got a perfect reproduction of his view of life. The first section of this chapter attempts to show the development of Hardy's method in his first five novels and its ultimate maturity reached in the sixth. In treating of these six works, I give examples of the sorts of irony that Hardy uses, for Hardy's episodic irony is notable from the first and may as well be illustrated here. In the second section I deal with the important later novels, stressing episodic ironies only as they contribute to the irony of the novel as a whole, for in these novels the episodes are subordinate to the philosophy, as they are not in the first novels.

1. The First Six Novels.

Desperate Remedies. Examples of ironies

*Desperate Remedies* (1871), Hardy's first book publication, is a novel of plot and most of its irony is irony of circumstance elaborated with rhetorical irony. A typical verbal irony occurs when Cytherea calls on Miss Hinton, who talks about her lover, Edward, not knowing
that Cytherea and he have just fallen in love at Budmouth. Miss Hinton says,

"He used to live at Budmouth as an assistant-architect, and I found out that a giddy thing of a girl who lives there took his fancy for a day or two. But I can't feel jealous at all—our engagement is so matter-of-fact that neither of us can be jealous. And it was a mere flirtation—she was too silly for him."

They are careless remarks, but they wound Cytherea deeply. And shortly after, she visits Mr. Springrove and he tells her that Edward will probably be better off when he has married his betrothed, Adelaide Hinton.

A typical irony of circumstance comes after Miss Hinton elopes with Farmer Ballen on the eve of Cytherea's marriage to Manston. Cytherea's real lover is now free, and she could stop the wedding if all the folk in the kitchen who know the news were to tell her; but circumstances prevent her being told. The marriage is performed, and at the end of it, as the newly-weds stroll into the garden, Hardy puts in one of the little ironic comments that are usual in him when he says,

The happiness that a generous spirit derives from the belief that it exists in others is often greater than the primary happiness itself. The gardener thought, 'How happy they are!' and the thought made him happier than they.

Ironic plot

The main group of ironies in the plot begins when Manston misreads a time-table and is not at the station to meet his reconciled wife,

1. Desperate Remedies, N. Y., Harper and Brothers, 1896, p. 145
2. Ibid., p. 292
Eunice, who is a stranger in the region. Because of his absence she puts up at the Three Tranter's Inn, and then leaves quietly in the middle of the night to see whether her husband has returned home; so when the Inn burns down a few hours later and she cannot be found, she is alleged to have been burnt to death.

Manston, coming to the scene of the fire, is met by a drunken poacher, who informs him of his wife's death, but Manston gives him no tip because of his drunkenness. The irate poacher in retaliation goes to steal some of Manston's fowls and accidentally overhears Manston kill Eunice. After the fire, Manston has been secretly glad that Eunice is dead, for now he is free to marry Cytherea; and upon finding Eunice at his house when he gets home, he quarrels with her and kills her by chance, when he makes a slight pass at her. He hides her body. Later, aware of what the poacher knows, he quiets him by bringing forth Anne Seaway as an ostensible wife, which sets free Cytherea, whom he has married.

But the secret of Eunice's death comes out only after the passage of many complications. Finally Manston, caught in the toils of his own plotting, commits suicide, and his sponsor, Miss Aldclyffe, who is his mother incognito, dies. Meanwhile heartgrief has come to Cytherea, her brother, her lover, Edward, and Edward's father, who loses all his property because of Manston's intrigues.

Weakness in ironies

Although the plot is thus clearly ironic in its conclusion, its ironies in general lack vividness, weakened by melodrama, conscious
mystification by characters and author, and a tendency to ramble. Many ironies, like the marriage date irony, are not organic to the story. Cytherea agrees to marry Manston on Old Christmas Day. Then she computes that the day will fall on a Friday and asks that the marriage be on Old Christmas eve. Later she learns that Old Christmas comes on Saturday, and her marriage is on Friday after all, since she will not change the date again.

**Under the Greenwood Tree. Ironies in author**

Irony is more varied though only episodic in **Under the Greenwood Tree**, an intimate, detailed, humorous, and delicately ironical story of the rural courtship of Fancy Day by Dick Dewey.

Fancy is the first woman whom Hardy treats ironically with gentle ironic satire on feminine vanity and caprice. Instance a long conversation in which Fancy tries to decide what dress she will wear when Dick comes a courtin’ at her father’s, Dick all the while protesting that clothes do not matter a bit to him. And the little love troubles that come to her during her engagement are all due to her fickleness.

Hardy himself is pleasantly ironical toward his characters in several scenes, as in the interview when the Mellstock choir calls on Mr. Maybold about being kept on till Christmas, before Fancy becomes organist. Reuben Dewey asks,

"Which churchwarden might that be who proposed her, sir?—excusing my common way." The truant intimated by his tone that, so far from being inquisitive, he did not even wish to ask a single question."

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Or in the passage describing the reaction of Mr. Spinks on Christmas Day to the unprecedented action of the girls in the congregation drowning out the choir. Spinks in the choir is incensed:

"Really, I think we useless ones had better march out of church, fiddles and all!" said Mr. Spinks, with a laugh which, to a stranger would have sounded mild and real. Only the initiated body of men he addressed could understand the horrible bitterness of irony that lurked under the quiet words "useless ones", and the ghastliness of the laughter apparently so natural.

Or again, at the Christmas party:

Mrs. Dewey spoke a few words about preparations for a bit of supper.

That portion of the company which loved eating and drinking put on a look to signify that till that moment, they had quite forgotten that it was customary to expect suppers on these occasions; going even further than this politeness of feature, and starting irrelevant subjects, the exceeding flatness and forced tone of which rather betrayed their object. The younger members said they were quite hungry, and that supper would be delightful though it was so late.

Ironic in characters

The rustics take an ironic attitude toward the ridiculous but kindly Tom Leaf, Hardy's first wambly-legged, shambly, silly character, just as in Far from the Madding Crowd the Weatherbury people do Jacob Poorgrass and the old maltster, in A Pair of Blue Eyes Swancour does William Worm of the buzzing ears, and in The Return of the Native the Egdon folks do Christian Cantle, born when the moon was wrong. These odd persons are both despised and liked by their fellows in a way that

5. Ibid, p. 71
would have pleased Meredith's Comic Muse.

Ironic in plot

All the irony in Under the Greenwood Tree is pleasant and cheerful, although the lovers may sigh and weep now and then, and although there is a suggestion at the end that Dick's marriage may not always be happy. Hardy seems to take it as a matter of course that true love never runs smooth, as his ironic system seems to take it for granted that nothing in life runs smooth.

Dick is called to friend's funeral out of the parish on the very day that Fancy is to give her debut as Mellstock organist. The funeral seems to come arbitrarily on that day to pique Dick. There is a tiny frustration, nevertheless irony, in one love scene:

And the love then stepped close to her, and attempted to give her one little kiss on the cheek, his lips alighting, however, on an outlying tract of her hair by reason of an impulse that had caused her to turn her head with a jerk. 5

Hardy's purpose can be only ironical in noting Dick's inaccurate kiss, because Dick probably corrected the error within the next minute.

While engaged to Dick, Fancy succumbs to a sudden proposal from Vicar Maybold, but she reacts and cancels this second engagement the next day and keeps it a secret. From this vagary Hardy draws for two fillips of irony at the close of the book. Dick tells his bride, Fancy, that he cannot figure out why Mr. Maybold did not wish to marry them; he had seemed to take kindly to Dick at first. And on the final

page of the book Dick says,

"We'll have no secrets from each other, darling, will we ever?—no secrets at all."
"None from today," said Fancy. "Hark! what's that?...
O, 'tis the nightingale," murmured she, and thought of a secret she should never tell."

A Pair of Blue Eyes

In A Pair of Blue Eyes irony is almost redundant. It gains direct effects, both humorous and tragic. Hardy himself is chary of parenthetical ironical observations. But there are a few such, as in this passage about Elfrida's love for Smith: Mr. Swancourt says,

"...you'll get over this bit of tomfoolery in time."
"No, no, no, papa," she moaned. For of all the miseries attaching to miserable love, the worst is the misery of thinking that the passion which is the cause of them all may cease.

Elfrida is an outstanding example in Hardy of a character being ironical toward his associates. Much of the time she is ironical toward her lovers, Smith and Knight. Early in the book she is ironical toward her father when she tells Smith how she often writes her father's sermons for him, inserting certain directions like "Leave this out if the farmers are falling asleep" and "Keep your voice down".

Ironic conception as a whole

The whole conception of A Pair of Blue Eyes is ironic tragedy, little suggested by the apparently trivial title. The plot centers on blue-eyed Elfrida. Stephen Smith wins her love but is finally rejected. Later, Henry Knight, who has always patronized Smith as a callow boy,

8. A Pair of Blue Eyes, N. Y., Harper and Brothers, 1896, p. 98
meets Elfride and comes to love her because he thinks her pure and un-touched by any previous love. Hence the irony when Knight says to Elfride (she has just failed in her resolution to confess her past love-affair with Stephen).

"There is one thing I do love to see in a woman—
that is, a soul truthful and clear as heaven's light...
Elfride, you have such a soul, if ever woman had...."\(^9\)
or when aboard the Channel ship he repeats to her that her main charm
is her inexperience in love matters.

Stephen is of plebeian birth. When he first calls on the Swan-
courts, the irony is two-edged on both Stephen and the Vicar that the
latter tries to convince him that he is of noble descent from the
Fitzmaurice-Smith line of blue-blood. Later on, at the time when the
truth comes out, the irony not only turns on Swancourt for his peerage-
-idolizing hopes but also on Elfride; her lover, the London visitor,
the handsome town man, is not a glorious outsider but is the son of
the local mason in her own village. Stephen, as a suitor, is rejected
when he discloses this parentage.

Knight learns of Elfride's previous love affair and estranges him-
self because he overestimates the degree to which she has let herself
be loved; he thinks she has once surrendered herself to Stephen on the
trip to London. But Knight's surprise was equalled by Stephen's
earlier, when he learned he was not her first lover. After making
love to Elfride in the churchyard, he discovered that under the tomb-

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stone he had insisted they sit on was the farmer Jethaway who had pro-
posed to Elfride a twelvemonth ago.

Initial and closing ironies

As is typical in the Wessex Novels, the whole main fabric of the
ironies begins with one event which might have happened otherwise but
which did not. Stephen and Elfride plan an elaborate elopement. They
meet in the village to marry. Then they discover that the license is
good only in a London parish. By the time they have rushed to London,
Elfride has changed her mind. Thus she is free to enter upon her
romance with Knight later on.

The book ends with a series of terrible ironies. After losing
Elfride, each lover travels for a time in Europe and remains ignorant
of Elfride's life in England. The two return, accidentally meet in
London, and by degrees confess to one another the details of their
respective affairs with the same woman. After a heated conversation,
Knight asks,

"Stephen, do you love her now?"
"Well, I like her; I always shall, you know," he said
evasively, and with all the strategy love suggested. "But
I have not seen her for so long that I can hardly be ex-
pected to love her. Do you love her still?"
"How shall I answer without being ashamed? What fickle
beings we men are, Stephen! Men may love strongest for a
while, but women love longest. I used to love her—-in my way
you know."
"Yes, I understand, ah, and I used to love her in my
way. In fact, I loved her a good deal at one time; but
travel has a tendency to obliterate early fancies."
"It has—-it has, truly."10

10. A Pair of Blue Eyes, Op. Cit., p. 450
The two men inform each other they will be one more day in London; a few hours later they meet in a train bound for Castle Boteral, where Elfride should be. On the way they dispute their claims to her. They arrive at Camelot and a crowd gathers around a black carriage that has been at the end of the train the entire journey from London. A coffin is taken out. Elfride is in it.

A more overwhelming irony follows. Smith says, "If we find—that she died yours, I'll say no more ever." Knight answers, "And if we find she died yours, I'll say no more." Then they meet the man with the tardily arrived coffin plate for "Elfride, Wife of Spenser Hugo Luxellian." She has died belonging to neither. And when Smith and Knight go to the Luxellian tomb they observe Lord Luxellian weeping over Elfride's vault. They are prevented even from paying their last respects to their common love and sorrow.

Evaluation of ironies

The smaller coincidental ironies in the novel are skillful. Consider the scene in the conservatory when Knight asks Elfride for a potted myrtle to take to London as a remembrance. The myrtle was once a sprig in Stephen's coat, which he planted, telling Elfride that if it grew it would be a memory of him. Hardy is learning to make one ironic event count in several unconscious verbal ironies afterwards, as when, after Elfride has told Stephen how she writes her father's sermons for him, Swancourt arrives and confides to Stephen that Elfride often composes his sermons.

The ironic contrasts in action and speech are so clearly set in
outline against one another that they fail to completely convince. The bald juxtaposition of speeches like those quoted from the end of the story are similar to the counterpoised speeches in Richard III or King John. There are very close parallels in the outdoor wooing of Smith and Knight. In each case the man walks and Elfride rides. They take the identical route. They embrace on the same rock above windy Beak Cliff, where Elfride loses her ear-ring when with Smith and finds it when with Knight.

The Hardy irony of fate is developing in A Pair of Blue Eyes to undermine the great issues in life like human love. Stephen and Henry in turn almost win Elfride and then lose her. Luxellian marries her, after the death of his first wife, but only because his children love her; and she dies shortly after this marriage. All are cheated by Elfride, themselves, and fate. The ironies are clearly based on deception; Elfride's deceptions on her lovers and the self-deceptions of the lovers. Knight is a study of a man who deceives himself. Like the later Angel Clare he thinks himself original in his ideas and free from convention, and yet intrinsically is a stiff, prudish "idealist". When he doubts the purity of Elfride the old ideal of virgin chastity leads him to desert her. He has the bird of happiness in his hand and lets it go in a barren desert quite without bushes.

Far from the Madding Crowd. Examples of ironies

In Far from the Madding Crowd Hardy is more ironical than previously, laying himself open to the criticism that he is doing "smart writing". Speaking of Oak on the first page of the novel, Hardy is
merely clever, because his remarks seem irrelevant to the Oak and the public of the succeeding pages--

Or, to state his character as it stood in the scale of public opinion, when his friends and critics were in tantrums, he was considered rather a bad man; when they were pleased, he was rather a good man; when they were neither, he was a man whose moral colour was kind of pepper-and-salt mixture. 11

Hardy is ironical toward the old maltster:

"Gabriel Oak, that's my name, neighbours."

The ancient maltster sitting in the midst turned at this--his turning being as the turning of a rusty crane.

"That's never Gable Oak's grandson over at Norcombe--never!" he said, as a formula expressive of surprise, which nobody was supposed for a moment to take literally....

"Why, my boy Jacob there and yer father were sworn brothers--that they were sure--weren't ye, Jacob?"

"Ay, sure," said his son, a young man about sixty-five, with a semi-bald head and one tooth in the left center of his upper jaw, which made much of itself by standing prominent, like a milestone in a bank. 12

The Weatherbury folk are ironical toward Poorgrass. Jan Coggan tells a story making fun of him. Jacob's defense is ironical in its self-revelation.

"And he was coming along in the middle of the night, much afeared, and not able to find his way out of the trees nohow, 'a cried out, 'Man--a-lost! man--a-lost!' A owl in a tree happened to be crying 'Whoo--whoo--whoool' as owls do, you know, shepherd" (Gabriel nodded), "and Joseph, all in a tremble, said, 'Joseph Poorgrass, of Weatherbury, sir!'"

"No, no, now--that's too much!" said the timid man,

11. Far from the Madding Crowd, N. Y., Harper and Brothers, 1896, p.1
12. Ibid., p. 60-61
becoming a man of brazen courage all of a sudden. "I didn't say sir. I'll take my oath I didn't say 'Joseph Poorgrass o' Weathbury, sir.' No, no; what's right is right, and I never said sir to the bird, knowing very well that no man of a gentleman's rank would be hollering there at that time o' night."  

Hardy uses the same Poorgrass to get ironical humor at the shearing supper when Jacob sings "a poor plain ballet of my own composure."

"Hear, hear!" said the supper party.
Poorgrass, thus assured, trilled forth a flickering yet commendable piece of sentiment, the tune of which consisted of the key-note and another, that latter being the sound chiefly dwelt upon.  

Ironies in plot

The first circumstance in the book is ironical. Bathsheba, coming to visit a relative, lacks the twopence to let her wagon through a toll gate. Gabriel Oak, who happens to be near in his shepherd capacity, pays the money for her, but she does not thank him, little guessing what he will mean to her later. In time Gabriel makes her acquaintance and proposes to her. He is refused. Then he loses all his sheep by accident and she inherits a rich farm. Gabriel, out of a job, his fortunes reversed, becomes a shepherd in her hire.

The central plot of tragic ironies begins with Bathsheba's sending as a freak whim a valentine to the stoic, reserved Farmer Boldwood, the only man in the parish who has paid her no attention. Utterly at random she seals the envelope with the seal, "Marry Me". Boldwood is puzzled and startled and ends by falling passionately in love with

her, though she has no interest in him. Sergeant Troy happens on the scene and wins Bathsheba, although in character he is inferior to either Oak or Boldwood. His success is ironical because he is the only one of Bathsheba's suitors who does not really love her. He is gay and unconstant, and for him she is only one of many attractive women he has met. He has loved her maid, Fanny Robin, before her. But the irony of fate which throws Gabriel, then Boldwood, then Troy, in Bathsheba's way takes them away in inverse order. The man she actually loves deepest she marries last, and her final love affair continues happily rather than unhappily, as in the case of Lady Penelope in A Group of Noble Dames, who also accepts three lovers in turn.

The basic irony underlying the whole plot is crystallized in several dramatic scenes. For example, Frank Troy waits with embarrassment for Fanny at All Saints' Church. He is ready to marry her and atone for seducing her. But she does not appear, for by mistake she is waiting in the neighboring All Souls' Church. Tragedy results, because Troy makes no further attempt to remedy the wrong he has done Fanny. He is disgusted by her error about the churches. By being still single, he is able to engage in his affair with Bathsheba and ruin Boldwood's hopes; when he marries Bathsheba, Boldwood is wooing her. Troy disappears after he has been married a while and is alleged to be drowned at sea. Boldwood's hopes revive and he makes impetuous advances.

The original irony in Boldwood's case lies in a great misunderstanding. Boldwood can fathom nothing but serious intent behind Bathsheba's "Marry Me" caprice. He cannot appreciate her sense of humor.
and of informality. A quiet, stoic man, once stirred out of his self-containment, he has no inhibitions and no capacity for sacrifice. His love is "a self indulgence, and no generosity at all." His ardor after Troy's disappearance leads to the climactic irony of the book. He gives a party at which he pledges Bathsheba to marry him in six years. Almost immediately Troy enters the ballroom filled with people. Boldwood is in a party mood for the first time in his known life, and not seeing Troy's face, he cries, "Come in, come in and drain a Christmas beaker with us stranger!" Then Troy looks him full in the face.

Even then Boldwood did not recognize that the impersonator of Heaven's persistent irony towards him, who had once before broken in upon his bliss, scourged him, and snatched his delight away, had come to do these things a second time. 15

In a moment Troy has touched Bathsheba, she has screamed, and Boldwood has shot Troy and is on his way to give himself up to the law. Such is the end of the great irony that ruins the august and respected Farmer Boldwood.

Characters affected by irony

But no character in the book escapes penetrating ironies. The happy-go-lucky Troy escapes less than any other. In one case he has set a rendezvous with Fanny at Casterbridge at ten. He wait impatiently for an hour. This is the second time she has missed an important engagement with him. In disgust he goes to the Budmouth races. Not until he returns home late at night and suddenly sees Fanny's

corpse in an open coffin does he realize why she has broken the appointment. The coffin has not arrived in time for burial this day and has been left at Bathsheba's. Bathsheba has opened it to discover the actual proof that Fanny had a baby by Troy. Now she has to endure the irony of seeing Troy kiss the dead Fanny with genuine love which he has never given to her. Troy is aware too late that he has abandoned his real love, and on this very day he has been enjoying himself while she lay in burial sheets. Next day he plants flowers and bulbs on her grave, and the worst irony of all from Troy's standpoint is that they are washed up that night by the rain's spouting through the gargoyle of the church onto the grave, churning the fresh soil into mud and spattering the headstone. For the first time Troy hates himself.

Bathsheba, Hardy's third study of fickle woman, is treated like Fancy and Elfride, not to preaching, but to trouble and sorrow ironically of her own choosing. Until she finally marries Oak her woes continually increase. Hardy remarks, "Women are never tired of bewailing man's fickleness in love, but they seem to snub his constancy."

Oak is the victim of mild, sustained ironies. After being refused by Bathsheba and losing his sheep, he has to work his way up in Bathsheba's favor by slowly becoming indispensable in the running of her farm. He has to wait patiently his turn in her love, watching Troy despoil her, and even encouraging Boldwood's suit, before he wins her--after an inferior man has already possessed her.

Advance in determinism

In Far from the Madding Crowd the irony ramifies organically into
every episode. There is no series of random coincidences nor any mystery; several chains of closely linked events cross and recross to frustrate one desire and then another and lead to definite ironic conclusions. The book contains no greater number of ironies than does A Pair of Blue Eyes, but the ironies are more convincing because they seem to spring in larger measure from the innate nature of the characters. Bathsheba and Troy, for instance, are more genuine people than Elfrida and Knight; hence, from the critic's standpoint, the ironies and the determinism that snare them are more genuine. The gay title of Far from the Madding Crowd is ironical, hiding the deeper meaning that tragedy may be found in sequestered districts as in the population centers.

The Hand of Ethelberta. Examples of irony

The Hand of Ethelberta is notable for frequent ironic comments by Hardy on the characters which are generally satiric irony on society. Hardy remarks, for instance, when Ethelberta sings "Then tapers tall"
in the salon at Mrs. Doncastle's,

Then she began, and the sweetness of her singing was such that even the most unsympathetic honoured her by looking as if they would be willing to listen to every note the song contained if it were not quite so much trouble to do so. Some were so interested that, instead of continuing their conversation, they remained in silent consideration of how they would continue it when she had finished.

Conscious rhetorical ironies abound. Montclere is ironical toward Ethelberta, Ficotee toward Ethelberta, Ethelberta toward society and

her lover, Julian. When Julian says to Ethelberta,

"I have many times told myself that your early life was superior to position when I met you. I think I may say without presumption that I recognize a lady of birth when I see her...." Ethelberta smiled a smile of many meanings.

for she is the daughter of a butler. Montclere is deliberately ironical when, after arriving at Ethelberta's to catch her with a tear in her eye, playing a song sent her long ago by Julian, he insists that she attend a concert at Melchester the next week at which he knows Julian will be one of the performers. Picotee is ironical toward her sister in this passage:

"Why don't you go out?" said Picotee timidly.
"I can hardly tell: I have been expecting someone."
"When she comes I must run up to mother at once, must I not?" said clever Picotee.
"It is not a lady," said Ethelberta blandly... "I must as well tell you, perhaps... It is Mr. Julian. He is--I suppose--my lover, in plain English."
"Ah!" said Picotee [who loved Julian herself].
"Whom I am not going to marry until he gets rich."
"Ah--how strange! If I had him--such a lover, I mean--I would marry him if he continued poor."
"I don't doubt it, Picotee; just as you came to London without caring about consequences, or would do any crazy thing and not mind in the least what came of it." (Picotee came to London to be near Julian.)

Ironic plot

For the two young lovers who were disappointed in A Pair of Blue Eyes, three young men are defeated in The Hand of Ethelberta, and senile old Viscount Montclere wins Ethelberta, only to have his dissi-

18. Ibid, p. 156
patience curtailed under her sharp household management. Ethelberta's manipulation of her lovers until she finally marries is frequently farcical, because so consciously done. When she is at the Hotel Beau Sejour, by accident they all come to see her at the same time, and she blithely distributes them through her drawing-rooms, (just as Zola's Nana hides her men around when assignations rush her,) so that she can see them one by one.

The general concept of the plot overturns romantic story traditions, for the leading character is the daughter of a servant and the people with social standing are of minor importance in the plot, an unconventional use of personnel paralleled in Meredith's *Evan Harrington*, in which a tailor's son rises into high society. When Chickerel rushes off to stop the marriage of Ethelberta to Lord Montclere, Mrs. Doncastle remarks "with a wretchedly factitious smile",

"The times have taken a strange turn when the angry parent of the comedy, who goes post-haste to prevent the undutiful daughter's rash marriage, is a gentleman from below stairs, and unworthy lover a peer of the realm." 19

Evaluation of ironies

Many bare ironies in outline occur. Julian waits near the stage-door to see Ethelberta exit after one of her public readings; she turns the corner out in front to watch for him and is met by Ladywell; hence she does not see Julian, and thinking he dislikes her, she writes him telling him to avoid her. But Julian writes that he wants to see her for the last time at 6:30 of the day he writes. Ethelberta calculates

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that there is not time for her to reply to him through the mails; so she writes a refusal, not expecting that he will receive it. She mis-calculates the mail service, however, and the letter is in his hands in two hours. Consequently, to the chagrin of Ethelberta, Julian does not call on her.

In The Hand of Ethelberta both the plot and the irony suffer from the same faults. Hardy is experimenting with added complication of plot, comic, not tragic, and the result is lack of compactness, farce, and unreality. Chance seems overworked, due to the deficiency of psychological depth in the characters and of a designedly overshadowing fate. The book is best taken only as an experiment, never tried again to any extent, with ironical treatment of society—Ethelberta, the social-climber; her father and brother, Sol and Chickeral, the butler and carpenter who want to stay in their own class; Montolere, the preserved, senile, old peer; Mrs. Doncastle, sponsor of the season's novelties; Neigh and Ladywell, gentlemen lovers; and so on.

The Return of the Native. Examples of ironies

The Return of the Native (1878) is Hardy's first masterpiece of irony and with it I can say that his irony has reached the end of its development. The style aims at perfect objectivity in exposition. The source of the irony is dual: the general fate in the plot, and the inner richness of the characters, who are creatures with hopes and desires, dominated by the Will-to-live.

Ironical remarks made by the author himself are very infrequent. In a reference to Clym's boyhood Hardy takes a "clever" attitude toward
the Egdon natives.

By the time he reached twelve he had...been heard of as artist and scholar for at least two miles around. An individual whose fame spreads three or four yards in the time taken by the fame of others similarly situated to travel six or eight hundred, must of necessity have something in him. Possibly Clym's fame, like Homer's, owed something to the accidents of his situation; nevertheless famous he was.20

Elsewhere there is reference to a blue strip on the horizon traditionally reputed to be the English Channel.

Far from the Madding Crowd had an abundance of ironic humor along with the yokels. In The Return of the Native the rustic scenes are far more limited, although Grandfather Cgilte and Christian are treated with loving irony. Later on, in a book like Jude the Obscure I miss these wise, happy, uncouth individuals; in The Return nothing is missing. Hardy employs with exact effect each type of irony that he has experimented with in the preceding five novels. The mower's play furnishes some excellent entertainment for the reader, and there is delicious humor in the peasant dialogues, as in Timothy Fairway's ironic views on celebrations expressed at the November five bonfire:

"You be bound to dance at Christmas because 'tis the time o' year; you must dance at weddings because 'tis the time o' life. At christenings folk will even smuggle in a reel or two, if 'tis further on than the first or second chiel. And this is not naming the songs you've got to sing....For my part I like a good hearty funeral as well as anything. You've as splendid victuals and drink as at other parties, and even better. And it don't wear your legs to stumps in talking over a poor fellow's ways as it do to stand up in hornpipes."21

20. The Return of the Native, N. Y., Harper and Brothers, 1896, p. 207
21. Ibid, p. 25
Plot and crucial ironies

The action of the story is quick to get underway with an incident that is ironic because it could very easily have happened otherwise. But the essential thesis in Hardy is that such events do not happen otherwise. Wildeve and Thomasin go to another parish to be married but are not married because of some trifling irregularity in the license. Hence Thomasin, distraught, returns in Venn’s wagon, and Wildeve is left free to call on Eustacia when she builds the bonfire. The license would be good in Budmouth, but Thomasin insists on Anglebury, as she is not known there. Furthermore, Wildeve and Thomasin would have been married long since if Mrs. Yeobright had not stood up in church and forbidden the banns. If the two had been married at either of these attempts, the whole course of events would have been changed; that is, there would have been a series of ironies different from the one which the story relates. As it is, ironies of many magnitudes follow in train after the unconsummated Anglebury marriage.

Venn renew his suit for Thomasin and Wildeve, stung with jealousy, finally forces through to completion his engagement and marries her.

Clym Yeobright returns home from many years in Paris. Eustacia Vye, a lonely, lovely, and passionate girl on Egdon Heath, who has had a secret love affair with Wildeve, attracts Clym’s attention, and they fall in love, although Mrs. Yeobright disapproves very much. Eustacia has high hopes of love and adventure. She contemplates Clym in a golden halo. He is the man from Paris. She wants to go to Paris and
leave gloomy Egdon forever. But Clym talks of marriage when she wants to hear of Parisian things; worse yet, he talks of staying home at Blooms-End to teach school. Bostacia deceives herself into thinking he will be going to France so soon as this idea wears off. They marry, much against Mrs. Yeobright's will, and settle temporarily in a cottage across the heath. Clym is blinded by overstudy and takes to furze-cutting to regain his health and make a meagre income.

Mrs. Yeobright has a hundred guineas in safe-keeping; fifty are for Thomasin after her marriage and fifty for Clym. She does not give them to Thomasin immediately after her marriage to Wildeve, nor does she when Thomasin first asks for them, nor when Wildeve calls to get the object which he understands she has for Thomasin. Only Thomasin knows of the money and she does not know the amount she has coming. Finally, Mrs. Yeobright gives the guineas to Christian to deliver to their respective owners. But en route Christian meets his friends and is lured to a raffle at the Quiet Woman, where Wildeve is led to suspect that he has money in his boots, given him by his mistress. Wildeve, to retaliate upon Mrs. Yeobright, who has long antagonized him, accompanies Christian out onto Egdon and there wins the guineas away from him by throwing dice. Christian goes home, frightened into silence. Then the good-intentioned Venn appears on the scene and in turn wins the money away from Wildeve. Venn gives the hundred guineas to Thomasin, not knowing the respective distribution intended. Mrs. Yeobright awaits an acknowledgement from Clym, which naturally does not come. Thus, by concealment and an alignment of small events with uncoordinated motives
in several people a serious misunderstanding arises.

Venn, who is aware of Wildeve’s past associations with Eustacia, is alarmed at finding the two renewing their acquaintance, for he intends that Wildeve shall be faithful to Thomasin now that he has married her. By shooting his gun he scares Wildeve from visiting Eustacia at night after Clym has retired; Wildeve decides to call on her in the daytime.

Venn tells Mrs. Yeobright of Clym’s blindness and Christian finally confesses to losing the guineas to Wildeve, and she decides to visit Clym. She makes the long walk across Egdon on a torrid day, and sees Clym going to his cottage far ahead of her. When she is near the house she sees a man—Wildeve—enter the door. Yet she knocks and knocks and the door is not opened. She glimpses Eustacia’s face in the window. She departs heartbroken, and crosses back over Egdon in so weakened a condition that the bite of an adder is fatal to her.

At the first knock Eustacia starts to hide Wildeve in the rear of the dwelling. Clym is sleeping soundly on the hearth after his morning’s work. But Eustacia and Wildeve in the kitchen think that they hear Clym stir and say, "Mother." Actually, he sleeps continually all the while, as Eustacia ascertains to her horror when she has bade Wildeve good-bye at the back-door and returned to the front room. In this terrible irony, the "Closed Door" incident, all the forces in the novel converge, only to be convulsed and deflect ed in irreconcilable directions. For a brief moment there is a chance that the story ends happily.
The tragedy is heightened by a number of ifs that come to mind.

If Mrs. Yeobright had been admitted when she first knocked, if Eustacia had known Clym was calling "Mother" in his sleep and not waking at all, happy reconciliation might have followed. If Venn had not frightened Wildeve from calling at night, he would not have visited Eustacia next day and been there to complicate events on Mrs. Yeobright's arrival. Also, if Venn had not told Mrs. Yeobright of her son's illness, she would not have decided to call that very next day.

And this whole complexity of affairs, this estrangement of mother and son, has its roots deep in the past: Mrs. Yeobright's dislike for Eustacia and a quarrel they have during Eustacia's engagement; Clym's breakdown, which leads him to take up furze-cutting and to be very tired each midday; Wildeve's old love for Eustacia; and Venn's watchful interference in the interests of Thomasin.

When Clym wakes up, Eustacia conceals what has just happened, though there is still time for him to hasten after his mother and mend matters. This concealment over a period of time subjects Eustacia to a series of verbal ironies such as Hardy has learned to use in following up a circumstantial irony. After his mother's death, Clym is sick. He unconsciously keeps Eustacia's nerves raw with constant reiteration of his unkindness to his mother.

"Why didn't she come to my house? I would have taken her in and showed her how I loved her in spite of all. But she never came; and I didn't go to her, and died on the heath like an animal kicked out, nobody to help her till it was too late."

"My door has always been open to her--a welcome here
has always awaited her. But that she never came to see."

Finally Eustacia confesses the truth and Clym reproaches her and sends her from his home. She returns cast-off to her grandfather's on Egdon. There she finds the front door closed and locked. The boy, Charley, tells her that Mr. Vye is gone for the day. But the situation is too similar to the one she had quarreled over with her husband, and she breaks down emotionally; so that she has to be cared for like a child by the same Charley to whom she once condescended the holding of her hand for thirty minutes.

Soon after Eustacia leaves Clym a servant arrives from Wildeve's to say that the "mis'ess and the baby are getting on wonderful well; and baby's name is to be Eustacia Clementine." "What a mockery!" said Clym. "This unhappy marriage of mine to be perpetuated in that child's name!"

Time passes. Wildeve inherits a considerable fortune. His old longing for Eustacia revives. The two plan to elope abroad. At last Eustacia will see Paris!

But Eustacia's fate is intensified by her having another chance for legitimate happiness. Clym is finally willing to have her back. He writes her a note, but delays sending it for one day, hoping she will appear of her own accord. It would bring her back, for

Having resolved on flight Eustacia at times seemed anxious that something should happen to thwart her own intent. The only event that could really change her position was the appearance of Clym.  

23. Ibid, p. 436
Fairway brings the letter and gives it to Captain Vye at night just before the hour when Eustacia has planned to escape. Fairway might have brought it sooner, if he had not forgotten it, tucked in his hat, when he ran on another errand. Vye does not give Eustacia the letter because he thinks she is asleep; once, when she seems to stir in her room, he calls but gets no answer; he leaves the letter on the mantel, where she will be sure to see it in the morning. The circumstance is close. Missing Clym's letter by minutes, Eustacia sets out to meet Wildeve. Going in a straight line from the Mistover trail to the lantern on Wildeve's gig, she stumbles into a weir and drowns. Wildeve is drowned trying to save her.

Clym devotes his life to education of the local inhabitants. Venn finally wins the widowed Thomasin after he has made a great sentimental to-do over a glove which she has lost and has discreetly disappeared for a while. Even this closing idyll is ironic, a light contrast to the end of Far from the Madding Crowd, in which Oak is preparing to leave Weatherbury before he realizes that Bathsheba is at last ready to marry him.

Frustration of hope

No character in The Return of the Native gets just what he wants. Eustacia longs to leave lonely Egdon, to be in a gay social center, to see Paris. She would be happy in Budmouth or any other pleasure town. Clym is not the way to escape that she hopes he is, and fundamentally she realizes this all the time. On the night of her escape she is drowned. The irony of Wildeve's fate is erring, unhappy love con-
summated also in accidental death; of Clym's, unintentional manslaughter of his mother and his wife which gives him life-long, dry-eyed sorrow; of Thomasin's, heart-woe before and after her marriage to Wildeve; of Venn's, like Oak's, not winning his loved one until another and less noble man has used her; of Mrs. Yeobright's, heart-break when her son abandons the career in Paris, for which she has sacrificed to start him in, and when he seems to spurn her motherly love.

Each frustration can be traced to some earlier action, decision, or concealment on the part of a protagonist or his associates. The fate which has begun spinning a tragic web before the opening of the story, envelops a mass of incidental ironies and gives to them an organic unity. An entire logic of cause and effect leads to the ironic tragedies.

Artistic use of determinism

In the course of seven years Hardy has learned to weld scattered episodic ironies into a chain of ironies, verbal and circumstantial, that will represent life as he sees it, truly and artistically, and at the same time indict the justice of fate. The very alignment of as many ironies as there are in *The Return of the Native* makes the fate of the protagonists seem convincing and inevitable, because, I will note in passing, the characters themselves seem complete and real. Hardy's philosophic irony is turned directly on life in the broadest sense. Hardy pictures life as he thinks it is, impartially, thoroughly. He injects no suggestion of social thesis as he does later in *Tess* and *Jude*, nor of cleverness as in the "Satires of Circumstance" and *Life's Little Ironies*. 
Summary of first six novels

The number of ironies, always abundant, increases in each novel from Desperate Remedies through Far from the Madding Crowd. A Pair of Blue Eyes has the most purely rhetorical ironies, The Hand of Ethelberta the most satiric ironies. Ironies, implicit and explicit, are on every page of the novels. The quality and convincingness of the ironies, except for Ethelberta, containing social material largely alien to Hardy's experience, improves continually through The Return, in which Hardy sets a standard he never surpasses, although he equals it several times. The ironies of deliberate intrigue of Desperate Remedies, the balanced, artificial ironies of A Pair of Blue Eyes, the leaning to smart writing, and the farcical ironies of Ethelberta are all supplanted in The Return by a proportioned use of all the sorts of irony that have been experimented with, well fused ironies, largely tragic, ironies with the tang of life in them.

2. The Later Novels

During the six years after he wrote The Return of the Native, Hardy produced three novels that are ironic to the core but are relatively light in tone. There is nothing unusual about their irony and I shall pass over them without analysis. The Trumpet-Major is a humorous idyll tinged with melancholy, A Laodicean a farcical, melodramatic love and blackmail imbroglio, Two on a Tower a tragic story of a woman's love for a man younger than herself.

The Mayor of Casterbridge. Plot

Then in 1886 came The Mayor of Casterbridge, in which the ironies
are less conspicuously verbal than in The Return. In The Return the ironies affected the several leading characters, but here they all converge on the single character, Michael Henchard.

One night a young hay-trusser, Henchard, in search of work, comes with his wife, Susan, and his daughter, Elizabeth-Jane, to a country fair. He gets drunk, and irritated by Susan, who tries to urge him away, he offers to sell her to the highest bidder. A sailor named Newson buys her and takes her away. Henchard, repenting, searches for weeks, but cannot find his wife; he vows not to touch liquor for twenty years. He goes to Casterbridge and by dogged industry becomes a leading corn merchant and finally mayor, admired and feared. He needs a new assistant, and after much persuasion hires a clever, young Scot, Farfrae, who chances to pass through town just when Henchard is being publicly heckled for selling bad corn, for Farfrae shows Henchard how to remedy the corn and attracts Henchard's attention. Henchard rejects Jopp, who has been virtually promised the assistantship.

Farfrae becomes popular as Henchard has never been. He is restrained and shrewd where his employer is not, and in the natural course of events comes to supplant Henchard in his business, his house, his mayorship, and in the love of his mistress, Lucetta, and of his supposed daughter, Elizabeth-Jane. He is less intrinsically selfish than either Troy or Wildeve, yet it is inevitable that he ruin his patron, who has given him his start in Casterbridge. The mayor hastens his own business downfall at the same time. For instance, he buys wheat in great quantities, expecting rain. Then the weather clears up and he
has to sell at a ruinous loss. When harvest time draws nigh, however, the weather is very poor for the crop. "If Henchard had only waited long enough he might at least have avoided loss, though he had not made a profit. But the momentum of his character knew no patience." And Henchard's moral prestige goes, when, confronted by a witness of his wife-selling act, he confesses having done it. About this time the twenty years are up and he takes to drink, destroying his great reputation for abstinence.

At the same time that Farfrae passes through town, Susan appears. Benson has supposedly drowned at sea. Susan has Elizabeth-Jane, who has been told that Henchard is a relative. After a mock courtship, Susan and Henchard remarry. Susan gradually declines in health and eventually dies. Henchard, whose business reversals are beginning, is lonely and wishes Elizabeth-Jane to know that he is her true father. He tells her, and goes upstairs to get documentary proof. He finds a note written by Susan on her deathbed, with the direction: "Not to be opened till Elizabeth-Jane's wedding day"; the seal is poorly fixed. "Some trifling fancy or other of poor Susan's, I suppose", says Henchard as he picks it up and without curiosity allows his eyes to scan the letter. He discovers with tragic dismay that the girl below, whose filial love he is yearning for, is a second Elizabeth, Newson's own daughter by Susan after his Elizabeth-Jane died. Hardy makes an impersonal comment:

If he had not revealed his past history to Elizabeth he would not have searched the drawer for papers, and so on. The mockery was, that he should have no sooner taught a girl
to claim to shelter of his paternity than he discovered her to have no kinship with him.
   This ironical sequence of things angered him like an impish trick from a fellow-creature. Like Prester John’s, his table had been spread, and infernal harpies had snatched up the food.24

Henchard assumes from this moment a malevolent attitude toward Elizabeth that she cannot understand. She moves into another dwelling. But when Henchard’s fortunes are at their lowest ebb, he is reconciled to her lovingness, and the two live happily together. Then Newman reappears and claims her. Henchard gradually loses all standing in Casterbridge, and departs degraded and disgraced. Once he returns to the marriage party of Elizabeth and Farfrae, bringing a finch as a present, but he is not admitted and goes off to die alone, cared for by only one old ex-workman of his.

Possible turning points

Many episodes happen in the book which seemingly could have happened otherwise, if the characters so willed. Actually, it seems that fate decides how the characters shall will and events take their predestined course. I could enumerate numbers of points in The Mayor, as in any other of the great Hardy novels, where the future action might go otherwise. To give a few, things would end differently if Susan told Elizabeth her relationship to Henchard; if Farfrae passed through town any moment but the one when he did; if Henchard did not press Farfrae to stay in Casterbridge and work for him; if Jopp came on Thursday instead of Saturday—Henchard would have hired a man, then,

24. The Mayor of Casterbridge, N. Y., Harper and Brothers, 1896, p.151
before Farfrae appeared--; if Susan sealed her note better, so that
Henchard did not read it until the proper time; if Henchard did not
take to drink and fall in with the low crowd at Peter's Finger.

It is a greater irony yet, that even if some of these events had
been otherwise, Henchard would be doomed to fall and fall hard; for
his doom lies not only in an ironical concatenation of circumstances
but in himself, in his own broad, obstinate, violent nature that never
does things by halves.

The Woodlanders. Plot

The Woodlanders is a story of disappointment and misery woven out
of tangled loves and jealousies. George Melbury, a timber merchant of
Little Hintock, has had for years the intention of marrying his daughter,
Grace, to a rustic forester, Giles Winterbourne, whose father he has
once wronged. But when Grace returns from school an educated lady,
Melbury's resolves waver. Besides, the new doctor who has come to the
neighborhood, the clever but erratic Fitzpiers, is a much better match
than Giles. Fitzpiers finally wins Grace. Giles, who loves Grace
deeply, has no sooner resigned himself to this heartrending loss than
by an intricate series of incidents he also loses his copyhold, which
reverts to Mrs. Charmond. Grace's marriage is unhappy, for Fitzpiers,
unfaithful, has affairs with the exotic Mrs. Charmond of Hintock House
and the country girl, Suke Damson. Giles dies, after Grace has realized
too late that he is the man she has always loved. Eventually Grace and
Fitzpiers reunite, but their marriage, like that of Dick Dewey and
Fancy Day, probably has woes in store ahead, though here it is the man
and not the woman who is fickle. Only Marty South, a poor, lonely lass, who has worked with Giles and loved him in secret, is left to mourn him, crying over his grave, "If ever I forget your name let me forget home and heaven!...But no, no, my love, I never can forget 'ee; for you was a good man, and did good things."

Sustained complications

The irony of the book is intricate; Melbury's private reason for wishing to marry Giles and Grace, the conditions of the copyhold, a chance meeting of Mrs. Charming and Fitzpiers in Heidelberg, Grace's education, Giles's rustic passivity and melancholy, Fitzpiers' characteristic unconstancy—all these and other things lie in the past and complicate the present, so that in time Giles dies of love, Marty is left said and lovelorn, Melbury is broken and rebuffed, Mrs. Charming is shot by a rejected suitor jealous of Fitzpiers, Grace and Fitzpiers have many troubles, and even Suke and Tim Tangs, her husband at the end, suffer sentimental heartbreak and marital jealousy.

The short stories

The collections of short stories contain many stories that are ironic rather than tragic in effect; they either end happily or are too condensed, too much like plot outlines to affect the reader more than to titillate him, though as bits of clear, objective irony they are as perfect as any of Hardy's writings. For example, "The Distracted Preacher", "An Imaginative Woman", the famous "The Three Strangers" (similar to "An Incident in the Life of Mr. Crookhill" in Life's Little Ironies) in Wessex Tales; "The First Countess of Wessex", "Barbara,
of the House of Grebe", "Squire Petrick's Lady" in A Group of Noble
Dames; "On the Western Circuit", "For Conscience Sake", "The Melancholy
Hussar of the German Legion" in Life's Little Ironies; and "A Changed
Man", "Alicia's Diary", "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid" in
A Changed Man.

On the other hand, some of the stories, like "The Waiting Supper"
in A Changed Man and "The Son's Veto" in Life's Little Ironies are
developed enough in characterization and reality of setting to be truly
tragic rather than just analytic.

The Well-Beloved

There is an inconsequence to the irony in the fantasy, The Well-
Beloved. It is only clever and grotesquely entertaining. The sculptor,
Jocelyn Pierston, has indulged in all sorts of passing fancies in pur-
suing the shadow of the Unattainable, the ideal woman, when he hears
of the death of his first flame, Avice, on the Isle of Slingers, whom
he jilted when she was twenty. Too late, he realizes that she is his
ideal. At the age of forty he falls in love with her daughter, Avice
II, but she is already married. At sixty he sees his ideal for the
third time in Avice III, but she jilts him. (He remarks, "It is how
I served her grandmother—one of Time's revenges.") The fantast
Pierston neglects his artistic career and ends his life working for
the social improvement of his native town on the Isle of Slingers.
Emotionally his life is a failure.

Tess of the D'Urbervilles. Plot and crucial ironies

In Hardy's last great novels, Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Jude
the Observe, ironies are customarily prolific, permeating every page, yet certain passages are peculiar, and in the irony as a whole there is a noticeable change in tone. But as far as the plots proper are concerned, the technique of the irony is never stronger in Hardy, never more ruthless in following irony with irony.

At the opening of Tess Parson Tringham is hesitantly telling Jack Durbeyfield, father of Tess, the results of some antiquarian research of his which reveals that Jack is a remote descendant of the ancient D'Urberville knights. At this point the troubles of Jack's daughter begin. For Jack, who is lazy and taken to drink, becomes lazier, living on the factitious honor he imagines due him for his ancestry. One accident after another lowers the family fortune, until Tess, to support the family, goes against her will to work at the Slopes, a place owned by a spurious line of D'Urbervilles and run at present by an old widow and her rakish son, Alec. Chance makes it possible for Alec to seduce Tess. She returns home and has a baby which dies. Later she takes work at Farmer Crick's dairy in Froom Vale. Here she meets Angel Clare, who is studying dairy work, and they fall in love. Once, long before, when she was at a Maypole at home in Marlott, they have glimpsed one another for a moment as Angel passed by on a walking tour with his brothers.

Angel exclaims about Tess, "What a fresh and virgin daughter of Nature that milkmaid is!" unconsciously deceiving himself as did Knight himself about the fickle Elfride. But Tess, unlike Elfride, does not want to deceive her lover. She refuses to become engaged, because of the
episode with Alec. Time and time again she attempts to confess it but lack of courage and favorable opportunity prevent her. This secret oppresses her while Angel is paying court to her, during the happiest months of her life.

One evening Tess and Clare were obliged to sit indoors keeping house, all the other occupants of the domicile being away. As they talked she looked admiringly up at him, and met his two appreciative eyes.

"I am not worthy of you—no, I am not!" she burst out, jumping up from her low stool with wild suddenness, as though appalled at his homage, and the fulness of her joy thereat.

Clare, deeming the whole basis of her excitement to be that which was only the smaller part of it, said, "I won't have you speak like it, dear Tess! Distinction does not consist in the facile use of a contemptible set of conven­tions, but in being numbered among those who are true, and honest, and just, and lovely, and of good report—as you are, my Tess."

She struggled with the sob in her throat. How often had that string of excellences made her young heart ache in church of late years, and how strange that she should have cited them now.

"Why didn't you stay and love me when I was sixteen; living with my little sisters and brothers, and you danced on the green? O, why didn't you!" she cried, impetuously clasping her hands.25

Then Tess makes a final effort to confess. Hardy tells one of his cruelest ironies very briefly:

She sat down and wrote on the four pages of note-sheet a succinct narrative of those events of three or four years ago; put it into an envelope and directed it to Clare. Then, lest the flesh should again be weak, she crept upstairs without any shoes and slipped the note under his door.

Her night was a broken one, as it well might be, and she listened for the first faint noise overhead. It came, as usual; he descended, as usual. She descended. He met her at the bottom of the stairs and kissed her. Surely it was as warmly as ever.26

26. Ibid, pp. 237-238
She thinks that he has read the note and forgiven her. --But a seasoned reader of Hardy feels uncomfortable. --Later she finds that he has never seen the note; when she slipped it under the door, it went under the carpet inside and hence was not seen by him in the morning. She has willed to confess, but fate has checked her.

She cannot again make up her mind to confess until their bridal night. Then Angel confesses a blot on his past and Tess forgives him. Tess makes her own confession, and Angel, who has claimed to be free from convention, rejects her completely. There is bitter gall in the unexpected self-centering and uncharitableness of Clare. That night he sleeps alone on the hearth rug. Next morning he gets up and builds a fire to start breakfast. The two, happy and gay the day before, eat the meal in silence. "The smoke of the kindled wood rose from the chimney without like a lotus-headed column; local people who were passing by saw it, and thought of the newly married couple, and envied their happiness." The only endearment Tess gets from Angel after her confession is being held in his arms a few nights later when he is in a somnambulistic trance.

Clare goes to Brazil, providing money for Tess, which she never touches, though once she walks to Emminter to get it from his father, only to be frightened away by closely timed coincidences before she sees his father. She enters rough, outdoor work under a skinflint tyrant at Flintcomb Ash. A year later, her father dies and the family loses its copyhold. Alec has been annoying her, and finally, in order to support the family, she is forced to become Alec's mistress. Angel,
coming back to England, and realizing too late the intrinsic worth of Tess, finds her with Alec. Mad with grief, Tess stabs Alec, runs to join Angel, and spends several idyllic days with him before she is captured by the law and executed. The book ends with two sentences ironically summarizing the whole series of tragic events begun when Jack Durbeyfield, haggler of Marlott, gets the ancestry craze, and unconsciously starts Tess on her long and futile struggle for happiness; and this conclusion suggests the irony that lies in the title of the book.

"Justice" was done, and the President of the Immortals (in Aeschylean phrase) had ended his sport with Tess. And the D'Urberville knights and dames slept on in their tombs unknowing.27

Decline in ironic tone

The best of irony is characterized by a moderation completely aloof from the issues; it sets forth struggles without comment. In Tess Hardy is writing a purpose novel for the first time, being one-sided and partial. The treatment of Angel, his ecclesiastical brothers, who appear now and then, the whole revealing light cast on marriage and the Church has a touch of the militant in it. Furthermore, Hardy is not content to portray the ironies of Tess's life. He adds a protest against the Power which has created a world and is so careless of the welfare of its creatures. Alec is nature. Angel is society. Each does Tess incalculable wrong.

As Alec takes advantage of the sleeping Tess, Hardy asks,

But where was Tess's guardian angel? where was the Providence of her simple faith? Perhaps, like that other god of whom the ironical Tishbite spoke, he was talking, or he was pursuing, or he was on a journey, or peradventure he was sleeping and not to be awaked. 28

After Angel has cast off Tess, Hardy remarks, using the word "unjust" in a manner unbecoming an ironist,

Clare had been unjust towards her; there is no doubt of it. Men are too often harsh with women they love or have loved; women with men. And yet these harshnesses are tenderness itself when compared with the universal harshness out of which they grow.... 29

Even inanimate nature seems to cynically mock Tess, for while she is confessing to Angel, the room about her appears to change symbolically--

But the complexion even of external things seemed to suffer transmutation as her announcement progressed. The fire in the grate looked impish—demoniacally funny, as if it did not care in the least about her strait. The fender grinned idly, as if it, too, did not care. The light from the water-bottle was merely engaged in a chromatic problem. All material objects around announced their irresponsibility with terrible iteration. And nothing had changed since the moments when he had been kissing her; or rather, nothing in the substance of things. But the essence of things had changed. When she ceased, the auricular impressions from their previous endearments seemed to hustle away into the corners of their brains, repeating themselves as echoes from a time of supremely purblind foolishness. 30

Hardy's protest against fate is clear in the famous passage defending the Durbeyfield children, in which he detects nothing holy in Nature's plan.

All these young souls were passengers in the Durbey-

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29. Ibid., pp. 392-393
30. Ibid, p. 258
field ship—entirely dependent on the judgment of the two Durbeyfield adults for their pleasures, their necessities, their health, even their existence. If the heads of the Durbeyfield chose to sail into difficulty, disaster, starvation, disease, degradation, death, thither were these half-dozen little captives under hatches compelled to sail with them—six helpless creatures, who had never been asked if they wished for life on any terms, much less if they wished for it on such hard conditions as were involved in being of the shiftless house of Durbeyfield. Some people would like to know whence the poet whose philosophy is in these days deemed as profound and trustworthy as his song is sweet and pure, gets his authority for speaking of "Nature's holy plan."

Jude the Obscure. Plot

Jude the Obscure opens with the boyhood of Jude Fawley, the "predestined lad", who is so sensitive that even after he loses his job as a living scarecrow because he is too sympathetic to the birds that eat the farmer's corn, he can walk home dexterously keeping his tread from earthworms in the road after a shower. His teacher, Phillotson, a struggling pedant, inspires him with the desire to be a scholar in the neighboring city of Christminster. Jude takes long walks in the evening to reach a hill from which he can gaze at Christminster in the distance. While he assists his aunt in her bakery business he studies all the classics he can lay his hands on. He grows up with his dreams of scholarship. A crude country girl, Arabella Donn, tricks him into marriage, seeing him as the most likely husband around. She is physical in her desires and does not appreciate Jude's aspirations, and after a sordid life together, the two separate, Arabella emigrating.

to Australia, and Jude finally going to the Christminster of his dreams. There he cannot get into the colleges and has to go to work as a stone mason. He makes the acquaintance of Sue Bridehead, his cousin, and falls in love with her. One day when they are on an excursion in the country, they miss their train back and spend the night very respectfully at a farmer's house; but as a result of the scandal, Sue is expelled from the Teacher's Training School that she is attending. Jude gets her a job teaching in a school run by Phillotson, and in an eccentric vagary she marries Phillotson; she avoids marital relations, however, and eventually runs off with his permission to live with Jude, by whom she has two children. Jude divorces Arabella at her own request, and Phillotson divorces Sue after his letting her go has lost him his standing in the community. But Jude and Sue delay getting married. They wander from town to town trying to make a living and enduring social ostracism. Arabella's son by Jude, called Father Time, because of his curiously aged boy's face, comes to live with them. He goes to school and is harassed by the gibes of his schoolmates about his parents' being unmarried. Feeling that he is not wanted in this world, one day when Jude and Sue are away from home, he hangs Sue's two illegitimate children and then hangs himself. Sue, shocked into a paradoxical prudishness, returns to Phillotson and gives herself up to him. Arabella finds Jude again after she has failed to succeed in a gin-selling career; she forces herself upon him to exploit him, and after some months of this squalid, anticlimactic reunion, Jude dies from overexposure and overdrinking, being deserted
on his deathbed by Arabella, who is at a carnival making advances to another man.

Jude lacks the training and influence to obtain an advanced education, and his energy is sapped by two unsatisfactory love affairs. His marriage to Arabella and his illegal union with Sue are equally ruinous to his achieving his spiritual desires. He gets nothing he wants from a fate that will show him no tenderness. His disillusionment is complete; it has no compensations. The visionary who dreams of scholastic and intellectual attainment in Christminster becomes the cynic saying, "Things are as they are, and will be brought to their destined issue."

Father Time

Is the odd boy, Father Time, a personification of the Ironic Spirit? as when he says of the flowers at the Wessex Fair, "I should like the flowers very much, if I didn't keep on thinking they'd be all withered in a few days!" Hardy observes of him, product of Jude's first union, destroyer of his second,

The boy's face expressed the whole tale of their situation. On that little shape had converged all the insuspicousness and shadow which had darkened the first union of Jude, and all the accidents, mistakes, fears, errors of the last. He was their nodal point, their focus, their expression in a single term. For the rashness of those parents he had groaned, for their ill-sortment he had quaked, and for the misfortunes of these he had died.32

Father Time is not like the normal children who were subject the Durbeyfields' whims, for he is distracted by no visions or hopes. And unlike

even Jude, he is disenchanted from the start. He summarizes hopelessness.

Allegory is decadence, and if Father Time (as the name insinuates) is a personification of ironical insight, as the aspect of the room when Tess confesses surely is, then I can contend that Hardy's attitude of irony is declining in Tess, notably in Jude, and not only because of this injection of symbolism.

Further decline in ironic tone

For where in books like The Return of the Native and The Woodlanders Hardy's irony is purely objective, merely illustrating life and fate—illustrating a point of view, in Tess and Jude the irony no longer simply depicts the irony of life; Hardy has lost a portion of his ironic detachment, and he is occupied with indicting the universe—proving a point of view. Hardy has changed his position and sides with his characters. Tess and Arabella are not satirical studies of woman's vanity. Jack Durbeyfield with his "skellingtons" is hardly a satirical figure. Jack and Jude and Tess and the rest are sympathetically treated, not ironically, as are, for instance the earlier Knight and Bathsheba and Henchard. Hardy still is ironical toward society. He sides with his characters against the Church and the society which bring woe to splendid people in Tess and Jude because of conventional notions about love and marriage, notions that finally conquer even the independent Sue. But Hardy is less concerned with the way society treats the individual than he is with the fate that lets all such things happen, the fate neither cruel nor good but indifferent to man.
Hardy's own remonstrance is so clearly expressed that it is barely masked under any sort of irony. And as irony is perfect in proportion to its impersonality, in polemics it becomes satire or cynicism. Hardy without irony is not himself; perhaps his realization that he was losing his artistic form in Jude led him to discontinue writing novels. The technique of irony mastered in The Return of the Native had carried through without faltering, but the added elaborations of controversial philosophy were contradicting artistic effects.
Chapter II Thomas Hardy: Ironic Attitude toward Man and Society

Hardy, seeing the comic side of social man, frequently makes ironical remarks about his characters or about society and life, merely to divert and entertain his readers. More often he has a serious criticism to make, though he expresses it lightly and subtly. Hardy is a Victorian when he sees man the victim of social institutions and when he feels that certain of these institutions should be reformed or done away with, and although deeply serious in these cases, he is more the ironist than the Victorian when he takes, except for a few instances, no open stand for or against anything. Only in his treatment of marriage and war does a manifest purpose show; his ironic calm wrestles with a satiric temper that would unveil and attack, and the result is ironic satire sometimes very close to satire.

All through his writings, Hardy expresses through ironic comment and ironic satire his reactions to the disagreeable, false, and foolish in man. Where Hardy's philosophy is based on his primal theme of man versus destiny, his ironic comment is based on his secondary theme of man versus society. It points out comic collectivism occasionally, tragic collectivism constantly. Conrad has the same primal theme, but a different secondary one: man versus himself.

Hardy's ironic attitude toward society expresses itself in remarks and ironies directed mainly against people—real people in his introductions, fictitious people in his works—and in remarks and ironies directed mainly against ideas and institutions.
Ironic remarks in introductions

Ironic remarks about real people are rare, for Hardy was very guarded in his public relations with men. Too, Hardy is impersonal in most of his statements about his work. He gives no self-revelations like those frequent in Conrad. Even in the prefaces to the sensational Tess he coldly confines himself to the book. In the later prefaces to two of his great novels, however, he replies to his critics, ironically, though kindly. For example, the Preface written in 1895 for The Mayor of Casterbridge contains this paragraph:

> Objections have been raised to the Scotch language of Mr. Farfrae, the second character; and one of his fellow-countrymen went so far as to declare that men beyond the Tweed did not and never could say 'warl'd', 'cannet', 'advairritisment', and so on. As this gentleman's pronunciation in correcting me seemed to my Southern ear an exact repetition of what my spelling implied, I was not struck with the truth of his remark, and somehow we did not get any forwarder in the matter.

Hardy has more fun with the critics when in the Postscript (1913) to the Preface of Jude he tells

> ...that an American man of letters who did not whitewash his own morals, informed me that, having bought a copy of the book on the strength of the shocked criticisms, he read on and on, wondering when the harmfulness was going to begin, and at last flung it across the room with execrations at having been induced by the rascally reviewers to waste a dollar-and-half on what he pleased to call 'a religious and ethical treatise'.

and when he refers to the bishop who burned Jude and to other disapproving critics:

> What they meant seems to have been only this: 'We Britons hate ideas, and we are going to live up to the privilege of our native country...Your picture...is not the view of life that we who thrive on conventions can permit to be painted.'
In the same Postscript he points out how critics always overlooked the thinker in him for the story-teller, when he remarks,

Then somebody discovered that Jude was a moral work—
austere in its treatment of a difficult subject—as if
the writer had not all the time said in the Preface that
it was meant to be so.

Remarks on peasants

While thus sparing of his contemporaries, Hardy is continually
ironical toward his characters all through his prose and poetry. Even
when describing his beloved peasants he observes their incongruities
and interpolates humor of his own that is as ironical as their own
yokel wit and humor. The earlier novels are full of illustrations. To
illustrate, when preparations are made for the tranter's Christmas
party:

Then were produced large knives and forks, which had
been shrouded in darkness and grease since the last occasion
of the kind, and bearing upon their aides, 'Shear-steel,
warranted', in such emphatic letters of assurance that the
warranter's name was not required as further proof, and not
given.

The old maltster speaks:

"Shepherd would like to hear the pedigree of yer life,
father—wouldn't ye, shepherd?"

"Ay, that I should", said Gabriel, with the hearti-
ness of a man who had longed to hear it for several
months.

Henery prophesys failure to Bathsheba's effort to be her own bailiff:

"I do, I do; but no baily—'I deserved that place",

1. Under the Greenwood Tree, p. 55
2. Far from the Madding Crowd, p. 71-72
and after she has skipped from the Girl's Training School in Methegater, 

...the letter being a strange piece of newspaper...

X37, Harper and Brothers, 1898, p. 272

6. The Hand of Methenart, p. 6

PER FROM THE MOTHING CROW, p. 116

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A letter bore the strange character...

...the letter being a strange piece of newspaper.

X37, Harper and Brothers, 1898, p. 272

6. The Hand of Methenart, p. 6

PER FROM THE MOTHING CROW, p. 116

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Hardy comments indirectly on the power of public opinion over public officials.

The mind of the matron was horrified—not so much at the possible death of Sue as at the possible half-column detailing that event in all the newspapers, which added to the scandal of the year before, would give the College an unenviable notoriety for many months to come.

Remarks on women

A considerable amount of Hardy's irony on people is directed on feminine fickleness and vanity. Novels like Under the Greenwood Tree and Far from the Madding Crowd are full of this sort of irony. Hardy delights in passages like these:

Ethelberta, with a rather fallen countenance, then left her mother-in-law, and went where all ladies are supposed to go when they want to torment their minds in comfort—to her own room.8

For a woman seems never to see any but the serious side of her attachment, though the most devoted lover has all the time a vague and dim perception that he is losing his dignity and frittering away his time.9

Or this (Bathsheba has sent Oak away because he reprimanded her for trifling with Farmer Boldwood. Next day sixty ewes are sick from eating fresh clover, and only Oak knows how to save them.):

"I won't send for him. No, I won't!"
The most vigorous expression of a resolution does not always coincide with the greatest vigor of the expression itself. It is often flung out as a sort of prop to support a decaying conviction which, whilst strong, requires no enunciation to prove it so. The "No, I won't" of Bath-

7. Jude, p. 171
8. Ethelberta, p. 15
9. Desperate Remedies, p. 51
sheba meant virtually, "I think I must."  

A minute later she asks, "Where is Oak staying?"

In the poetry Hardy refers to feminine frailties again and again, now rather harshly, as in the "Satires of Circumstance", now lightly, as in "The Pink Frock" (*K. V.):*

O my pretty pink frock,  
I sha'n't be able to wear it!  
Why is he dying now?  
I can hardly bear it!

He might have contrived to live on;  
But they say there's no hope whatever;  
And must I shut myself up,  
And go out never?

O my pretty pink frock,  
Puff-sleeved and accordion-pleated!  
He might have passed in July,  
And not so cheated!

In "The Slow Nature" (*W. P.*), the first thing that Mistress Damon thinks of, when told that her husband is gored to death, is her untidy house which visitors will see—but to her credit, she soon pines away and dies. Hardy is ironical oppositely in "The First Countess of Wessex" (*A Group of Noble Dames*), where Mrs. Dornell suddenly becomes very affectionate toward her husband after he has died.

Apparently Hardy considers womankind as about as capricious as fate, for in *The Well-Beloved* he comments on Pierston, that "Anyhow, he was not disposed to resent an inexplicability in womankind, having found that it usually arose independently of fact, reason, probability,  

10. *Far from the Madding Crowd*, p. 159  

[* Moments of Vision. Hereafter, abbreviations in parenthesis denote volumes of verse. See Appendix, p. 164, for list of abbreviations. Poems may be found most conveniently in the *Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*, N. Y., Macmiilen, 1928, which contains all of Hardy's*
or his own deserts.  

Remarks on mankind
From ironizing ordinary people it is just a step to directly ironize the best types of people and mankind indirectly. "Wagtail and Baby" (T. L.) is an irony on the cream of society.

A baby watched a ford, whereto
A wagtail came for drinking;
A blaring bull went wading through;
The wagtail showed no shrinking.

Similarly, a splashing stallion and a slinking mongrel failed to disturb the dipping and sipping of the bird.

A perfect gentleman then neared;
The wagtail, in a winking,
With terror rose and disappeared;
The baby fell a-thinking.

And "A Drinking Song" (H. W.), with a title ironically deceptive, is ironical toward great men. Each stanza names a great thinker and the important idea of each: Thales, that the earth is firm and flat; Copernicus, that the globe rolls around the sun; Darwin, that we are brethren to apes and reptiles; Einstein, that there is no time, space, motion, square, straight. After the stanza for each man the chorus is

Fill full your cups: feel no distress;
'Tis only one great thought the less!

and the final chorus is

Fill full your cups: feel no distress
At our great thoughts shrinking less:
We'll do a good deed nevertheless.

Ironic comment on people is logically accompanied by ironic com-

ment on the way people treat each other. The novels are a vast accumu-
lation of such comments, and the poems echo the prose again and again,
emphasizing, with little poignant touches, the heartlessness of society
and the disillusionment that comes with having lived. For example,
"Just the Same" (L. L. E.):

I sat. It all was past;
Hope never would hail again;
Fair days had ceased at a blast,
The world was a darkened den.

The beauty and dream were gone,
And the halo in which I had hied
So gaily gallantly on
Had suffered blot and died!

I went forth, heedless whither,
In a cloud too black for name:
"—People frisked hither and thither:
The world was just the same.

or "The Church-Builder" (P. P. P.). A church-builder has ruined himself
financially to fulfill his contract; his home is in ruins. He stands
on the prie-dieu of the church and makes ready to hang himself on the
beam "Midway 'twixt Cross and truss".

Well: Here at dawn they'll light on one
Dangling in mockery
Of what he spent his substance on
Blindly and uselessly!...
"He might," they'll say,
"Have built, some way,
A cheaper gallows-tree!"

Ironies directed at various ideas and conventions

The second large group of ironic comments in Hardy aims at society
less through individuals than through ideas and conventions. I have
mentioned Hardy's ironic treatment of peerage idolizing in A Pair of
Blue Eyes and The Hand of Ethelberta and of high-society etiquette and the traditional romantic plot in Ethelberta. I could multiply examples of all his critical ironies, but I shall try only to suggest the variety of his attacks.

In Two on a Tower he comments on the column raised in memorial to Sir Blount,

> Probably not a dozen people within the district knew the name of the person commemorated, while perhaps not a soul remembered whether the column were hollow or solid, whether with or without, a tablet explaining its date and purpose.\(^\text{12}\)

The Well-Beloved is Hardy's ironic counter to Platonic love. "The point is, that the idealized women are not nonentities, but insist on asserting individual personality."\(^\text{13}\)

Jude thinks that the local composer who has written an Easter hymn must be "A hungry soul in pursuit of a full soul!" He calls on the man, whom he finds not at all moved at being a composer since he can make little money at the work; so he is turning to the wine business.\(^\text{14}\)

Hardy shows the fallacy in envy: a country girl is envious of the finery of a past acquaintance—but the latter is ruined, either a mistress of a prostitute ("The Ruined Maid", P. P. P.); he turns superstition to an ironic end when Susan Nunsuch melts the waxen image of Eustacia on the very evening of her death—as if the melting had precipitated the death—; he gets a miniature tragedy in "An Imaginative Woman" (Wessex Tales) because the husband believes in the fallacious

\(^{12}\) Two on a Tower, N. Y., Harper & Brothers, 1896, p. 5
\(^{13}\) L. Abercrombie, Thomas Hardy, London, N. Secker, 1912, p. 25
\(^{14}\) Jude, p. 234
theory of pre-natal influence; he makes ironic use of sea-sickness to reveal unsuspected blood-relationships in "For Conscience Sake" (Life's Little Ironies).

Ironies on death

In his verse Hardy reverts time and time again with an almost morbid preoccupation to the subject of death, ironizing the traditional sacredness, beauty, and lasting memory associated by man with death and the grave. "Ah, Are You Digging on My Grave?" (S. C.) is a typical grave-yard irony. Not the loved one is digging the grave to plant rue; no, he married a rich lady yesterday. Not the near kin; they say what is the use? she's dead. Not her enemy; an enemy dead doesn't merit hate any more. No, only her dog, who is burying a bone, having forgotten he is over her grave. Or there is "By Her Aunt's Grave" (S. C.), in which a girl goes with her beau to a dance where they will spend the money slowly saved by her deceased aunt for a tombstone. Again, in "The Three Tall Men" (W. W.), there is the man who is very tall and makes his own coffin, fearing no carpenter will make him one that is long enough. His brother, equally tall, dies and he puts him in this coffin. He makes a second; his tall son dies and is placed in this. The man starts a third, hoping again that he will get to use it himself; but he is cheated a third time, for he finally dies when out at sea.

In "Royal Sponsors" (W. V.) the king and queen will stand to a child; but when the morning of the christening comes, the child is found to have died. The royal couple must not be disappointed, and the ceremony is gone thru with a dead child. In another poem, a man
In love of the fame of her,  
And in the good name of her.....

his daughter, washes the soot from a Statue of Liberty in a city square for which the girl has been the model. She has died before he reached her. Only the sculptor, who sees the man scouring, knows that

His child, my model, held so saintly,  
Grand in feature,  
Gross in nature,  
In the dens of vice had died.

("The Statue of Liberty", M. V.)

One more instance is "The Children and Sir Nameless" (L. L. E.). Sir Nameless of Athelhall has a seven foot statue of himself in alabaster stone placed in the church. He wants to be remembered and does not think that his children will remember him. Three hundred years later church-restorers cannot trace his lineage and therefore put his statue on the floor under the seats for school-children; the youngsters kick out his name and hobnail off his nose, wondering who this old stone man is. These ironies are more typical of the verse than of the prose, although the novels contain incidents like the rain washing up the grave of Fanny Robin, and the accidental keeping of old Holway's body in unconsecrated ground in "The Grave by the Handpost" (A Changed Man).

On marriage

The two of Hardy's themes for ironic satire that receive treatment nearest to polemic satire are marriage and war. Hardy is constantly turning his irony on marriage. All the misery and trouble in Desperate Remedies result either from misuse of the marriage contract or from its inherent inadequacy. Cytherea once protests the futility of duty to society when her brother urges her to be happy in her marriage to Man-
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inherent inadequacy. Cytherea once protests the futility of duty to
society when her brother urges her to be happy in her marriage to Man-
ston, whom she does not love; her own happiness is what counts—society does not profit when her duty makes her unhappy. And all through the novels and poems, events leading up to the marriage service or following it, are the causes of trouble and suffering. Many of the ironies in matrimony arise from misleading concealments of the truth about premature or delayed marriages, about illicit unions, or about the individual desires of the husband and wife. Such is true, for instance, in "The Fight on Durnover Moor" (H. S. F. P.) and "A Conversation at Dawn" (S. C.), and in A Group of Noble Dames, which is a series of matrimonial tangles in which the crucial irony is generally based in some way or other on the marriage contract. Wives and husbands are continually dying or reappearing in foreign lands. There is a series of secret marriages, elopements, juggling of children (especially in "Lady Mottisfont"), and questioned parentages.

Hardy's stand in the matter is increasingly explicit as he writes more prose. When Lord Mountclere pockets his certificate of marriage he pockets

...a document in which romance, rashness, law, and gospel are so happily made to work together that it may safely be regarded as the neatest compromise which has ever been invented since Adam sinned.

Angel Clare is a satire on the would-be self-thinker in matters of marriage. The double-standard of morality conquers his individuality when the time comes for him to judge Tess. He revolts against convention too late when he makes a hasty and inane proposal to elope to

15. Ethelberta, p. 379
With all his attempted independence of judgment, this advanced and well-meaning young man—a sample product of the last five-and-twenty years—was yet the slave to custom and conventionality when surprised back into his early teachings. ... In considering what Tess was not, he overlooked what she was, and forgot that the deficient can be more than the entire. 16

Marriage, hide-bound with old inhibitions, brings no happiness to Tess or to Angel, nor does it except to a very few Hardy people, such as Venn and Thomasin, Bathsheba and Oak—and even with them the women have had marital troubles aplenty before they marry the right man. Far from being unfortunate in his first choice. And in the marriages of Dick Dewey and Fancy Day and of Fitzpiers and Grace lie ironic suggestions of coming unhappiness. In Jude the Obscure Hardy emphasizes the troubles that are forever arising out of both regular and irregular unions. When Jude and Arabella get married, he says,

And so, standing before the aforesaid officiator, 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. 19

After several months of sordid marital life and mutual disappointment with their union, Jude and Arabella separate. Jude reflects,

Their lives were ruined, he thought; ruined by the fundamental error of their matrimonial union: that of having based a permanent contract on a temporary feeling which had no necessary connection with affinities that alone render a life—

16. Tess, pp. 302-303
17. Jude, pp. 65-66
These later comments by Hardy point out an irony but are too nearly controversial to be themselves very ironical.

One of the manifest ironies in The Dynasts centers in Napoleon's marital diplomacy in his frantic endeavor to obtain an heir. The Emperor casts off the wife, Josephine, who has come to really care for him, and quite loses his head over the Princess Louisa, who marries him only to bring a peaceful issue to international relations between France and Austria and to bring a male issue to Napoleon. The Chorus of Ironic Spirits is ribald when Napoleon meets his bride.

First 'twas a finished coquette,
And now it's a raw ingenue.--
Blonde instead of brunette,
An old wife doffed for a new.
She'll bring him a baby,
As quickly as maybe,
And that's what he wants her to do
Hoo-hoo!
And that's what he wants her to do!  

The short poems revert as continually to the grimness of matrimony as the song-lyrics, in ironical contrast, do to the joy of love and good times. "In Honeymoon-Time at an Inn" (M. V.) on the morning after the bridal night a pier-glass in the bedroom falls and breaks. The lady sees the event as a portent of long years of sorrow. The Spirits Ironic behind the wainscot laugh and the Spirit of Pity sighs.

"It's good," said the Spirits Ironic, "to tickle their minds
With a portent of their wedlock's after-grinds."

"The Curate's Kindness, A Workhouse Irony" (T. L.) reflects the "after-grind". An old man has looked forward to being in the workhouse because the men are in one wing and the women in another, so that after forty years of wedlock he'll be away from his spouse and with strangers. "To get freed of her there was the one thing Had made the change welcome to me." But the young Pa'son, feeling it wrong to part a couple so long married, has got special permission to have them in one wing.

Many of Hardy's marriage ironies center upon babies, unborn or recently born. There are not many children in the Wessex writings who grow up, but there is a full quota of natural children and even legitimate children who cause ironic entanglements aplenty, notably in A Group of Noble Dames. In one poem, "John and Jane" (T. L.), which is a close parallel to "The Idiots" by Conrad, Hardy hints at the bitter irony possible in marriage after children are born. John and Jane are happy:

They see as a palace their cottage-place,  
Containing a pearl of the human race,  
A hero, maybe, hereafter styled,  
Do John and Jane with a baby-child.

They rate the world as a gruesome place,  
Where fair looks fade to a skull's grimace,—  
As a pilgrimage they would fain get done--  
Do John and Jane with their worthless son.

On the Church

Hardy's ironic treatment of marriage is essentially pointed at the Church. Several of his men are ironical studies that do not flatter the Church, though some of the Church's men, like Maybold and old Clare, are fine men. The two brothers of Angel, and Swancourt are hollow
churchmen, and the hearty Bishop of Melchester in *Two on a Tower* has his weaknesses.

"The Respectable Burger" (P. P. P.) concerns ecclesiastical scholarship; "The Higher Criticism", says the burgher, tells us to "prepare to doubt if Adam ever were"; to believe "David was no giant-killer", "Pontius Pilate acted square", etc., and he concludes by remarking,

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All churchgoing will I forswear,
And sit on Sundays in my chair,
And read that moderate man Voltaire.
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*Life's Little Ironies* includes two stories of men whose ambition to rise in the Church leads to a vitiation of filial love. Cornelius and Joshua Halborough watch their father drown and make no effort to save him—because he is low and drunken and a continual disgrace to them and is bent on ruining their sister Rosa's chance for a good marriage to the squire ("A Tragedy of Two Ambitions"). A son keeps his lonely, poor widowed mother from marrying the greengrocer lover of her youth and thus keeps her from any sort of happiness in her declining years—and all because her marriage might endanger his dignity and his episcopal career ("The Son's Veto").

The futility of the offices of the church is suggested in a scene in *The Dynasts*, when simultaneous with a cannonade in the distance killing more a chaplain at Coruna is burying a soldier of the Ninth and referring to "Jesus Christ our Mediator and Redeemer."

On theology

Going one step further, Hardy's metaphysics, discussed in a later chapter, is an ironical rejection of Christianity. Consider the irony
in "God-Forgotten" (P. P. P.), in which God, when interrogated, does not at first remember having made the earth, mid millions of such shapes of his. He faintly remembers, but adds that he lost interest in the world from the first and hence its life has been dark.

Hardy throws a questioning ironic light on even Christ, Mary, and the Conception. "An Evening in Galilee" (E. E.) is a soliloquy by Mary. She expresses her worries about her son; his vesture is odd; he associates with low fisherfolk; he may be mad; no telling what may come of his preaching: it may lead even to arrest and death. But she will not confide her troubled thoughts to Joseph; he has nightmares enough. She reminisces,

"And he said, too, 'Who is my mother?'--
When he knows so very well.
He might have said, 'Who is my father?'
--And I'd have found it hard to tell!
That no one knows but Joseph and--one other, nor ever will;
One who'll not see me again....How it changed!
--I dreaming no ill!..."

Hardy introduces a peasant agnosticism into The Dynasts. During Napoleon's progress to Elba a market woman exclaims, "I hope by the Virgin, as 'a called herself, that there'll be no riots here!" In "Panthera" (T. L.) a Roman soldier bored at Nazareth with waiting for wounded soldiers to convalesce, makes love to a demure maiden. He leaves in due time. Years later he is in charge of some executions at Golgotha. He recognizes one of the weeping mothers as this maiden of former days. His own son is one of the malefactors whose impalements he has just superintended. He learns that an old man has married the pregnant girl and raised the boy. "He who goes fathering Gives frightful hostages
to hazardless!" Panthera admits. The irony works two ways: the divinity to Christ is questioned and his father dies an obscure soldier; and Panthera, who has killed his own son, dies unknowingly that he is the father of the founder of a great religion and with a gross misconception of his son's character. He knows only,

"That he—the man whose ardent blood was mine—
Had woke sedition long among the Jews,
And hurled insulting parliance at their god,
Whose temple bulked upon the adjoining hill,
Vowing that he would raze it, that himself
Was god as great as he whom they adored,
And by descent, moreover, was their king;
With sundry other incitements to misrule."

Irony on war

War is exhaustively ironized in The Dynasts, and is occasionally ironized in the short poems, particularly in the groups of poems written during the Boer War and the World War. The Trumpet-Major is the only novel which deals with war. At the close, the noble John Loveday and his companions leave England for the Peninsular campaign, and John's ex-sweetheart wishes them "a prosperous voyage, easy conquest, and a speedy return." 20

"But, alas, for that! Battles and skirmishes, advances and retreats, fevers and fatigues, told hard on Anne's gallant friends in the coming time. Of the seven upon whom these wishes were bestowed, five, including the trumpet-major, were dead men within the few following years, and their bones left to moulder in the land of their campaigns.

"A Wife in London" (P. P. P.) contains one of Hardy's most penetrating war ironies. The wife of a soldier in the Boer War sits at

20. The Trumpet-Major, N. Y., Harper and Brothers, 1896, p. 304
home in the gloomy fog of London. A messenger comes with the official notice that her husband has fallen in the far South Land. But next day the postman brings a letter, written by the husband before his death:

Fresh—firm—penned in highest feather—
Page-full of his hoped return
And of home-planned jaunts by brake and burn
In the summer weather,
And of new love that they would learn.

"The Man He Killed" (T. L.) has a telling irony:

Had he and I but met
By some old ancient inn,
We should have sat us down to wet
Right many a nippurkin.

But ranged as infantry
And staring face to face,
I shot at him as he at me,
And killed him in his place

Yes; quaint and curious war is!
You shoot a fellow down
You'd treat if met where any bar is,
Or help to half-a-crown.

Along the margin of "His Country" (M. Y.) Hardy summarizes the contents of the piece; "He travels southward, and looks around; and cannot discover the boundary of his native country; or where his duties to his fellow-creatures end; or who are his enemies." The hint is that not geography but man makes the factions of war. The last stanza goes,

I asked me: "Whom have I to fight,
And whom have I to dare,
And whom to weaken, cruch, and blight?
My country seems to have kept in sight
On my way everywhere."

Nowhere is the irony of victory clearer than in the long list of great and valiant men killed in the terrible battle of Albuera in Spain. Or
the irony of the ultimate futility of war's more generous impulses than
in a scene at Waterloo:

Wellington
It's Marshall Ney himself who heads the charge.
The finest cavalry commander, he, That wears a foreign plume; ay, probably
The whole world through!

Spirit Ironic
And when that matchless chief
Sentenced shall lie to ignominious death
But technically deserved, no finger he
Who speaks will lift to save him!

Spirit of the Pities
To his shame
We must discount war's generous impulses
I sadly see.21

Or the ultimate futility of the Napoleonic wars and of all wars—at the
end of Waterloo:

Spirit of the Pities
Is this the last Esdraelon of a mail
For mortal man's effacement?

Spirit Ironic
Warfare mere,
Plied by the managed for the managers;
To wit: by frenzied folks who profit nought
For those who profit all.22

And in the end even Napoleon profited nought. Yet immeasurable misery
has been endured by the managed, as shown, for example, by a scene in
Spain in which drunken deserters are shot and then insufficiently buried
under dirty snow and the Spirit Ironic exclaims, "Quaint poesy, and real
romance of war!" But at last, war is over, and here sits the distin-
guished convocation that will bring peace:

21. Dynasts, III, VII, vi, p. 219
22. Ibid., III, VII, viii, p. 243
The Congress of Vienna sits
And war becomes a war of wits,
Where every Power parleys withal
Its dues as large, its friends' as small;
Till Priests of Peace prepare once more
To fight as they have fought before!  

Hardy's final volume of verse (W. W.) contains the sardonic quatrains,

Christmas: 1924

"Peace upon earth!" was said. We sing it,
And pay a million priests to bring it.
After two thousand years of mass
We've got as far as poison-gas.

25. Ibid., III, V, 1
Chapter III Joseph Conrad: Irony in the Novels

The irony in the novels of Conrad has no clearly traceable development through several novels as the irony in Hardy has, for except as Conrad checks his exuberant descriptions and his sonorous style, with a gained prominence for the irony, his irony changes very little, as he writes more. Some of Conrad's stories are more ironical in one respect than are others, but I cannot fit the variations into any sort of a developmental scheme. Furthermore, Conrad's philosophy, always much less elaborate than Hardy's, and his one great theme, the disillusionment that comes with time, are formulated at the first as much as they are at the last. Hence, reserving Conrad's ironic criticism of society and his philosophic conceptions for later chapters, I shall restrict the subject matter of this chapter to his use of irony in his tales for particular effects and as the basis of the plots, taking up the stories in chronological sequence.

Almayer's Folly

Examples of irony

In Almayer's Folly (1895), Conrad's first published writing, atmosphere and description predominate; the plot with its annihilation of hopes and desires is ironic, but incidental ironies, though frequent, are far less frequent than in books Conrad wrote three and four years later.

Conrad makes ironic comments on his characters as Hardy does.

"Dain has returned at last. He is here for an important talk, bitcharra—if you mercifully consent."

Evidently Lakamba's mercy went so far—for in a short
while he came out....

She will poison me, thought the poor wretch [Almayer of his wife at the thought of Lingard's taking their child a-
way], well aware of that easy and final manner of solving the social, political, or family problems in Malay life. 2

Conrad puts his people in ironic situations. There is ironic in-
congruity in the scene where the troubled Lakamba, the feeble old Malay ruler, has himself lulled to sleep by Babalachie grinding out Il Trova-
tore from an old hand organ. The oriental derives satisfaction from
the creation of the despised white man, unconscious alike of his incon-
sistency and of the cultural significance of the music. Again, these
same two, Babalatchi the one-eyed diplomat, and Lakamba the ruler of
Sambir, are the victims of an ironic self-delusion when they think that
Almayer knows the secret of the inland treasure; actually, he himself
has only a few shreds of information from Lingard's note-books.

The plot

Almayer has married Lingard's adopted Malay daughter because she
should bring the Lingard fortune to him, and Lingard has established
Almayer as the white trader at Sambir, on a secret river known only to
him. But the Arabs have finally come, introduced by chance, and with
their arrival Almayer dates the beginning of all his misfortunes. Fort-
tune is against Almayer's carrying out his plans. He loses his trade
and his prestige in Sambir, his spacious new home ("Almayer's Folly")
remains incomplete and untenanted, and he gets none of the Lingard

2. Ibid., p. 27.
fortune because Lingard uses it up making futile trips exploring the interior. Now his wife rails at him in his poverty,

"You know, Kaspar, I am your wife! Your own Christian wife after your own Elanda law!" For she knew that this was the bitterest thing of all; the greatest regret of that man's life."3

His old friend, Dain, returns and is at first "the blue and the sunshine of the sky" to Almayer, but he fails to aid Almayer rehabilitate his fallen fortunes and ends by taking away Almayer's last hope, his daughter Nina. The river which has brought Lingard his fortune, which has lost him his fortune, which has brought Almayer to Sambir to establish a brish trade, which has then brought the Arabs to displace him, finally carries away Dain and Nina and the final tattered dreams of Almayer.

Ah! the river! His old friend and his old enemy, speaking always with the same voice as he runs from year to year bringing fortune or disappointment, happiness or pain, upon the same varying but unchanged surface of glancing currents and swirling eddies.4

Almayer is the prototype of the Conrad man, whose own character is his fate. Almayer, like Willems or Nostrume or Renouard or Razumov, is weak when he should be strong and is strong when it is too late. External fate bears down upon these men, but it is their inner nature reacting to fate which brings about their defeat, just as it does that of the Mayor of Casterbridge.

3. Ibid., p. 40.
4. Ibid., p. 162.
An Outcast of the Islands

In An Outcast of the Islands there is much conscious irony in the remarks of one person to another. Babalatchi uses much rhetorical irony in speaking to blind Omar and Aissa, Willems to Almayer sewed up in the hammock, Joanna to Willems—as when she sends him from the house after Hudig has dismissed him—and so on. Almayer is ironical when he aids Mrs. Willems to get off and then starts a pseudo-chase after her, taking care to delay and to get the chasing boat stuck in the mud all day when the tide goes out.

The plot

The plot is another instance of thwarted dreams and hopes. Willems, in a Straits town, after embezzling some money from his employer, Hudig, has almost completed a secret restitution and is elated at the nearness of safety when Hudig finds out and fires him. Willems is cast off by his wife as well.

For the first time in his life he felt afraid of the future, because he had lost his faith, the faith in his own success. And he had destroyed it foolishly with his own hands!5

Lingard, who placed Willems with Hudig to begin with, plans to aid him once again, and temporarily leaves him with Almayer at Sambir. His return to get Willems is delayed because, by accident, he loses his ship, the Flash; he arrives at Sambir three months late. His lateness is fatal. In the meanwhile Abdulla the Arab has arrived and gained ascendency in Sambir, and Willems, decaying under the idleness and tedium

5. An Outcast of the Islands, p. 31
of his life with Almayer, has gone over to the enemy side, after falling in love with a native girl and intriguing with Malay and Arabs against Almayer and Lingard.

When Lingard comes back, he has with him Willems' wife and child. Eventually Willems' wife and his native mistress quarrel over him and the latter kills him; he pays the great penalty for his duplicity towards her as well as towards his white benefactor, Lingard. All the troubles of Willems are of his own making. Lingard, who has tried to benefit Sambir and Willems, loses all, Almayer is ruined, Aissa and Joanna lose the man they love, everyone suffers from the events told in the book. Old Lakamba's power goes, too.

By Lingard's advice he was left alone, notwithstanding his rebellious mood; and for many days he lived undisturbed amongst his wives and retainers, cherishing the persistent and causeless hope of better times, the possession of which seems to be the universal privilege of exiled greatness. 6

Why these ironies?

Almayer is visited by a naturalist and he lays the whole tale before him. His speech sounds as though Conrad were speaking, for the Conrad speculation is in his words.

"Here!" went on Almayer, speaking very loud and thumping the table, "I want to know. You, who say you have read all the books, just tell me... why such infernal things are ever allowed. Here I am! Done harm to nobody, lived an honest life... and a scoundrel like that is born in Rotterdam or some such place at the other end of the world somewhere, travels out here, robs his employer, runs away from his wife, and ruins me and my Nina—he ruined me, I tell you—and gets himself shot at last by a poor miserable savage,

6. Ibid., p. 51
that knows nothing at all about him, really. Where's the sense of all this? Where's your Providence? Where's the good for anybody in all this? The world's a swindle; a swindle! Why should I suffer? What have I done to be treated so?"

"My dear fellow, don't--don't you see that the bare fact--fact of your existence is offensive."

The entire series of events apparently fortuitous has no justice in the eyes of Almayer. The passage suggests ordained fatality. Conrad does not develop his idea beyond this point but he gives constant illustrations of it. He merely concludes that Almayer is offensive, which in practice is about the same as Hardy's idea that a man is simply ignored by Providence.

The Nigger of the Narcissus. Ironic psychology

The Nigger of the Narcissus is an ironic psychological study.

Among an ordinary crew aboard the Narcissus is a big, imposing nigger who is apparently in the last stages of consumption. But for some reason, inexplicable to themselves, the men nurse and care for him. The dying nigger gets an ironical hold on the mongrel crew. Archie gives up concertina playing; all give up singing and noise so that Jimmy Wait can sleep; they speak to him gently, and out of his sight exchange sour smiles; nobody can tell what will please the incomprehensible invalid, but the scorn of the nigger is hard to bear; their attitude toward life becomes weirdly uncertain; he is demoralizing, for through him they become highly humanized, tender—even Belfast, a gutter rat, is tender—complex, excessively decadent; Wait torments all their moments; he is

7. Ibid., p. 367
worse than a nightmare; yet he fascinates them, and they build him a special cabin and carry him into it; when a terrible storm isolates him in this cabin they labor incredibly hard to save him from premature entombment behind the bulkhead; they hate him and at the same time struggle to save him; "The secret and ardent desire of our hearts was the desire to beat him viciously with our fists about the head; and we handled him as tenderly as though he had been made of glass..."; the cook makes tea for Wait and purloins white sugar for it from the cabin; and the men almost mutiny when Captain Allistoun refuses to let Jimmy go on deck; finally even the two stolid Scandinavians take an interest and discuss the situation; "all this for a hypochoondrical, egocentric negro with tuberculosis, "alone forward in his cabin, fighting great shadows, clinging to brazen lies, chuckling painfully over his transparent deceptions." For all the time the men sense that he is exaggerating his illness to escape work, that his extreme suffering is factitious. But, Falsehood triumphed. It triumphed through doubt, through stupidity, through pity, through sentimentalism. We set ourselves to bolster it up, from compassion, from recklessness, from a sense of fun. 8

And when Wait dies and is buried at sea, everyone sighs a sigh of genuine relief; a great depression is lifted from them all. What makes the whole situation come about Conrad does not know. The heart of man is inscrutable. Mud and stones—and flowers are at the bottom of every heart. Conrad can read the mystery of human behavior no more than Hardy can read the mystery of external fate.

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8. Ibid., p. 138
Tales of Unrest

Conrad's first book of short stories is Tales of Unrest. The stories are brief and closely meshed with ironies, though less so than Hardy's because the romantic adventure element gets full treatment from Conrad. Irony of all sorts is continually present.

In "Karain: A Memory" Karain and Matara search long years for Matara's daughter, who has broken tribal bonds to run off with a Dutchman. Finally they find her. Karain has orders from Matara to shoot her after Matara has killed the Dutchman. But Karain, who loves her, kills Matara by shooting him in the back. The murder of his friend and chief haunts Karain until he finds an old pilgrim who charms his conscience and follows always at his heels. Then the old man dies. Karain's conscience gnaws his nerves raw and Karain comes trustingly to the three whites on the boat to get a charm which will ease his troubles. Hollis gives him a Jubilee sixpence sewed up in a glove of Hollis' past love and Karain departs happy. The whole conclusion is ironic, but very kindly and sympathetic.

"The Idiots" tells of a French farmer, Jean-Pierre, and his young wife Susan who are happy when twins come. Susan hopes one of the boys may become a priest. Then in a few months it is clear that the twin boys are simple, and will never be of any use. The parents hope that the third child will be normal. But it too, like the other two, never stretches its hands to its mother, never smiles, never speaks. Hopes for the fourth child, a girl, are also soon destroyed. Jean-Pierre Bacacou becomes greedy and troublesome and takes to drink; he has had
to give up the hope of having by his side a son who will look at the
turned-up sod with a master's eye. Fate is against him. Four idiots.
Other people sometimes had one. But four! Susan commits suicide, and
her old mother is left guardian of the four children.

"An Outpost of Progress" is ironical to the very title. Kayerts
and Carlier, two incompetents, are placed by their company at an ob-
scure trading-post on an African river. They do not understand their
environment, each other, or the savages around them. Carlier says,

"We shall let life run easily here! Just sit still and
gather in the ivory those savages will bring. This country
has its good points, after all!" They both laughed loudly
while Carlier thinks: "That poor Kayerts; he is so fat and
unhealthy. It would be awful if I had to bury him here. He
is a man I respect.".... Before they reached the verandah of
their house they called one another "my dear fellow."

They gradually change. Conrad says of Carlier: "He had become
hoarse, sarcastic, and inclined to say unpleasant things. He called
it 'being frank with you.'"

Some strange savages hang around the compound for a day but Makola
the native attendant sends them away. Carlier and Kayerts lie on their
beds all night and think, "This Makola is invaluable," and at the same
time he is trading their ten native men for six tusks of ivory. A tiny
touch of irony is worked in here by Conrad, who is adept at such.
When Makola's savage friends are stealing the men of the Company, after
making them drunk, the least drunk wakes up and gets shot for his sobri-
ety.

Next morning there is ironic humor in Makola's attitude toward the
white men. Kayerts upbraids him for the illicit deal.
"I did the best for you the Company," said Makola imperceptibly. "Why you shout so much? Look at this tusk."

"I dismiss you! I will report you—I won't look at the tusk. I forbid you to touch them. I order you to throw them into the river. You—you!"

"You very red, Mr. Kayerts. If you are so irritable in the sun, you will get fever and die—like the first chief!"9

And a bit later the whites help him carry the tusks into the storehouse.

In the end the two men irritate one another so much that they quarrel and Kayerts shoots Carlier dead, finally hanging himself just as a relief boat is coming up the river. The pair are defeated by the savage solitude about them, the sly Makola, and the outerclothing of their own brute natures. The story shows round pegs in square holes. Kayerts, for instance, who likes the small duties and squabbles of a government office, is out here thousands of miles from the next station.

"The Return" is a piece of almost pure ironical psycho-analysis. Conrad is ironical toward society through his discussion of Mr. and Mrs. Alvan Harvey's social career. He remarks of them:

They moved in their enlarged world amongst perfectly delightful men and women who feared emotion, enthusiasm, or failure, more than fire, war, or mortal disease; who tolerated only the commonest formulas of commonest thoughts, and recognized only profitable facts. It was an extremely charming sphere, the abode of all the virtues, where nothing is realized and where all joys and sorrows are cautiously toned down into pleasure and annoyances.10

Conrad devoted pages to an ironic study of Harvey's introspection on his coming home and finding that his wife has deserted him. Harvey never thinks of her as a woman but only of her as a cultured person or

10. "The Return", Tales of Unrest, pp. 120-121
a wife; he wishes she had died—there were precedents for such an occasion; he has to face the world—with its defiling truth. He is the polished, hollow man of ultra-refined society. And when his wife returns a few hours after her intended flight, he is so pompously selfish in his desire to know all—tho she protests that there is nothing; she has come back to be faithful to him—that in an agony of jealousy he departs and leaves her. He never returns. Had he been loving and generous, the two could have lived on happily together. Except as an ironic study, "The Return" is dull and tedious. Its irony is tenuous and subtle.

Lord Jim. The irony of missed opportunities

Lord Jim is a searching study of opportunity missed because of weakness in a man whose aspiration outweighed his will. Jim, a youth of "exquisite sensibility", dreams of doing something heroic and truly great. His first chance comes when a man is washed off board during a storm. But he flinches from the menacing waters, and is too late to get among the life-saving crew. Then he is hurt by a falling spar and is bed-ridden for many days, and "...the unintelligent brutality of an existence liable to the agony of such sensations filled him with a despairing desire to escape at any cost." Jim is more than ever dominated by the desire of doing some great romantic exploit. He is now mate of the Patna, a steamer carrying eight hundred Arab pilgrims across the Red Sea. In the middle of a dark night the ship runs into something, the engines stop, and the officers think that sinking is imminent. The pilgrims, strewn about the deck sleeping restlessly, are unaware. Jim stands firm while the four other officers try to get a boat lowered
into the water. He will not assist when the sliding bolt of the boat-
chock jams tight. He will stay with the ship! He sees his opportunity
to do a heroic deed. The men finally get the boat off, a squall is ap-
proaching, the pilgrims begin to stir and scream. The third engineer,
who has gone to his room for some possession, falls dead. The men call
for him to jump...and...Jim loses his nerve and jumps in the engineer's
place. And it is as if he has jumped "into a well—into an everlasting
deep hole", for after days at sea in the small boat the men come to
land and learn that the Patna, so shamefully deserted, has not sunk but
has been found by a French gunboat and towed to land without a mishap.

It is Jim's eternal regret that he jumped. He cries to Marlowe,

"Ah! what a chance missed! My God! What a chance
missed!" he blazed out, but the last "missed" resembled a
cry wrung out by pain.11

And Marlowes admits "There was not the thickness of a sheet of paper be-
tween the right and wrong of this affair," but Jim was on the wrong
side. Jim can not live down his past. He is water-clerk at one place
or another in the islands, but in each case the irrepressible Patna ep-
isode crops up and Jim with his lost honor moves on. He makes a splen-
did start as ship-chandler for Egström & Blake and then fate hems him
again.

One chance in a hundred! But it is always that hun-
dredth chance! That little second engineer of the Patna had
turned up in a more or less destitute state, and got a tem-
porary job of looking after the machinery of the mill. 'I
just couldn't stand the familiarity of the little beast,'

11. Lord Jim, p. 83
Jim wrote.\textsuperscript{12}

So Jim moves on again. Marlowe and Stein, the naturalist, arrange for Jim to go to Patuan, an obscure settlement.

He left his earthly failings behind him and sort of reputation he had, and there was a totally new set of conditions for his imaginative faculty to work upon. Entirely new, entirely remarkable and he got hold of them in a remarkable way.\textsuperscript{13} Jim organizes the forces of the native chief, Daramin, and wins a war against an enemy force under Sherif Ali. He mounts some old guns high on a hill-top and gets a reputation for supernatural powers. He becomes virtual ruler of the land. Then a white scoundrel, Brown, appears at Patuan, and Jim cannot make up his mind to fight him. The conflict with a white man brings back all Jim's old inferiority complex. Jim tries to compromise, and as a result of tragic complications, Dain Waris and his band of men down the river are destroyed by Brown. Dain, son of the ruler of Patuan, is the local hero, and with his death goes Jim's prestige of infallibility. Jim faces his destiny at last by walking unflinchingly up to Daramin and receiving a gunshot in his breast, while "Fate looked on with her cold-eyed knowledge of the end."

He was overwhelmed by the inexplicable; he was overwhelmed by his own personality—the gift of that destiny which he had done his best to master.\textsuperscript{14} Like Michael Henchard, Jocelyn Pierston, or Kaspar Almayer, Jim is not master of his fate because he is not master of himself. He is a man of immense promise who never accomplishes anything.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 189
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 218
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 341
Youth. "The Heart of Darkness"

"Youth" in the volume Youth is dealt with in a later chapter.

"The Heart of Darkness" in the same volume contains a blending of atmosphere and irony comparable to that in The Return of the Native. Marlowe, new captain of a Company boat on the Congo, hears, from the moment that he lands, of the remarkable agent, Kurtz, in an interior post.

There are months of delay and a long, slow journey up the river. Marlowe develops almost a mania to see this Kurtz—the wonderful man who has the natives under perfect control, who is a fluent orator, a fascinating personality, an author of a humanitarian treatise on the treatment of savages. Finally the ship reaches Kurtz's post. Marlowe sees him.

I looked at him, lost in astonishment. There he was before me, in motley, as though he had absconded from a troupe of mimes, enthusiastic, fabulous. His very existence was improbably, inexplicable, fabulous.¹⁵

Kurtz—Kurtz—that means short in German—don't it? Well, the name was as true as everything else in his life— and death. He looked at least seven feet long.¹⁶

The wonderful man whom Marlowe has looked forward to talking to dies shortly, after Marlowe has been thoroughly disillusioned as to his nobility and fineness and has seen the diamally decadent genius of the man, degenerated by his environment.

"Destiny. My destiny! Droll thing life is—that mysterious arrangement of merciless logic for a futile purpose. The most you can hope from it is some knowledge of

¹⁶. Ibid., p. 134
yourself—that comes too late—a crop of unextinguishable regrets," Kurtz summed up and judged the universe as he died: "The horror!"

Before Kurtz dies he gives Marlowe some papers to give to his "intended" back home in England. Marlowe reaches her more than a year later. There is an awful look of desolation on her face that shows she is not one of those creatures that are not the playthings of time. For her he has died only yesterday. Finally she asks for the last words of Kurtz, whose death she in her blind love considers "a loss to me—to us!...To the world."

I pulled myself together and spoke slowly.
"The last word he pronounced was—your name."
I heard a light sigh and then my heart stood still, stopped dead short by an exulting and terrible cry, by the cry of inconceivable triumph and of unspeakable pain. "I knew it—I was sure!...She knew it. She was sure."

Marlowe appreciates the trenchant irony of this trusting love for a worthless man. But though disillusioned himself, he is too sympathetic to disillusion her.

An irony in "Typhoon" works exactly the other way. Mrs. Captain M'Whirr barely glances over the long, factual letters that her husband dutifully sends home to her and lives "in abject terror of the time when her husband would come home to stay for good."

There is an emphatic irony in the close to "The Heart of Darkness" that is less noticeable in the preceding tales. Later tales like "Tomorrow", Nostromo, "The Brute", "Because of the Dollars", and "The Black

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17. Ibid., pp. 150-151
18. Ibid., p. 150ff.
Mate" bare the irony very clearly at the end.

"The End of the Tether", the third story in Youth, is written in a mood of melancholy, for although there are ironic studies of the seanc-
drel, Massy, and the mate, Sterne, the central figure is Captain Whally, old and going blind, his wife, friends, and reputation gone, his daugh-
ter married to a nincompoop, forced by a fine parental devotion to work against his conscience for a rogue. His character is not his undoing. Exterior circumstances have undone him and disillusioned him; and in the end he dies completely defeated, for Massy outwits him in his blind-
ness.

**Typhoon**

"Typhoon" (Typhoon), one of Conrad's "storm-pieces", contains a contrast of an unimaginative old captain who does the right thing only unconsciously with the magnificence of a typhoon in the China Sea. M'Whirr (an ironical name for a slow-thinking man) in the midst of the worst storm of his life,

> Before the renewed wrath of winds swooped down on his Ship, Captain M'Whirr was moved to declare, in a tone of vex-
> ation, as it were: "I wouldn't like to lose her." He was spared that annoyance.\(^{19}\)

Aside from the description of the storm, "Typhoon" is an ironic study of one man. Conrad likes to isolate men, put them alone on deserted islands either actually or figuratively, so to speak, and then analyze them. Conrad's study is never of an idea or of a convention but is al-
ways of a man, and in this he contrasts with Hardy, as I shall point

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19. "Typhoon", Typhoon, p. 91
out in Chapter VII.

"To-morrow" is a tale of hope too long deferred. Captain Hagbard loses his wife and shortly afterward his son is lost at sea. For sixteen years he believes in the imminent return of his son on the next day: tomorrow. He is deranged because of this one mania, which absorbs all his energies. When his son Harry does come back after many years, Hagbard will not recognize him—for Harry is to come "to-morrow"—and throws a shovel at him. Harry has been in and out of London all the sixteen years, but he has not cared to come back to the little village where his father lives; now he has returned only in the hopes of getting "five quid" from the old man because he and a chum in London are hard up. And all these years his father has been saving money and furniture for Harry. Hagbard never sees Harry; Harry never gets anything from his father; and behind these two frustrations is the sad figure of Bessie, who is disappointed in her love for Harry. "To-morrow", with its bleak setting and its brief, non-committal style, resembles "The Idiots" and suggests the stories of the Wessex peasants by Hardy. The close circumstances and the unity of setting make the dramatized version, One Day More, a much better play than Conrad's other play, Laughing Anne.

**Nostromo**

If any one of Conrad's works is selected as his masterpiece in irony, Nostromo (1904) deserves the selection. Nostromo contains all the types of irony that Conrad uses, and all the irony is perfectly blended with the story and setting. The ironic tone is subdued so that
it reacts to the detriment of neither the personages nor the reader's emotional pleasure. As in *The Return of the Native* where all the ironies ultimately hinge on the closed door incident, so in *Nostromo* the whole ironic structure of the plot converges on the lighter episode, in which Nostromo engages in the most desperate affair of his life when he undertakes to escape with six months' produce of silver ingots from the San Tome Mine. Nowhere, again, is Conrad's peculiar retrospective method of telling a story employed with more effectiveness.

**Ironic studies of characters**

The canvas on which *Nostromo* is painted, an entire revolution in the Republic of Costaguano in South America, finds ample room for a group of finished ironic studies. Captain Mitchell is treated with humorous irony; you see through the pretense of the man and still like him for his good qualities. Dr. Momygham, disliked by the people of Sulaco because of his ironic turn of mind, has suffered much in his life and he is sardonic to everyone but Mrs. Gould.

People believed him scornful and sourcd. The truth of his nature consisted in his capacity for passion and in the sensitiveness of his temperament. What he lacked was the polished callousness of men of the world, the callousness from which springs an easy tolerance for oneself and others; the tolerance wide as poles asunder from true sympathy and human compassion. This want of callousness accounted for his sardonic turn of mind and his biting speeches. 20

Sotillo is an ironic study of the handsome, swaggering, avaricious, cowardly soldier; Pablo Ignacio Barrios of a general who could gamble away the equipment of his army; General Montero of the stiff, formal

20. *Nostromo*, p. 520
official. Conrad observes of him,

General Montero was the only one there in full uniform, so stiff with embroideries in front that his broad chest seems protected by a cuirass of gold.... But why was it that nobody was looking at him? he wondered to himself angrily. He was able to spell out the print of newspapers, and knew that he had performed the "greatest military exploit of modern times."21

Conrad constantly drops remarks in passing like this one of the chief-engineer: "It was as if something subtle in the air of Costaguana had inoculated him with the local faith in 'pronunciamientos'." Conrad is kindly ironical toward Don Jose Avellanado, the honest and platitudinous patriot-politician, for his lifelong endeavor to bring peace and stability to Costaguano—the state in which, Conrad says, the fourth government in six years was quite an ordinary government. Charles Gould, "The King of Sulaco", owner of the great San Tome silver mine, is a dispassionate study of the man who gives all his love to his business and none to his wife. Here is another romance blighted by time. For example, after an eleven months' tour in America, the Goulds return to their Casa in Sulaco. Mrs. Gould has hoped to spend the first night back alone with Charles. He goes right off to make a short visit to the mine. Later Basilo announces a message: "A telephone came through from the office of the mine. The master remains to sleep at the mountain to-night." Circumstances like this turn irony on Mrs. Gould that is hard to bear, but Conrad himself never touches her with irony. She heals Monygham's withered heart; only to her does Nostromo confess;

21. Ibid., pp. 118-119
she is a splendid woman with no blemishes that irony can reveal.

Martin Decoud, the gay intellectual from the boulevards of Paris, is a clear study. He is an ironist himself, as when he lets rifle agents take him out to dine while he knows that the government purchases will be made elsewhere. His death, alone on the island of the Great Isabel, where Nostromo leaves him with the silver after their escape from Sulaco, is a searching irony on the man of books and society who is isolated from his environment.

He spent the night open-eyed, and when the day broke he ate something with the same indifference. The brilliant "Son Decoud", the spoiled darling of the family, the lover of Antonia and journalist of Sulaco, was not fit to grapple with himself single-handed. Solitude from mere outward condition of existence becomes very swiftly a state of soul in which the affectations of irony and scepticism have no place. It takes possession of the mind, and drives forth the thought into the exile of utter unbelief. After three days of waiting for the sight of some human face, Decoud caught himself entertaining a doubt of his own individuality. It had merged into the world of cloud and water, of natural forced and forms of nature. In our activity alone do we find the sustaining illusion of an independent existence as against the whole scheme of things of which we form a helpless part.22

The seagulls even never frequent the Great Isabel. Silence conquers Decoud, when Nostromo fails to return because he is in the grasp of other circumstances. Decoud starts to escape in the lighter's boat and then commits suicide.

A victim of the disillusioned weariness which is the retribution meted out to intellectual audacity, the brilliant Don Martin Decoud, weighted by the bars of San Toma's silver, disappeared without a trace, swallowed up in the immense indifference of things.23

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22. Ibid., p. 497
23. Ibid., p. 501
Decoud alone with nature is as helpless as Heyst (Victory) among people when he must act, or be defeated.

Nostromo, the Capataz de Cargadores of Sulaco, is a delicate study of an egoist whose courage and dependability are recognized by everyone, and who is admired even by those who see thru his vanity. Viola, the old Garibaldino calls him the "incorruptible". Mitchell considers him that "indispensable man". Even Mobygham is moved to call him "a devil of a man" for his insincerity. Decoud sums him up better than anyone else does.

"That man seems to have a particular talent for being on the spot whenever there is something picturesque to be done....anything striking to the imagination has to be done. I made that remark to him afterwards when we met after some sort of order had been restored in the town, and the answer he made rather surprised me. He said quite moodily, 'And how much do I get for that, senor?' Then it dawned on me that perhaps this man's vanity has been satiated by the adulation of the common people and confidence of his superiors!" 24

Nostromo's prestige is his fortune. Decoud unconsciously sounds Nostromo's fatal flaw when he writes to his sister,

"The only thing he seems to care for, as far as I have been able to discover, is to be well spoken of. An ambition fit for noble souls, but also a profitable one for an exceptionally intelligent scoundrel." 25

The plot

Nostromo undertakes to save the lighter of silver when Sulaco is beset by Revolutionists, and against Nostromo's will, Decoud goes along. Out in the pitchy blackness of the Placid Gulf they find that a sheep

24. Ibid., p. 224ff.
25. Ibid., p. 246
dealer, Hirsch, stiff with fear, has secreted himself in the boat, having accidentally found his way to it when the revolutionists began firing early in the day. Sotillo's steamship almost runs the lighter to death and by another curious accident Hirsch escapes from the lighter by clinging to the anchor of the steamship. He spreads the tale that the lighter has gone to the bottom. Nostromo hides the silver safely on the island and eventually returns to Sulaco in time to be of crucial importance by riding through the enemy lines to bring succor to Sulaco. But meanwhile he has come to realize that he is a mere tool. His vanity is satiated with praise and he feels that he is unrewarded.

He profits from the rumor spread by Hirsch and from the suicide of Decond by never telling till he dies that the silver is on Great Isabel. He finds that Decond took four ingots when he started to leave in the lighter's boat. Nostromo decides to get rich slowly. He enters the coast trade with his own ship and is very successful. At every trip to Sulaco he secretly purloins a bar or two of the silver.

And his reputation still holds. Captain Mitchell says, "Moreover, that man always succeeded in everything except in saving the silver."

There is unconscious irony again in the Captain's statement: "He has done for Separation as much as anybody else, and, has got less than many others by it--when it comes to that."

Nostromo is naturally startled when a lighthouse is built near the treasure which he has staked his honor on. But this "fellow in a thousand" gets old Viola made lighthouse tender and the silver is safe, because Nostromo can visit it when he comes to pay court to Linda, whom
he supposedly loves. Besides, the old Garibaldino, strictly watching
the virtue of his two daughters, keeps all strangers off of the isle.
Nostromo really loves Giselle, the younger, but he enters betrothal with
Linda, rather than risk being forbidden the island. Ramirez, a former
Cargadore, has been forbidden the isle because he was making love to
Giselle. There is no greater irony in Nostromo than that one night
Viola shoots at a figure that he thinks is Ramirez, but which is really
Nostromo coming for a secret assignation with Giselle. The irony works
two ways.

Nostromo dies at Mrs. Gould's. In his last words there is a
curiously ambiguous irony.

"And Decoud took four. Four ingots. Why? Picardia!
To betray me? How could I give back the treasure with four
ingots missing? They would have said I had purloined them.
The doctor would have said that. Alas! It holds me yet!"26

Take that speech literally, and Nostromo is the victim of a great irony;
take it as rationalization, and Nostromo is a great ironist.

The ending of Nostromo is as splendid as the rest of the book.
Linda's cry of love ironically unrequited is equal to Marty South's cry
at the end of The Woodlanders. Here is the final passage with its
subtle and artistic suggestion of a colossal irony.

Linda's black figure detached itself upright on the
light of the lantern with her arms raised above her head as
though she were going to throw herself over.
"It is I who loved you," she whispered, with a face as
set and white as marble in the moonlight. "I Only It She

26. Ibid., p. 559
will forget thee, killed miserably for her pretty face. I cannot understand. I cannot understand. But I shall never forget thee. Never!"

She stood silent and still, collecting her strength to throw all her fidelity, her pain, bewilderment, and despair into one great cry.

"Never! Gian' Battista!"

Dr. Monygham, pulling round in the pelice-galley, heard the name pass over his head. It was another of Nostromo’s triumphs, the greatest, the most sinister of all. In that true cry of undying passion that seemed to ring aloud from Punta Mala to Azuera and away to the bright line of the horizon, overhung by a big white cloud shining like a mass of solid silver, the genius of the magnificent Capataz de Cargadores dominated the dark gulf containing his conquests of treasure and love. 27

Nostromo, the quondam Genoese sailor and Captain Mitchell’s indispensable man, eventually succumbs to the San Tomé silver, the silver that dominates everyone in the book, and, the victim of disenchanted vanity, becomes a false hero. His one corrupt deed changes the very pith of the man; and yet his reputation lasts on long after his death. Only Mrs. Gould knows his entire secret, and she will never tell.

The conception of Nostromo as a whole is ironic to the core; the novel is full of ironic episodes with attendant verbal ironies. The inscrutability of fate is a constant theme. Yet Conrad makes no attempt to moralize, but retains the valuable and impersonal attitude all the way through.

A change in ironic tone. The Secret Agent and Under Western Eyes

"Remember, Razumov, that women, children, and revolutionists hate irony, which is the negation of all saving instincts, of all faith, of

27. Ibid., p. 566
But store specimens and change, player to player. He: Verdecia be the.

State the entire, half-related brother, to depot is in the Q-O-P-E-R-A-T-I-O-N.

He gets a shortened time: bomb from the procedure and elements for that is,crememnQ-O-P-E-R-A-T-I-O-N. He: Verdecia be sustained with this task.

middle-the same commando in England by continuing up the first remaining

Plot of the Secret Agent

plot deep was a terrifying bomb plug which proposed to start it.

I really think that "the secret agent" is a perfectly proper. Command hitherto stated in respect to the confidential detail.

Now I would have to say that I am not at all that I would soon expect some would mind me to say. In the exercise proper. This might cause emotionless. I am sent to find the state in the

the observer, rather than a philosopher, but had taken a new artistic at-

and so is the philo-osophizing material, material, for command has become they are among sentiment. The expression of the emotion is gone what change in command is use of love. They represent the two natures which command more next after position. They represent

may be made to apply to the secret agent and to under western eyes.

as well as the division of all sections. Be sure copies autographs and here state...
I'm very grateful for the opportunity to serve in this position and to work with such a dedicated and committed team.

In the recent events, our team has demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability, facing challenges head-on and finding solutions.

As we move forward, I believe that our collective strength and determination will guide us towards success. Thank you for your continued support and commitment.
the author is deeply sympathetic, is an ironic study: Chief Inspector Heat; Verloc, lover of comfort and ease; Michaelis, the terrorist; Karl Yundt, the writer; the Professor, who carries a detonator in his pocket that he can set off in twenty seconds; and so on. Conrad's irony merely reveals these people; it does not make caricatures of them.

The same is true of Conrad's treatment of the Russian revolutionaries in Geneva in *Under Western Eyes*, notably Peter Ivanovitch, a man with a vast flow of words and an extreme smallness of heart, who is powerfully influential over the sincerest of revolutionaries.

The plot of *Under Western Eyes*

The story is one in which character and circumstances combine to ruin four people. Haldin, after assassinating Mr. de P--- in Moscow, escapes and hides in the rooms of Razumov, whom he has always admired. If Razumov had not previously impressed him, he would not have come to his rooms now. Razumov betrays Haldin and becomes a spy for the imperial government. He goes to Geneva to watch the revolutionaries at work there. The mother and sister of the executed Haldin accept him as a friend and his conscience begins to gnaw him. He falls in love with the sister. No one suspects him of betraying Haldin. Then, finally, when he is quite safe, he confesses to the revolutionist circle at Lampara's house. He would, as he says in his last diary, rather deliver himself up deliberately to perdition than go on living debased in his own eyes. He is destroyed by his sentimentality. The whole complication begins when Haldin seeks refuge with Razumov, and that largely by chance. From then on the march of events is unavoidable. And just
when Haldin came, Razumov was ready to start an essay for a prize contest; he had it all thought out. He writes in his later diary: "I had my security stolen from me, years of good work, my best hopes." His promising career is spoilt. Surely fate is inscrutable!

An outer irony envelopes the whole book. Conrad expresses it in the "Author's Note"; he sees a paradox in the revolutionary idea.

"The autocratic rule rejecting all legality and in fact basing itself upon complete moral anarchism provokes the no less imbecile and atrocious answer of a purely Utopian revolutionism encompassing destruction by the first means to hand, in the strange conviction that a fundamental change of hearts must follow the downfall of any given human institutions. These people are unable to see that all they can effect is merely a change of names. The oppressors and oppressed are all Russians together; and the world is brought once more face to face with the truth of the saying that the tiger cannot change his stripes nor the leopard his spots."

The later short stories

As Conrad writes more and Under Western Eyes is past, even though he returns to his South America and Archipelagos material, he has lost some of the early lyrical, descriptive mood, as found in Youth and Tales of Unrest and Typhoon.

He is now the slightly ironic artist whose business it is to get things on to paper in the clearest possible way. He is conscious that in the past he has been at the mercy of sonorous and high-sounding adjectives.

Stories like "Amy Foster" and "The Informer" and "The Brute" in A Set of Six are low-toned, tense, restrained in romantic exuberance, and woven of close mesh like the tales of Hardy. And though Conrad's short

33. Under Western Eyes, p. x
stories cannot be so easily lumped together as regards subject matter as can Hardy's, the remainder of his short tales as regards ironic tone can with fair accuracy be considered here in a body. The method clearly stressed in books like *Lord Jim* and *The Secret Agent* is used throughout: one small incident leads to consequences that seem incommensurate with their beginning; external fate plays its part, but the immediate agency for the denouement is human fallibility. The irony is unobtrusively blended with the plots, though when the stories are seen as a whole the irony is seen as their gist. There is always at least a suggestion of tragedy, as in "A Smile of Fortune" (*Twixt Land and Sea*), "Il Conde" (*A Set of Six*), and "The Black Mate" (*Tales of Hearsay*).

"The Black Mate", with its humorous ironical treatment of personal idiosyncrasy, is a near parallel to some of Hardy's sketches in "A Few Crusted Characters" (*Life's Little Ironies*). But the majority of the short stories, like "Caspar Ruiz", "The Brute" (*A Set of Six*), "The Planter of Malta", "Because of the Dollars" (*Within the Tides*), "The Tale" (*Tales of Hearsay*), and "Freya of the Seven Isles" (*Twixt Land and Sea*), are downright tragedies. Nowhere is Conrad the ironist in better form than in the seventeen stories in his last four volumes of short tales.

An example: "Because of the Dollars"

"Because of the Dollars" is an example of a later short tale. The leading character, Davidson, is a good man—an indiscriminately good man who is always doing favors to his own cost. He is captain of a small trading boat. One day he meets a friend in a tiffin-room and
tells him that he is going on a trip among the small island traders to collect old dollars. He intends to go out of his way to call at Bemtz's. Bemtz is an honest but very poor man with whom Laughing Anne, a castaway woman, and her child are living. Fector, an ignominious blackmailer and swindler, overhears the conversation in the tiffin-room, and, weeks later, with two equally disreputable associates has forced himself upon Bemtz when Davidson arrives with a cargo of dollars. Anne, whom Davidson has befriended, warns him that his life is at stake because of the dollars. He underestimates the danger; and in a midnight scuffle Anne and one of the villains are killed. Davidson takes Anne's child home for his wife to care for, but he does not tell her where he got it, for fear of frightening her with the dangers he has run with Fector's gang. The wife, whose heart is "about the size of a parched pea", thinks that the orphan is an illegitimate child of Davidson's, and in her mean, jealous way she makes Davidson's home life hellish before she finally runs away, taking her daughter with her. Anne's boy, raised by the White Father in Malacca, becomes a priest—"and poor Davidson is left out in the cold. He will have to go downhill without a single human affection near him because of those old dollars." Davidson's innate goodness is indirectly his undoing. He does not suspect any unkind ears in the tiffin-room, he helps Bemtz and Anne, he does not fully realize the danger of the gang that has forced itself on Bemtz, and, prompted by the best of motives, he tries to care for Anne's son. Disaster results in each case.
Chance

Chance contains a moiety of direct action and a vast amount of retrospective psycho-analysis made on the protagonists by the narrator, Marlow. Finally a multitude of events and motives work to a focal point in time and circumstance, guided by chance, the motif of the book. Chance upsets calculations and makes new ones necessary. As Marlow says to Flora, "things are not always what they seem."

Victims of ironies

Chance through a series of complications gives young Powell his first command as mate under Captain Anthony aboard the Ferndale. And chance throws Flora de Barral in Captain Anthony's way. She is staying with the Fynes on their English farm and sets out one day to commit suicide from sheer unhappiness; she meets Anthony, who talks to her and breaks her mood. She finally elopes with him and goes to live on the Ferndale. She has been unhappy all her life, raised by strangers because her father, a notorious swindler, is in prison, and has developed bad habits of introversion. Her gloomy fate attends her even to sea.

For under a cloud Flora de Barral was fated to be even at sea. Yes. That sort of darkness which attends a woman for whom there is no clear place in the world hung over her. Yes. Even at sea! 35

The mate, Franklin, and the sailors of the Ferndale do not like Mrs. Anthony. The tone of the men becomes disgruntled.

It was as if the forehead of Flora de Barral were marked. Was the girl born to be a victim; to be always

35. Chance, p. 281
disliked and crushed as if she were too fine for this world?
Or too luckless—since that also is often counted as sin.\textsuperscript{36}

Old de Barre, released from prison at the time of Anthony's marriage to Flora, comes aboard the Fenndale as a regular resident when young Powell is on his first command. He has nowhere else to go. But he torments himself and Flora too by being endlessly vindictive toward Anthony, day after day.

"Helpless, in jail, with no one to think of, nothing to look forward to, but my daughter. And then when they let me out at last I find her gone—for it amounts to this. Sold."\textsuperscript{37}

There is no spiritual ease on board the ship. Powell feels the tense, sullen mood as soon as he comes on duty. In the relations of Anthony and the de Barrals there is an irony of close confinement like that in \textit{Ethan Frome}. Psychologically, things are a tight fit. Marlow speculates,

"What must have been rather appalling were the necessities of daily life, the intercourse of current trifles. That naturally had to go on. They wished good morning to each other, they sat down together to meals—and I believe there would be a game of cards now and then in the evening, especially at first. What frightened her most was the duplicity of her father, at least what looked like duplicity, when she remembered his persistent whispers on deck."\textsuperscript{38}

\textbf{Chance in the conclusion}

After this intolerable situation has reached the breaking point, the end comes quickly at the conclusion of a series of carefully timed events in the evening of the day that a rope breaks the window of the

\textsuperscript{36. Ibid., p. 309}
\textsuperscript{37. Ibid., p. 379}
\textsuperscript{38. Ibid., p. 380}
Captain's cabin. Conrad does not accept chance with Hardy's equanimity and elaborates on the theme. Marlow, speaking of Powell:

He proceeded to call my attention to the wonderful linking up of small facts, with something of awe left yet, after all these years, at the precise workmanship of chance, fate, providence, call it what you will: 'For observe, Marlow,' he said.... 'that everything depended on the man who cleared up the poop in the evening leaving that coil of rope on the deck, and on the topsail-tie carrying away in a most incomprehensible and surprising manner earlier in the day, and the end of the chain whipping round the coaming and shivering to bits the coloured glass-panes at the end of the skylight.... It was very thick plate glass. Anyhow, the upper part got smashed, and directly we had set the carpenter to patch up the damage with some pieces of plain glass.... Clear glass. And of course I was not thinking of it. I just stooped to pick up that rope and found my head within three inches of that clear glass and—dash it all! I found myself out."

Powell, out of curiosity, watches the Captain reading a book;—then he sees a hand reach from behind a curtain and drop poison into Anthony's tumbler of brandy and water. He waits spellbound until Anthony leaves the room and then rushes in and smashes up the glass.

He held the glass in his hand; all he had to do was to vanish back beyond the curtains, flee with it noiselessly into the night on deck, fling it unseen overboard. A minute or less. And then all that would have happened would have been the wonder at the utter disappearance of a glass tumbler, a ridiculous riddle in pantry-affairs beyond the wit of any one on board to solve. The grain of sand against which Powell stumbled in his headlong career was moment of incredulity as to the truth of his own conviction because it had failed to affect the safe aspect of familiar things....

the steady light, the open book, the peace, the home-like effect in the cabin. If he had fled directly out, any number of things might have

39. Ibid., p. 411
40. Ibid., p. 419
occurred otherwise. But as it is, he hesitates, is caught by Anthony, explains; Flora, then old de Barral, come in; husband and wife are passionately reconciled; de Barral commits suicide. de Barral drinks the poison he has prepared for Anthony. He took this same poison secreted with him to jail.

He had found it in his clothes when he came out of jail. It had escaped investigation if there was any. Chance had armed him. And chance alone, the chance of Mr. Powell's life, forced him to turn the abominable weapon against himself. 41

Captain Anthony looks down at dead de Barral, thinking perhaps that it is chance his body isn't there on the floor instead.

It is quite by chance that Anthony is killed four years later when the Ferndale is run down by the Westland. All other hands and Flora are saved. It is due to a misunderstanding in the excitement that Anthony is left on his ship when all are supposed to be off of it.

Several years later by Harlow's connivance Flora and young Powell are married. Flora at last has an opportunity for sustained happiness. But in all her early life she gets even less of a "chance" to be happy than Tess Durbeyfield does.

Victory. The plot

Victory is an impersonal study of Axel Heyst, a man of perennial interest to gossips in the Islands because of his peculiar actions. Various nicknames are given him, "the queer Swede", "Enchanted Heyst," "Hard Facts", "Utopist", "the Hermit", "the Enemy", some of them ironical. Twice he is the big news item, once when through events unknown

41. Ibid., p. 437
to the public he becomes partner with Morrison on Morrison's schooner, and again when he is Manager for the Tropical Belt Coal Company, headquarters on Samburan, before the Company goes broke. He has been a recluse most of his known life, and he becomes a recluse again, taking up an isolated existence on Samburan Island, where he reads philosophical books inherited from his father. Enchanted Heyst is disenchanted—not with the Islands—but with the world as a whole after Morrison's death in England, for which he holds himself responsible, and the collapse of the Coal Co.

But once more he returns to the town of Sourabaya to wind up some money matters. Acting on a chance interest in an English girl who is playing at Schomberg's hotel in Zangiacomo's Ladies Orchestra, he runs off to Samburan with her. Schomberg, who has been making illicit advances to her, and her proprietor, Zangiacomo, are furious. Heyst's escapade by its unexpectedness makes him a greater general topic of conversation than he has ever been before. For the time he is a public character in gossip.

Sequestered on Samburan, Heyst tells Captain Davidson, who touches at the jetty,

"I don't care what people say, and of course no one can hurt me. I suppose I have done a certain amount of harm, since I allowed myself to be tempted into action. It seems innocent enough, but all action is bound to be harmful. It is devilish. That is why this world is evil upon the whole. But I have done with it! I shall never lift a little finger again."42

42. *Victory*, p. 54
At the end of the short interview with Davidson, Heyst observes abruptly,

"The world is a bad dog. It will bite you if you give it a chance; but I think that here we can safely defy the fates."

When relating this to me, Davidson's only comment was: "Funny notion of defying the fates—to take a woman in tow!" 43

Schomberg has always disliked Heyst, and the orchestra episode turns his dislike into malice. He is annoyed and perturbed by Martin Ricardo and "plain Mr. Jones", two "gentlemen" gamblers and desperados, who with their ape-like servant, Pedro, are running a joint on his premises. He convinces them that Heyst has a lot of swag hidden on Semburan, and they finally arrive there, making their arrival appear an accident.

Heyst immediately feels vague apprehensions. "The sceptical carelessness which had accompanied every one of his attempts at action, like a secret reserve of his soul, fell away from him. He no longer belonged to himself." Heyst, like Tuan Jim, has failed in everything he ever tried, and now in his seclusion, as Jim was faced by Brown, he is faced by these desperados whose motives he cannot read and whose actions he does not know how to oppose. He has never before had to face men in self-defense; he has trained himself to refine away anger, scorn, indignation; alone, he is splendidly self-reliant; in the society of men he is a complete failure. Even with the girl, Lena, he is ignorant of how to make love. Peyrol, in The Rover, is quite his opposite in adaptabil-

43. Ibid., p. 57
ity; but Peyrol has always lived among men and has commanded them.

Heyst is so helpless that he cannot get his only revolver back from his erstwhile factotum, the Chinaman Wang. It is Lena who by strategically working on Ricardo, tries to meet the situation—unknown to Heyst, who submits to fate: "We are the slaves of this infernal surprise which has been sprung on us by—shall I say fate?—your fate, or mine."

Heyst interviews Jones though he has no plan. Jones sums up his relation to Heyst: "In one way I am—yes, I am the world itself, come to pay you a visit. In another sense I am an outcast—almost an outlaw. If you prefer a less materialistic view, I am a sort of fate—the retribution that waits its time."44 Ironically enough, Ricardo and Jones think all the time, following the hints of the garrulous German, Schomburg, that Heyst is a deep one, a real desperado, who is playing a roundabout game to save his swag, and they expect him to "prance" at any time. And Heyst has nothing. He is poor.

On the final night of the story, Lena gets Ricardo's knife from him (the dagger is "the symbol of her victory" in the attempt to save the man she loves), but delays to run to safety in the forest. Jones shoots her for betraying Ricardo and Ricardo for betraying himself; then he drowns himself off the jetty. Heyst burns himself up in the bungalow. Wang shoots the brute Pedro, whose appearance he has never liked. Only the insignificant Wang and his native Alfuro wife are left living and as they were. Davidson, delayed by the thunderstorm, arrives

44. Ibid., p. 379
just too late to stop the course of events. The beginnings of this wholesale slaughter lie in Schomberg's gossip. But further back yet lies Schomberg's dislike of Heyst, and still further back the fundamental natures of Heyst and his unwelcome visitors.

Heyst an ironic study

Heyst is unlike any of Hardy's men in that in the greatest crisis of his life he has no will. Had he performed any act the end might have been much more suspicious. —But I cannot profitably bandy might-have-beens in Conrad or Hardy unless I wish to write a whole new story myself.— Heyst is defeated by his own nature; his enemies are defeated by their own suspicious, scheming natures.

Walpole comments,

The theme of the book is the pursuit of almost helpless uprightness and innocence by almost helpless evil and malignancy; that is to say that the strength and virtue of Heyst and Lena are as elemental and independent of human will and effort as the villainy and slime of Mr. Jones and Ricardo. 45

Conrad analyzes the book in his "Author's Note":

The unchanging Man of history is wonderfully adaptable both by his power of endurance and in his capacity for detachment. The fact seems to be that the play of his destiny is too great for his fears and too mysterious for his understanding.

It is only when the catastrophe matches the natural obscurity of our fate that even the best representative of the race is liable to lose his detachment. It is very obvious that on the arrival of the gentlemanly Mr. Jones the single-minded Ricardo and the faithful Pedro, Heyst, the man of universal detachment, loses his mental self-possession, that fine attitude before the universally irremediable which wears

the name of stoicism. It is all a matter of proportion.
There could have been a remedy for that sort of thing. And
yet there is no remedy. Behind this minute instance of life's
hazards Heyst sees the power of blind destiny. Besides, Heyst
in his fine detachment had lost the habit of asserting himself.
I don't mean the courage of self-assertion, whether moral or
physical, but the mere way of it, the trick of the thing, the
readiness of mind and the turn of the hand that come without
reflection and lead the man to excellence in life, in art, in
crime, in virtue and for the matter of that, even in love.
Thinking is the great enemy of perfection. The habit of pro-
found reflection, I am compelled to say, is the most pernicious
of all the habits formed by the civilized man.46

Heyst is defeated because his mind has lost touch with life.

The Rescue. The plot

The Rescue centers around Captain Lingard, "that man of infinite
illusions." For two years Lingard spends all his time and money per-
fecting plans to help his native friends, Hassim and his sister Immada,
regain their Wajo rulership. Men and supplies are collected at Belar-
ab's village in a lagoon off the Shallows. But as Hassim says, "One
can see men's faces but their fate, which is written on their foreheads,
one cannot see"; just when Lingard is about ready to strike, an English
yacht commanded by the stiff, conceited, unimaginative Travers stranda
altogether by accident on a sandbank outside the lagoon. The yacht's
stranding there on that one particular spot is Lingard's bad luck. It
upsets all his calculations. Travers sardily refuses to come with his
party aboard Lingard's Lightning, and therefore not being under Lingard's
protection is captured by a party of natives rather hostile to Lingard.
Lingard would never trouble about saving the small-headed Travers were

46. Victory, pp. x-xi
it not for Mrs. Travers, with whom Lingard suddenly falls in love. She complicates Lingard's existence just as the missing four bars of silver complicated Nostromo's. On her account he undertakes to rescue her husband and the associate captured with him. When Lingard goes inland to negotiate with the natives, he cannot trust his mate, Shaw; so he leaves Carter, the mate of the yacht, in charge. A few days later, when Lingard has made a compact for Travers' release, Carter impetuously fires on a camp of the chief, Daman, located on the sandbank. This violates Lingard's recent treaty with Daman, and precipitates the catastrophe. The irony of it is that from his own standpoint Carter has done his duty in the absence of definite orders from Lingard. Lingard has thought he would understand that he was just to lie low. He admits that Carter has done "that job outside very smartly—damn his smartness! And here we are with all our lives depending on my word—which is broken now...."

His tremendous prestige over the natives is weakened. Lingard

... was not angry with Carter. The fellow had acted like a seaman. Carter's concern was for the ships. In this fatality Carter was a mere incident. The real cause of the disaster was somewhere else, was other, and more remote. And at the same time Lingard could not defend himself from a feeling that it was in himself, too, somewhere in the unexplored depths of his nature, something fatal and unavoidable.47

He sinks into a passive slump; he does nothing. He is in a dilemma: he must break his solemn vow to Hassim or abandon the whites connected with Mrs. Travers; he must relinquish all his plans and his reputation

47. The Rescue, p. 329
among the natives or snap the new-found tender regards for the white women. Mrs. Travers is staying under the watch of Jürgenson (Lingard’s agent at Belarab’s) on board the Emma, the ammunition supply boat in the lagoon, when Jaffir, Hassim’s servant, comes with Hassim’s ring, the symbol of Lingard’s bond with Hassim. Lingard is in the heavily guarded palisade of Belarab across the lagoon. Only Mrs. Travers can cross and carry the ring to Lingard. She goes, and is reunited to her imprisoned husband, but, distrusting Lingard, does not give him the ring. The ring would have recalled Lingard to his paramount duty to Hassim and stimulated him to action that might have destroyed the encumbering whites. Jürgenson, expecting some signal from Lingard and getting none, waits until Deman, Tengga, and many Illamun warriors, together with their prisoners, Hassim and Lumada, are on board the Emma, and then blows the ship up. All Lingard’s enemies and real friends, literally, and all his benevolent plans and schemes, figuratively, are blown up. All he accomplishes is to rescue the white people who have ruined him and whom he never sees again. And he loses his soul. Lingard is a noble and courageous man, engaged in an enterprise which for daring and magnitude wins admiration from even the taciturn and widely-experienced Jürgenson, but a woman undoes him as a woman undid Martin Ricardo. Mrs. Travers robs Lingard of his courage and makes him deaf and dumb; and she betrays him who loves and trusts her, as he loves and trusts only this once in his life, when she withholds the ring. Because of Mrs. Travers Lingard gets lost in a maze and ends by hating his very self and struggling with disillusion and despair.
Lingard victim of a deterministic irony

Hence the melancholy irony of Lingard's last interview with Mrs. Travers on the sandbank over Jaffir's grave.

...she asked passionately. "Am I to live on hating myself?"

"You mustn't!" he said with an accent of fear. "Haven't you understood long ago that if you had given me that ring it would have been just the same?.... It was only after I heard they gave you the ring that I felt the hold you have got on me. How could I tell before? What has hate or love to do with me? Hate. Love. What can touch you? For me you stand above death itself; for I see now that as long as I live you will never die."

Mrs. Travers finally comprehends the greatness of the man's soul. She returns to the yacht calling him the "most magnanimous of men". But Mr. Travers never tries to appreciate Lingard—some piratical outlaw or other—or the sacrifice Lingard has made.

Lingard is left alone in the world, left on in lonely spiritual island.

Lingard looked persistently at Carter, thinking that now Jaffir was dead there was no one left on the empty earth to speak to him a word of reproach; no one to know the greatness of his intentions, the bond of fidelity between him and Hassim and Immaa, the depth of his affection for these people, the earnestness of his visions, and unbounded trust that was his reward. By the mad scorn of Jørgensen flaming up against the life of him, all this was as if it had never been. It had become a secret locked up in his own breast forever.

Clym Yeobright is no more alone in his dry-eyed sorrow than is Captain Lingard, affectionately called "King Tom." But where Fate betrays Clym, a secret enemy, himself, betrays Lingard.

48. Ibid., p. 465
49. Ibid., p. 451
Chapter IV Joseph Conrad: Ironic Attitude toward Man

Conrad is not only a writer of stories and a reflective thinker but he is also an incidental critic of men and society, albeit much less so than Hardy. His mind is alert for incongruities in social man, and he portrays them either directly by personal comment or indirectly by comment on his characters. Where Conrad the philosopher deals with life, as when he depicts disillusionment, Conrad the satirist deals with living— with the minutiae of everyday existence. He can poke fun at one thing or another in a suave manner; he can see through the little follies and poses of a man and still find him worth knowing, at least worth studying; he can confess his own weaknesses with equanimity.

Ironic comments upon self and critics

In the "Author's Note" to Tales of Unrest he mentions his temporary sentimentality over the steel pen with which he wrote An Outcast and "The Lagoon". And in the same Note he says, speaking of "The Heart of Darkness", "As for the story itself it is true enough in its essentials. The sustained invention of a really telling lie demands a talent which I do not possess," an ironical misstatement about his art, similar in tone to his remark about Almayer's Folly in A Personal Record: "It was not the outcome of a need— the famous need of self-expression which artists find in their search for motives." And perhaps Conrad is ironically commenting on his method of story telling, when, after pages of psychologizing, Marlow parenthetically says, as the mockery of his eyes gives a pellucid quality to his tone, "I suppose that you think it's high time I told you something definite. I mean something about the
psychological cabin mystery of discomfort...." As Hardy was ironical toward his critics of Jude and The Mayor, Conrad is toward some of his critics. In the "Author's Note" to The Arrow of Gold he says,

I never tried to conceal the origins of the subject matter of this book...but some reviewers indulged themselves with a sense of triumph in discovering in it my Dominic of 'The Mirror of the Sea' under his own name (a truly wonderful discovery) and in recognizing the balance in the un-named little craft in which Mr. George plied his fantastic trade and sought to allay the pain of his incurable wound. I am not in the least disconcerted by this display of perspicacity. It is the same man and the same balance.

Elsewhere: "'Hestromo'...which is still mentioned now and again, and indeed kindly, sometimes in connection with the word 'failure' and sometimes in conjunction with the word 'astonishing'. I have no opinion on this discrepancy. It's the sort of difference that can never be settled." Pertinent here is a sentence from Conrad's essay, "Stephen Crane": "Criticism is very much a matter of a vocabulary, very consciously used...."

Incidental ironies in essays

Conrad's essays contain now and then a pointed irony. In one case Conrad reveals the distortion of seamanship terms by the newspapers, which say "the ship cast anchor" instead of "the ship brought up", and so on. Again, his irony is sarcastic in treating the (incompetent) boat "technicians" who investigated the Titanic disaster. In "Travel"

1. Chance, p. 225
2. A Personal Record, p. 98
3. The Mirror of the Sea, pp. 13-15, 23
he is ironical about travelers who write books of "Impressions". In another essay he is humorously ironical toward both scholarship and the modern fad of stomach disorders.

A great authority upon North American Indians accounted for the sombre and excessive ferocity characteristic of these savages by the theory that as a race they suffered from perpetual indigestion. The Noble Red Man was a mighty hunter but his wives had not mastered the art of conscientious cookery. And the consequences were deplorable. The Seven Nations around the Great Lakes and Horse-tribes of the Plains were but one vast prey to raging dyspepsia. The Noble Red Men were great warriors, great orators, great masters of outdoor pursuits; but the domestic life of their wigwams was clouded by the morose irritability which follows the consumption of ill-cooked food. The gluttony of their indigestible feasts was a direct incentive to counsels of unreasonable violence. Victims of gloomy imaginings, they lived in abject submission to the wiles of a multitude of fraudulent medicine men—quacks—who haunted their existences with vain promises and false nostrums from the cradle to the grave.

Kitchens were the arbiters of the Redskins' destiny just as the pharmaceutical companies are of ours today.

In novels

Little satiric passages are inserted in the novels. For instance, in "An Outpost of Progress" are remarks on government offices, "with the gossip, the small enmities, the mild venom, and little jokes," an acute summary; and on the storehouses in each African station, each called "the Fetish, perhaps because of the spirit of civilization it contained." Referring to Rita's Basque parents, prosperous orange merchants, as representatives of business on a large scale, Blunt says, "They weren't

5. Last Essays, p. 86
6. "Cookery", Last Essays, p. 147
poor, you know; therefore it wasn't incumbent on them to be honest."7

The Italian restaurant is a peculiarly British institution, Conrad says elsewhere.8 In "An Anarchist" the narrator remarks about the claims of a popular medicinal preparation:

In various parts of the civilized and uncivilized world I have had to swallow B. O. S. with more or less benefit to myself, though without great pleasure. Prepared with hot water and abundantly peppered to bring out the taste, this extract is not really unpalatable. But I have never swallowed its advertisements. Perhaps they have not gone far enough. As far as I can remember they make no promise of everlasting youth to the users of B. O. S., nor yet have they claimed the power of raising the dead for their estimable products. Why this austere reserve, I wonder?9

Victory contains a description of the map which accompanied the prospectus of the Tropical Belt Coal Company for the edification of the shareholders.

On it Samburan was represented as the central spot of the Eastern Hemisphere with its name engraved in enormous capitals. Heavy lines radiated from it in all directions through the tropics. Figuring a mysterious and effective star—lines of influence or lines of distance, or something of that sort. Company promoters have an imagination of their own. There's no more romantic temperament on earth than the temperament of company promoters.10

Twice Conrad potentially sharpens darts for the heart of Big Business: Once by showing another drop of bitterness added to the cup of Almayer's disenchantment when the British Borneo Company decides to abandon the claim to the part of the coast, unconcernedly leaving Almayer at the mercy of Arab and Dutch competition;11 once when telling of the

7. The Arrow of Gold, p. 33
8. The Secret Agent, p. 149
9. A Set of Six, p. 136
10. Victory, pp. 23-24
11. Almayer's Folly, p. 34
illegal gunpowder trade with the natives, which is becoming so dangerous that some very respectable people sitting very safely in counting-houses decide that the risks are too great and that only one trip more can be made.\textsuperscript{12}

**Irony on white man from native viewpoint and vice versa**

In his earlier works Conrad frequently turns an oblique light on the white man in the East by recording the reactions of the natives to him. The weakness of the white man as he exploits the East and its people is evident in the light irony of such passages as these:

"The white man's daughter took him there. She told me so herself, speaking to me openly, for she is half white and has no decency."\textsuperscript{13}

"...for a white man's eyes are not good to see when the devil that lives within is looking out through them."\textsuperscript{14}

A native caretaker on the wharf watches Lingard and Willem struggle with one another:

The next day he informed his friends, with calm satisfaction, that two drunken white men had fought on the jetty... .. They fought without arms, like wild beasts, after the manner of white men... How could he know why they fought? White men have no reason when they are like that.\textsuperscript{15}

Even the superior Malay, Ali, thinks, at Almayer's impatient orders:

How could he clear the table and hang the hammock at the same time. Ya-wa! Those white men were all alike. Wanted everything done at once. Like children....\textsuperscript{16}

At the crucial moment when Captain Whalley's Sofala may be running on

\textsuperscript{12} "Karain: A Memory", Tales of Unrest, p. 19
\textsuperscript{13} Almayer's Folly, pp. 127-128
\textsuperscript{14} An Outcast of the Islands, p. 228
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 37
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p. 297
the shoal, the Malay serang is not anxious.

He was not troubled by any intellectual misgivings. If his captain chose to stir the mud it was well. He had known in his life white men indulge in outbreaks equally strange. He was only genuinely interested to see what would come of it.17

These passages reflect as much on the Malay ideals of taciturnity, sobriety, and immobility as they do on the Caucasian lack of ideals. And in a few cases Conrad turns the irony directly on the natives.

...one evening, I made a speech in English with gestures, not one of which was lost to the sixty pairs of eyes before me.18

"Why eat all that dirt?" he exclaimed, with an oriental energy of expression—about the only sort of energy you can find a trace of east of the fiftieth meridian.19

Conrad inserts a nuance into his account of the persecutions of Guzman Bento in Sta. Marta years before the time of Nostromo's exploits.

The Citizen-Savior was not accustomed to wait. A conspiracy had to be discovered. The courtyards of the castle resounded with the clanking of leg-irons, sounds of blows, yells of pain...20

The search for the conspiracy thus ends even more disastrously than the search for an anarchistic intrigue in The Revolt of the Angels. Conrad makes Guzman's actions the point of departure for an ironic comment on civilization.

At no time of the world's history have men been at a loss how to inflict mental and bodily anguish upon their fellow-creatures. This aptitude came to them in the growing complexity of their passions and the early refinement of

17. "The End of the Tether", Youth, p. 229
19. Lord Jim, p. 66
20. Nostromo, p. 371
their ingenuity. But it may safely be said the primeval man did not go to the trouble of inventing tortures... He brained his neighbour ferociously with a stone axe from necessity and without malice.\(^{21}\)

**Irony on women**

There are few women in Conrad compared to the number of men, and where Conrad is abundantly ironical toward man he is very seldom ironical toward women. Except for Mrs. Almayer (Almayer's Folly), Mrs. Harvey ("The Return"), Mrs. Fyne, the suffragette, and Flora's governess (Chances), and the women in The Inheritors, Conrad's women are all sympathetic studies of women who are the victims of ironies, women like Winnie Verloc, Mrs. Gould, Lena. Conrad's commentary on women is meagre compared to Hardy's; I know of only two notable passages:

I call a woman sincere when she volunteers a statement resembling remotely in form what she really would like to say, what she really thinks ought to be said if it were not for the necessity to spare the stupid sensitiveness of men. The woman's rougher, simpler, more upright judgment, embraces the whole truth, which their tact, their mistrust of masculine idealism, ever prevents them from speaking in its entirety. And their tact is unerring. We could not stand women speaking the truth. We could not bear it. It would cause infinite misery and bring about most awful disturbances in this rather mediocre, but still idealistic fool's paradise in which each of us lives his own little life—the unit in the great sum of existence. And they know it. They are merciful.\(^{22}\)

Women are not generally prone to review their own conduct, still less to condemn it. The embarrassing masculine absurdities are in the main responsible for its ethics.\(^{23}\)

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21. Ibid., p. 373
22. Chances, p. 144
23. "Freyja of the Seven Isles", 'Twixt Land and Sea, p. 193
Ironic studies in The Inheritors

The Inheritors -- like The Nature of a Crime, an ironic study of an undetected criminal -- written in collaboration with Ford Madox Ford, and based on a light, superficial view of society, is filled with ironic caricatures of persons in prominent positions in English diplomatic and balletristic circles. The narrator himself, Granger Etshingham, is a journalist who is "got at" and worked as a publicity puppet by the powers on one side of a vast international intrigue. Among those of whom Granger ironically tells are the actress, Mrs. Hartly, an eternal dress rehearsal upon whom the curtain never falls, Churchill, the tired statesman-politician, Miss Churchill, the lady politician, the Duc de Marsah, a ruthless exploiter of the Greenlanders disguised as a philanthropist, and the great novelist, Callan, who, when Granger first meets him, sits in an appropriate attitude—the one in which he is always photographed, and is pleased to find that Granger has remembered very little of what he ought to have noticed on the way; it gives him an opportunity for the display of his local erudition.

Irony on men

Conrad is ironical toward a great many of his men; Gould, Schonberg, Willems, Wait, Almayer, Travers, Anthony, M'Whirr, for example. Sometimes he makes an ironical comment that can be applied to many people in society. He says of Hervey and his tastes,

On the rich, stamped paper of the walls hung sketches, watercolours, engravings. His tastes were distinctly artistic. Old church towers peeped above green masses of foliage; the hills were purple, the sands yellow, the seas sunny, the skies blue. A young lady sprawled with dreamy eyes
in a moored boat, in company of a lunch basket, a champagne bottle, and an enamoured man in a blazer. Bare-legged boys flirted sweetly with ragged maidens, slept on stone steps, gambolled with dogs.  

He says of Travers when Travers is again on the yacht after Lingard has saved him, lying in a roomy and comfortable cabin,

To find himself again on board his yacht had soothed his vanity and had revived his sense of his own importance. He contemplated it in a distant perspective, restored to its proper surroundings and unaffected by an adventure too extraordinary to trouble a superior mind or even to remain in one's memory for any length of time. He was not responsible. Like many men ambitious of directing the affairs of a nation, Mr. Travers disliked the sense of responsibility. He would not have been above evading it in case of need, but with perverse loftiness he really, in his heart, scorned it. That was the reason why he was able to lie at rest and enjoy a sense of returning vigour.... It was unnecessary to admit for a moment the existence of impudence or ruffianism.

Conrad has Travers say to d'Allesee when the two are imprisoned in the {

Emma}, letting the man unconsciously reveal his own shallow pompousness and conceit,

"My habits are the outcome of strict method. I had to order my life methodically. You know very well, my dear d'Allesee, that without strict method I would not have been able to get through my work and would have had no time at all for social duties, which, of course, are of very great importance. I may say that, materially, method has been the foundation of my success in public life. There were never any empty moments in my day."  

The comment on mankind can be very direct.

"Slavery is an awful thing," stammered out Kayerts in an unsteady voice.
"Frightful—the sufferings," grunted out Carlier with conviction.

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25. The Rescue, p. 455
26. Ibid., p. 337
They believed their words. Everybody shows a respectful deference to certain sounds that he and his fellows can make. But about feelings people really know nothing. We talk with indignation or enthusiasm; we talk about oppression, cruelty, crime, devotion, self-sacrifice, virtue, and we know nothing beyond the words. Nobody knows what suffering or sacrifice mean—except, perhaps, the victims of the mysterious purpose of these illusions. 27

Conrad's psychological analysis generally has an ironic vein running between the lines. In dealing with Heemskirk ("Freya of the Seven Islands") and the Schomberg of Victory, Conrad's irony is strongly tainted with disgust and shows no traces of sympathy. But a kindly, at least appreciative, irony plays around his other characters, even around rascals like Massy ("The End of the Tether"), James Wait, Brown (Lord Jim), or de Barral. The irony in "The Return", which both author and critics agree is a left-handed piece of writing, destroys Harvey, who is scarcely convincing as a real person. But the irony with which Conrad shows his disrespect for Travers has that touch of appreciation in it which keeps it from corroding the man; instead it touches up the salient spots.

Conclusion

In general, Conrad is thinking of men as individuals rather than as men in society, and his social satire is slight compared to Hardy's. Hardy directs his irony at certain definite things, the church, the marriage vow, the vanity of women. Conrad's comments on social institutions as well as on people are only incidental; Conrad's attention is centered on the one great irony that overshadows man, institutions, so-

27. "An Outpost of Progress", p. 106
society, and all—the inevitability of disillusion, no matter how bright the future seems, no matter how we try to avoid the shadows; a certain shadow line comes to everyone, and whether it widens depends upon him.
Chapter V Joseph Conrad: Youth and Disillusionment

The theme of disillusionment runs throughout the writings of Conrad. Conrad is a romantic, for he sees the adventure and the glamour of life, but he sees as well the disenchantment that lurks in wait for the dreamer and youth who have their aspirations and illusions and for the men and women, young and old, with their hopes and desires. His Weltschwaung is midway between that of the Russians, who "detest life, the irremediable life of the earth as it is," and that of the western Europeans, who cherish life "with perhaps an equal exaggeration of its sentimental value." He sees people trying to do good and to be happy and he sympathizes with them, not sentimentally but ironically, by giving attention to their mistakes and flaws as well as to their noblest motives and accomplishments. He shows Captain Lingard (Almayer's Folly, An Outcast of the Islands, The Rescue), whose benevolent plans fail time after time, Winnie Verloc (The Secret Agent), whose whole scheme of life blows up around her, Yanko ("Amy Foster"), a foreigner misunderstood cruelly by a wife speaking another language, Mrs. Travers (The Rescue), who clothes Travers in a mist of romance before her marriage and afterwards finds him "enthusiastically devoted to the nursing of his own career", Kurtz ("The Heart of Darkness"), whose intellectual promise degenerates in the African jungle, Davidson ("Because of the Dollars"), with his happiness at home ruined by a small-minded and jealous wife, Mrs. Gould, married to a mine rather than to a man, and Martin Decoud

1. Under Western Eyes, p. 104
(Nostromo), brilliant intellectual conquered by loneliness and his own mental andacity, and a score of others, all trying to make a go of life; just as Hardy shows Henry Knight, Bathsheba Everdene, Clym Yeobright, Eustacia Vye, Giles Winterbourne, the "Noble Dames", Jude Fawley, and the Napoleon, who finally concludes after Waterloo, that "Great men are meteors that consume themselves to light the earth."

Conrad's contact with disillusionment in real life

I note in passing, that Conrad, in his essays and autobiographical books, records numerous instances of disappointment in real life; and all his books reflect his observations and his own experiences, to what extent critics are still speculating. Edward Garnett says,

I agree with Monsieur Jean-Aubry that Conrad's Congo experiences were the turning-point in his mental life.... The sinister voice of the Congo with its murmuring undertone of human futility, baseness and greed had swept away the generous illusions of his youth, and had left him gazing into the heart of an immense darkness.²

A Personal Record records some of Conrad's glimpses into gloom, if not into darkness. Consider a passage like this recital by Valery, the old servant of Conrad's father in Poland,

"Behold the vanity of all hopes and fears! I was the most frail at birth of all the children. For years I remained so delicate that my parents had but little hope of bringing me up; and yet I have survived five brothers and two sisters, and many of my contemporaries; I have outlived my wife and daughter, too—and from all those who have had some knowledge at least of these old times, you alone are left. It has been my lot to lay in an early grave many

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honest hearts, many brilliant promises, many hopes full of life."\textsuperscript{3}

There is no essential difference between Valery, the man in life, and Stromness (The Rescue), the man in fiction, who tells Lingard,

"Look at me. I came out a boy of eighteen. I can speak English, I can speak Dutch, I can speak every cursed lingo of these islands—I can remember things that would make your hair stand on end—but I have forgotten the language of my own country. I've traded, I've fought, I never broke my word to white or native. And, look at me. If it hadn't been for the girl I would have died in a ditch ten years ago. Everything left me—youth, money, strength, hope—the very sleep. But she stuck by the wreck."\textsuperscript{4}

Comments on disillusionment

This whole problem of disillusionment, closely related to his philosophy, frequently calls forth comment from Conrad. He observes of Karain,

Karain stared stonily; and looking at his rigid figure, I thought of his wanderings, of that obscure Odyssey of revenge, of all the men that wander amongst illusions; of the illusions as restless as men; of the illusions faithful, faithless; of the illusions that give joy, that give sorrow, that give pain, that give peace; of the invincible illusions that can make life and death appear serene, inspiring, tormented, or ignoble.\textsuperscript{5}

And Marlow reflects in Lord Jim,

There are the girls we love, the men we look up to, the tenderness, the friendships, the opportunities, the pleasure! But the fact remains that you must touch your reward with clean hands, lest it turn to dead leaves, to thorns, in your grasp.\textsuperscript{6}

Jim could not touch his reward with clean hands, nor can many of us. I

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3. A Personal Record, p. 30
4. The Rescue, p. 103
5. "Karain: A Memory", Tales of Unrest, p. 40
6. Lord Jim, p. 222
life at sea. "the sea is beautiful, inviting and great! a hop, a
step or two more untroubling, untroubling, and untroubling, then the
water I had become a Beacon at last." he remarks in lord Jim that
most tender mood. "the Intrusions were gone, but the Fascination re-
seizes from a stiuning blade. he saw the duplicity of the sea in the
humest struggle. a thin, calm day, the penumbra of the noonable dawn
ordered by the horizon to sea. and in the breadth of the sea coned tells of
that looked so changing from afar, but proved so hard and exacting on
the prime mingle with the prime. greater distraction with the sea
your stream all came to gaze at the nature of the sea resolved. there
produced only. "comrade receive the distraction of going to sea! it was
not what concerned me most was the removal of the fairy tale glamour.
"but what concerns us all, is the first presence, not distraction,
presents boy. frank in "frank Harrison" who sees the first presence, not distraction.
youth. Youth is the time of intrinsic Intrusions. there is the little
more artistic beauty and more convoluted realism than in the stories of
nowhere does coupled meet the mate matter of distraction with
inference in the stories of youth
people do not know what is need of them!
many statements, they have little Intrusion of existence. fortunatelly
and present. there Intrusions rest on the chance concentration of so
from the start on our characters, past and present, and on fate, past
our returns and the judgement and the confidence of our hands depend
whether our hands are open depends on our judgement and the judgement of
inter, in parenthesis, that apparently all things are comparable, and
Dick is its true representative; and like all mysteries, it lives only in the hearts of its worshippers. The sailors stay with the sea, compelled by some great ironical paradox. Especially the young men; and because Conrad was a young man once—all men have not been young—his young men are real. Conrad constantly pays his tribute to youth:

Youth speaks for itself, both in its triumphant feeling and its wistful regrets. 7

The audacity of youth reckons upon what it fancies an unlimited time at its disposal.... 8

"Youth does not have a vivid sense of lost opportuni-
ties." It believes in the absolute reality of time. 9

...the sustaining and inspiring sense of youth.... 10

[Monsieur George, referring to his first experiences in the West Indies:] But they had left me untouched. Indeed they were other men's adventures, not mine. Except for a little habit of responsibility which I had acquired they had not matured me. I was as young as before. Inconceivably young—still beautifully unthinking—infinitely receptive. 11

[Marlow, commenting on young Powell, unable to land a berth for weeks, though he has a blue certificate:] I must render the man the justice that he conveyed very well to us the sense of his youthful hopelessness surprised at not finding its place in the sun and no recognition of its right to live. 12

Youth is a power. 13

Conrad sees the glory of youth and the unknown ironies it resolutely
end broken up by repeated handling. Before running by spontaneous com-
the ship enters into the Indian Ocean, and then the cargo of coal, water. Many
were received, pressed, nuts. Pseudoplasmodium went a patch on it. Finally
ship more than ever, and wants exactly to get to Bencool. "To bencool
a new area is brought from this pool to man the ship. Marcus loves the
June, June, and has to put back to Futuna. "The men return, duty, and
repeat. They met and eat—lor Bencool. But what again the
up the experience for work. The truth has to return to Futuna for
out from running the pumps. But Marcus is pleased. He would not give
a terrible storm which lasts for weeks; and spares, lecture? the men week
all the degrees. The ship is not far out from Kouto when the men meet
in the command with a desire to see Bencool. Seeing Bencool in the goal of
Green Orchid on board the June bound east with a case of coal. He
"Though is the story of Bencool's first trip east. Marcus is a

Youth

never needs

LIKE "Youth", which is built upon a very delicate idea much as Harvey.
else says mankind on the. To see no confinement, however, in a tale
whether, with all its confinement and sober melancholy, to a true sentiment.
earthening still the weight and story of their dream. For our heart
howe in the wisdom of experience, a wisdom told of little ones but
the person who Grows Contemplative can manifestly keep of the matter. What
Goes to meet. In change. Lord Itm, and Heart of Darkness. Marcus is
bustion. They cannot another it out; they pour the Indian Ocean into the hatches trying to stop the fire.

It was our fate to pump in that ship, to pump out of her, to pump into her; and after keeping water out of her to save ourselves from being drowned, we frantically poured water into her to save ourselves from being burnt. 15

The sky and sea are miracles of azure and calm beauty as the Judea moves on amid the languid and unclean vapours from the coal, that, ironically enough, do not disillusion young Marlow. It is an affair of youth and the serene weather that is a wonder of purity enhances the irony of destiny. 16 The deck blows up and Marlow is singed and battered; sixteen hours after the explosion, the Judea is in flames and the crew leave "that ship doomed to arrive nowhere" and take to the boats. Marlow is in command of a small boat and has orders to stay near the captain's long boat. But he beats on ahead to land first. Here is a real chance for independent cruising! ("Youth! All youth! The silly, charming, beautiful youth.") He sights a ship far away but does not tell his men, uncomfortable in the cramped boat.

You see I was afraid she might be homeward bound, and I had no mind to turn back from the portals of the East. I was steering for Java—another blessed name—like Bangkok, you know. I steered many days. 17

After the men have endured physical privation and fatigue, the boats finally get to land at night. The first voice that Marlow hears in the East curses and execrates him from a moored ship, the speaker thinking

15. "Youth", Youth, p. 20
17. "Youth", p. 35
he is a shore-boatman. Next morning he wakes up, while the rest of the men are still dead asleep on the bottom of the boats, and sees overhead a jetty full of silent faces—brown, bronze, yellow—looking motionlessly down at the tired men in the boats.

That is all. The East of his vision is looking at him. "Only a moment; a movement of strength, of romance, of glamour, of youth!" No more. No less. Is Marlow's realization antitlimax, or is it not? Surely the young man has not seen what he expected. Does he acknowledge his disillusionment even to himself? Who can say? For Conrad has covered "Youth" with a diaphanous veil of the most delicate irony which at once casts a haze over the outlines of the narrative and yet makes their intuitional perception startlingly poignant.

The Shadow Line

Marlow in "Youth" reaches the first great climax in young manhood. In The Shadow Line he passes through a second stage and comes to another crucial point.

The very young have, properly speaking, no moments. It is a privilege of early youth to live in advance of its days in all the beautiful continuity of hope which knows no pauses and no introspection....

And the time...goes on—till one perceives ahead a shadow-line warning one that the region of early youth, too, must be left behind.

This is the period of life in which such moments of which I have spoken are likely to come. What moments? Why, the moments of boredom, of weariness, of dissatisfaction. Rash moments.18

*No name is given the young captain in The Shadow Line; I call him Marlow only for convenience. Actually he is Conrad himself.
The Shadow Line begins after one of these rash moments. Marlow is in an unreasoning mood of despair has just thrown up a fine position as mate in which he was making good, because he has decided to go home. Then, taking a tip from Captain Giles, he gets a rare chance to be appointed captain on a ship whose captain has suddenly died. All his energy comes back to him with a rush. He is in ecstasy over his first command. His ship thrills him with its appearance; among her companions moored to the bank, all bigger than she, she looks "like a creature of high breed—an Arab steed in a string of cart-horses." Impatient to be off, he sets out, even though the first mate, Burns, is very sick and the second officer is an immature cub. But the ship does not get out of sight of the islands before she is becalmed. Fever goes from man to man. The young captain finds the quinine all gone: his predecessor sold the supply to get ready cash and put some worthless powder in the bottles.

Monotony. Heat. Sick and restless men. Not a breath on board to spare. The sea immobile. The men work the sail feebly, panting when ephemeral pseudo-breezes mock them. Ransome, the steward, and the captain are the only two who are not ill. His officers useless, Marlow is alone in his responsibility. Rain and wind eventually come, but the men cannot work and Captain Marlow has to steer. He arrives at Singapore with a forecastle full of sick, moaning men after he has been on deck for seventeen days. His initial departure was rash; he admits it; but he will not give up. Twenty-four hours after his sick crew is carried off he will depart with a set of new men. Oh youth—oh, the glamour of it! Marlow has learned his lesson. A real irony has balked his first voyage.
as chief commander. He has crossed the shadow line between youth and maturity. How many of his illusions are left? Again Conrad leaves the answer unsaid. Irony doesn't answer questions.

Other stories of young people

"Youth" and The Shadow Line together with "The Heart of Darkness" are Conrad's three books which stress the theme of youth, but it runs through all his tales. There is the daring young captain on his first command who runs the gauntlet of his men's suspicions to smuggle to safety a murderer who is a fellow alumnus of the Selway training school, (The Secret Sharer). And there are other young people who go to ruin at the shadow line or enter upon years of woe, such as Flora de Barral (Chance), Freya Nielson ("Freya of the Seven Isles"), Tomassov ("A Warrior's Soul"), Razumov (Under Western Eyes); and I am left wondering what is the fate of the impetuous young Cosmo Latham (Suspense).

Conrad sees youth struggling to assert its individuality. Hence he appreciates the disillusion of the young soldier in The Red Badge of Courage who is deprived of moral support "which he would have found in a body of men matured in achievement to the consciousness of its worth." His regiment is tried by days and days of waiting and comes to see itself only as "'a part of a vast blue demonstration'." He finds action at last; but how sordidly the war compares to his expectations! 19

Conrad's view of youth

So, Conrad builds up the atmosphere of romance—a romance often

19. "His War Book", Last Essays, p. 121
tinged with the hue of vain regret, of useless desire, and of defeated hope. It dyes his stories with the sadness of vanished youth. "For it is romance alone that makes memory poignant. An air of expectance hovers over his stories, but it is an expectance that fades away into old age. For it is hope that is sweet but it is decay that is certain." 20

Marlow expresses the whole matter,

Oh, the glamour of youth! Oh, the fire of it, more dazzling than the flames of the burning ship, throwing a magic light on the wide earth, leaping audaciously to the sky, presently to be quenched by time, more cruel, more pitiless, more bitter than the sea—and like the flames of the burning ship surrounded by an impenetrable night. 21

Hardy's one notable treatment of the disillusioning of youthful hopes is in *Jude the Obscure*. Time quenches all of Jude's boyhood fire and he dies unqualifiedly bitter toward life. At the time of Sue's scandalous truancy from the Training-School at Melchester, Hardy says of her seventy young women associates in their cubicles for the night:

They formed a pretty, suggestive, pathetic sight, of whose pathos and beauty they were themselves unconscious, and would not discover till, amid the storms and strains of after-years, with their injustice, loneliness, child-bearing, and bereavement, their minds would revert to this experience as to something which had been allowed to slip past them insufficiently regarded. 22

These people in Hardy may retrospect on their earlier days, but with bitterness; not as with Conrad's people will the glamour that once has existed be a compensation.

Conrad is not ironical in his tender treatment of youth and dis-

20. Curle, p. 88
21. "Youth", p. 30
22. Jude, p. 168
illusionment. He cannot be ironical toward the unfathomable. He shows only the irony that lies in youth's hopes and illusions.
Chapter VI Thomas Hardy and Joseph Conrad: The Ironic Method

Neither Hardy nor Conrad can suppress a bit of irony any more than Oscar Wilde could suppress an epigram. To enumerate all the ironies in a novel like Tess of the D'Urbervilles or Nostromo would be to relate the whole story, and to explain some of the more delicate ironies would be as tedious a task as explaining a good pun. Hardy and Conrad are so impregnated with irony that they do not keep it out of pieces essentially descriptive, like "A Tryst at an Ancient Earthwork" (A Changed Man) and "Typhoon". The words "irony" and "ironical", and "satire" and "satirical" used synonymously by Hardy, frequently used, run through their writings like motifs.

Their use of irony

Hardy and Conrad use all the varieties of irony, verbal, circumstantial, conscious, unconscious, personal, fictional. Since they are writing stories, they use circumstantial ironies most commonly; verbal ironies come next in number; and least frequent are ironic personal statements by the authors themselves, though many of their scenes and characters are indirect satires on life and manners, designed to amuse or to call serious critical attention. With the exception of a few near-villains, most of the characters in Hardy and Conrad are unconscious of the ironies they are perpetrating or enduring, and in this unconsciousness of the protagonists lies much of the effectiveness of the irony. Hardy and Conrad are not ironical in their descriptions of natural surroundings, notably in their early works, but they set off the subjects of the descriptions against the ironic mood of the story proper
to gain a subtle ironic effect; for instance, the serene calm in "Youth" and the burning risk in *Far from the Madding Crowd*. They employ irony, then, to express their ideas as authors, to criticize and evaluate their characters, to suggest philosophically the futility and frustration that await all man's open-eyed, yet blind striving, and to gain effects in plot and scene construction. The last named use of irony is the subject of this chapter (the preceding uses being treated elsewhere), irony as an artistic method.

**Contrast in methods**

The conclusions that Hardy and Conrad reach about life are more or less in concord, but their methods of irony differ as much as the men themselves. Hardy's irony is more objective, more systematic, more dramatic, Conrad's more introspective, more reflective, more psychological. Hardy searches for a metaphysical explanation, Conrad for a psychological. Hardy tells a story from beginning to end in the third person, giving a series of dramatic presentations in chronological order from the lives of his people. Ironic frustrations are set forth directly and clearly. Conrad tells a story in the first person, neglecting chronological sequence, darting forward or backward as the mood takes him, retrospecting on the disillusionsments of the past. Hardy depicts the ironies in the vivid present, Conrad the ironies in the shadowy past. Hardy illustrates his ironies with a thousand small incidents, a thousand minutiae, closely timed; Conrad depicts his ironies with many fewer incidents, seen in broad perspectives of time and rarely timed very closely.
Conrad's method is to keep as long as possible the expected things from happening—to hang a sword by a hair, which, when it does fall, destroys at a stroke. Hardy's method is to make things happen from the very beginning and lead from one to another with increasing speed, like water coming to a waterfall. Conrad kills with the one stroke, Hardy with many strokes.

Hardy's irony is formal, logical, thought-out. Hardy has a thesis to prove. But he is too much an artist, too much a student of men to become a tractarian philosopher. He records the lives of his people largely without comment, often recording the data of each irony with the meticulousness of a scientific report. Conrad's irony is personal, discursive, felt-out. Conrad feels that often an irony cannot be definitely stated—any more than life or character or fate can; it can only be suggested, hinted at, and cannot with true realism be put into set situations and dramatic speeches. So where Hardy crystallizes his irony into firmly outlined scenes, altogether objectively, Conrad elusive-ly approaches his scenes from many angles, getting evidence from many sources and throwing subjective light on the irony as from a revolving mirror. Conrad's vision is purposely blurred. His ironies, seen in perspective, are not sharp, but they gradually converge on one focal point, the crucial irony of the tale. Where in Hardy there is really a series of ironic climaxes at any of which the action might turn, as in The Return of the Native and The Mayor of Casterbridge, in Conrad there is only one climax, one place for the action to turn: the breakdown of Kayerts and Carlier at the moment of relief, the death of Charley's
beloved at the moment of safety ("The Brute"), the killing of Lena when she has almost saved her life and Axel's, Carter's firing on Daman just when Lingard has seen his way clear out of his diplomatic tangle.

Conrad's indirect story-telling

Concealment is the fundamental of ironic method. Concealment in conflict leads to irony. Hardy's concealment takes the form of dramatic irony; the characters conceal from one another, consciously or unconsciously, but the spectator-reader knows all—knows the secrets that Elfride and Tess delay to tell, knows the secret ambitions that take hold of Malbury's heart, knows the facts of the misdelivered letters sent by Tess, Ethelberta, and Clym. Only in Desperate Remedies, his first novel, does Hardy try to mystify his reader; ever after he keeps the reader's point of view. Conrad's concealment is of another sort, for the sum effect of his elliptical method of story-telling is concealment from the reader. Yet the reader does not take offense, because he feels that things are being concealed from the narrator too. Delicate, subtle men, lovers of oblique psycho-analysis, like the Davidson of Victory and "Because of the Dollars", the Giles of The Shadow Line, and the Marlow of Lord Jim, Chance, "Falk", "Youth", and "The Heart of Darkness", even the garrulous and superficial Mitchell of Nostramo are men who take a long while to reach conclusions for themselves and their informing the reader is delayed accordingly. Where Hardy's people can make crisp, dramatic speeches, and sum up an event in short order, Conrad's people struggle to express their thoughts and to set them in order. There is a realism in this incoherence that is not flattering to
the ordinary person. For example, in *Suspense*, the emotional negro maid, Aglae, takes several minutes to tell Bernard that the man in "the too-much-laced coat" is going to marry Adale; and in *Lord Jim* it is only in a much delayed and fleeting clause that Marlow tells that the French gunboat picked up the *Patna*. Conrad conceals the trend of the story from the reader just as Plato concealed the trend of the logic from his circle of students. There is something distinctly Platonic in Conrad's hazy approach to a matter from all sides, knowing very well his reasons for analyzing as he does but remaining non-committal. Chance is the supreme example of this method, with its retrospection within retrospec-
tion, its circles within circles. The advantage of the method is that personal comment on the ironies is possible without the author's having to assume any artificial prophetic tone by remarking how little the actor realized the fatal portent of this step, etc.

Direct comment is possible, as when:

Young Powell precipitates the climax aboard the *Ferndale*.

And his own presence on the scene was so strangely motivated that it was left for me to marvel alone at this young man, a completely chance-comer, having brought it about on that night.

Each situation created either by folly or wisdom has its psychological moment. The behaviour of young Powell with its mixture of boyish impulses combined with instinctive prudence, had not created it—I can't say that—but had discovered it to the very people involved. What would have happened if he had made a noise about his discovery? But he didn't. His head was full of Mrs. Anthony and he behaved with discretion beyond his years.1

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1. Chance, p. 426
Jim tells how when mate of the Patna he always had the boats ready for
instant service:

"I always believed in being prepared for the worst,"
he commented, staring anxiously in my face. I nodded my
approval of the sound principle, averting my eyes before
the subtle unsoundness of the man.2

The basic principle of Conrad's method is that people are most likely to
see the ironies of life when looking back on the past; that is certainly
true in Hardy's treatment of history in The Dynasts. Some of Conrad's
deftest touches are polite reminders of the past. In Nostromo he de-
scribes Señor Hirsch, hanging dead in the custom house, and refers to
him as former hide-merchant and "enterprising business man from Esmer-
aldas." In "Freyja" he continually puts the name Nielson in brackets af-
ther the name Nelson adopted by Freya's father. Or, he speaks of Con-
rade Ossipon in The Secret Agent as "Alexander Ossipon, anarchist, nick-
named the Doctor, author of a medical (and improper) pamphlet, late
lecturer on the social aspects of hygiene to working men's clubs, was
free from the trammels of conventional morality." It is because Conrad
wants to look back constantly that his plot is set forth in so rounda-
bout a fashion. The blurred edges of his characters are the result of
his groping search of the soul, for life too is a blur. And the reader
is left groping. Is Captain M'Whirr a hero or simply an ass? Is Lord
Jim a scoundrel or a coward or a gallant knight? Is Falk a beast or an
idealist? How classify Nostromo? Conrad cannot find the truth; so he
gives only his reading notes where the more logical Hardy organizes his

2. Lord Jim, p. 89
notes into a syllabus.

Concealment in Conrad and Hardy

Fate conceals. A man cannot tell what chain of future events will link onto a trivial incident of the present. Hence the plots in Hardy and Conrad are built around the irony of opportunity missed because half or wholly unrealized at the time. Tess and The Mayor are striking examples in Hardy's prose. His poems constantly play on this theme, for instance "A Beauty's Soliloquy During Her Honeymoon" and "The Harbour Bridge" (H. S. E. P.). Nostromo, The Secret Agent, "Because of the Dollars" are notable examples from Conrad. The concealments of fate, the concealments and inhibitions of men are what bring about the tragic end in Conrad and Hardy. The preponderance of ironies in Hardy depends on concealed pasts and concealed motives. Susan Henchard, Elfride Swancourt, Bathsheba, Wildeve, Fitzpiers, Dona Rita, the Fyndes, Razumov, Freya and all their brothers and sisters in fiction do not frankly explain at the proper times and they tangle up themselves and their associates in tragic misunderstandings, which because they could be avoided are bitter ironies.

Coincidence in Conrad and Hardy

To obtain ironies a writer must depend upon coincidence to turn the course of events to ironic frustrations or disappointments. Conrad and Hardy are aware of coincidence in real life, but Conrad uses it as a literary device far less than does Hardy. I have pointed out Conrad's one climax contrasting with Hardy's many potential climaxes which form a picaresque series. A climax is the crucial coincident of a plot. A
reader has to accept the situation at the beginning of a story; no one questions initial episodes like Mr. Durbeyfield's conversation with Parson Tringham, Hanshard's selling his wife, Jude's meeting Arabella, Travers' yacht stranding on the Shallows, Nostromo's being the hero of Sulaco; but one may fail to believe the events that are depicted as inevitably following. Conrad supports his coincidences with explicit psychology; Hardy tends to support his with implicit psychology, and explicit fate. Grimsditch demonstrates that ample vindication can be made for the coincidences in Hardy rising out of environment, home-training, occupation, character, ideology, and custom. Conrad uses coincident avowedly in Chance, and a philosophy of fate is his only alibi. Far-fetched ironies are practically non-existent in Conrad's best work. In "The Duel" he turns them to a humorously fantastic end as Hardy does in The Well-Beloved. Curle objects to the doctor's wanting to measure Marlow's cranium before he leaves for Africa as an improbable irony. But there is really no case to be made against Conrad's use of coincidence as a literary device and as an engine of irony. Coincidence is only incidental in the broad sweep of his philosophy of disillusionment.

Coincidence in Hardy's poetry and prose

Coincidence, however, is integral in Hardy's scheme. But from the critic's standpoint there is a question how far the little accidents like the losing of letters and the delay of news, are to be regarded as true ironies of fate, how far as necessary devices of plot workmanship.

Hardy is variously condemned for excessive use of coincidence in the novels, as in *A Pair of Blue Eyes, The Hand of Ethelberta, Life's Little Ironies,* and coincidence is noticeably strained in the poems.

Hardy's ironies in his poetry often demonstrate the inherent weakness of all his ironies where they come thick and fast: improbability; the irony is often placed in strange, unique situations which lack universality. For example, in "The Enemy's Portrait" (M. V.), a man buys a portrait of his enemy at an auction, intending to destroy it. But he decides to save the frame. He takes the picture home and forgets it the next day. Eventually a servant hangs it on the wall in some remote corner. The man delays taking it down after he sees what the servant has done. So to the end of his days the portrait of his enemy hangs on his walls. Again, in "The Caricature" (R. S. F. P.), an artist, tortured by the elusive coquetries of Lady Lu, draws privately a caricature of her and by laughing at it and at her cures his passion. Years later he learns she is dying heartbroken, for she has really loved him. He goes gloomily and insanely about, "The curse of his own contrivance like a sander into his fate." In "The Contratempo" (L. L. F.) is an incredible sex mix-up. A lover with an assignation rushes into the arms of a woman on the harbour-bridge. He discovers that she is a stranger. Her husband enters and tells her that going with this man is all right; he will find twice as good a bride. Next the lover she had

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L. Johnson, pp. 56-57
R. Williams, p. 138
Helen Garwood, p. 57ff.
been waiting for comes, and he says he little knew she had a third. Husband and lover depart. The two "chancewise" met remain together. "One pairing is as good as another Where all is chance!" The teller of the story concludes by merely stating that none of the four is ever fully happy. These three poems are not extreme examples chosen to support a case against Hardy's poetic irony; they are similar to a great number of his other poems, and I grant that as ironies, per se, they are undeniably finished productions.

Some readers are not convinced by Fanny's going to the wrong church in *Far from the Madding Crowd* or Vean's error about the ownership of the guineas in *The Return* or the letter under the carpet in *Tess* or everything going wrong at Winterbourne's party in *The Woodlanders* or by many of the ironies in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. Hardy is illustrating his philosophy. His use of coincidence is deliberately startling; he wishes to call attention to essential aspects of life that are overlooked. He skilfully creates a series of ironical situations and then subjects a few hapless beings to seemingly inexorable agencies. The result is an extremely effective brute chance. And reflection substantiates this brute chance that runs riot. In this age of train schedules, telephone exchanges, time-clock lives, and event-filled, active lives all sorts of chance happenings are transpiring continually, even more so than in Wessex in the 19th Century. Hardy stresses the ironic complexities in civilization and turns them to tragic ends; he intensifies little circumstances. Garwood says,

If we took from him the undelivered letters, the
marriage licenses that have a mistake in date or place, the leases where chance of renewal is discovered after the time has expired, the marriages that come too early or too late, we should spoil the whole fabric of his tales.5

Evaluation of coincidence in Hardy and Conrad

The proper interpretation to put on the whole matter is to take Hardy's coincidences not as the expedients of a resourceless craftsman, but as the evidence offered after a severe scrutiny of man and fate. Hardy is no cheap novelist who has to think up a solution for his plot; as I shall indicate in the next chapter, he is a thinker who illustrates his interpretation of life in his writings.

Hardy's coincidences, and Conrad's, for that matter, are not pure coincidences, as in Fielding or Dickens, for instance, where the face value of things is not changed, where the coincidence might happen anytime and the quality of the situation would remain the same with no change in thoughts, motives, or acts, as if another guest were simply added to a banquet table. Coincidences in Conrad and Hardy are ironic coincidences: the course of events is altered, and some past event is seen in a new light (consanguinity because of the sea-sickness in "For Conscience Sake") or some event in the future is forecast that otherwise would never have so happened (Jude's disillusionment because of his marriage which follows after Arabella throws a piece of pigflesh at him one day when he happens to walk home by a new route).

When Hardy's fate wrecks his characters no one objects, for fate is not to be analyzed; just as Conrad's psychology is not to be contro-

5. Ibid., pp. 60-65
verted, because his insight into the human heart, like Hardy's insight into the working of earthly destiny, is deeper than ours. We cannot check up on the superior thinker. But when we feel that the authors themselves are pulling the strings of fate we object. Hardy's use of obvious plot manipulators, notably Miss Aldclyffe in *Desperate Remedies*, Dare in *A Laodicean*, and Netty in "Netty Sergeant's Copyhold", lays him open to the charge that in his off moments he employed Deus ex machina devices to get his effects. Hardy seems at times to strain to fit his events into a preconceived dove-tailing. Rarely does Conrad seem to strain, for his psychology comes to the rescue, and fills in the ribs of a skeleton plot which Hardy with almost scientific preciseness will leave bare. But Conrad's psycho-analysis in a book like *Chance* sometimes seems to lead the characters as Hardy's determinism leads the characters in a book like *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.

Irony key to effects. Appeal to justice

Irony is the key to the effects in Conrad and Hardy with the exception of passages of pure description in their earlier works. Conrad is more prodigal with words and with atmosphere, Hardy more parsimonious, classically severe where Conrad is romantically exuberant. But Hardy is more prodigal of incident and of irony. Many of the ironies in his earlier novels could be trimmed out without upsetting the main plot; none could be trimmed from Conrad. Conrad trims down to the story in its essentials, Hardy to the irony in its essentials, notably in the succinct tragedies in the "Satires of Circumstance" and Life's Little Ironies. But each has his style and his irony well fused by the time
of the writing of The Return and Nostromo, respectively, with the possible exception of books like The Mayor of Casterbridge and Chance.

From then on the two authors stir the emotions of the reader through the irony of the situations they set before him, accentuating the irony with little bits of rigidly selective realism. They awaken sympathy by placing an admirable creature or a creature in some way likeable in a net of ironies, and letting him tangle himself up until suffering or death result. When people like Tess or Winnie Verloc, Knight or Razumov, Mrs. Yeobright or Lingard come to grief there is a powerful appeal to our sense of the unfitness of things. Our feeling for justice is outraged. The contrast that is the province of the ironist—the contrast of ideality with reality—when joined with artistic technique and the thinking of strong minds is a sure means of effect in Conrad and Hardy.

Ironic and character development

Yet some of the irony is much more convincing than the rest. It is the irony in the group of novels including Far from the Madding Crowd, The Return of the Native, The Woodlanders, in which Hardy fully understands his people and their environment and makes their fate seem to result from their inner nature as much as from the predestined fate without. Where his characters are most real his ironies are most convincing. In The Hand of Ethelberta and A Laodicean and the other novels of ingenuity the people and the settings are lacking in reality and the ironies accordingly are noticeably unconvincing, albeit clever. In The Dynasts, where all fate is deterministic and the spirits of the protagonists are guided by external causes, the ironies are cut-and-dried and
I am sure the title they deeply desired: Here are
consequences, only when they really desire to see
readable dream. Their iron-consequences now when the title they show
its secrets, its manner, and the rhythm, the same diseases, and the
that can see life as it is in itself, immediately strayed off the scene,
ex to the secrets in life than life itself. It is the present in them
the heavy irony in life, for either all, hero and coward can get no near
the earth in life. They succeed in such great and
produced readable consequences, they succeed in
the iron dream, and by applying these methods of approach to life re-
keeping with the pedagogies of metaphysical bent, received the
in the tendency to stress the metaphysics, in Hardy the metaphysics, in
like consequences from the metaphysics and the metaphysics together. In contrast
which is, the method of both Hardy and Conrad is to show the irony of

sense. This is the irony that seems most like real life.

as much from the important gradient of the protagonist as from experimental
in whose best novels of both men, the contrasted consequences arise

of action to make them important of consequence.
the novels centered around the party convention and the snob experiences
in Burke's 'The Pleasure' the secret agent, as the hero, and other stories lack
live, 'the Hero', the secret agent, the hero, and other stories lack
as interest as the dramatic persona. Similarly, in contrast, the its-

145.
present as those of the present into the future.

Yielding into one consolidation, the sense of the past reality into the more than conscious, there are subseries in the other. At the situation some consolidation at any given point. Hardy's stories illustrate the reached and then become serious in the, but in a web of consistency the meet. This is not a single thread within reality until a thicker is

plot. By demonstration, the method and the demonstration of their uses of extent and intensification of the in the illustration of their work—

unconscionable progress of a thousand years or more. These reasons, because of the grade—

because of past experiences and past associations, because of this massety,

do in the meantime because of the past character, because of this massety,

determine, how different events would be now. But what we do

in section that character would take. The way I'ld only added

of some sort of home condition. They make a character's action from

their great participation in the mass. Fortunately, the return of the

character for the story to the basis for the success of the

justification in demonstration

Whenever during any much exhausted from

lack thereof, their novels deal with these people who have not lived among these leaders of high society, and contrariwise not lived.
Chapter VII Thomas Hardy and Joseph Conrad: The Philosophy of Irony

Hardy and Conrad see irony in life and try to find and to investigate the reasons for its existence. They search independently, collecting immense amounts of material, represented by their writings, from which they evolve their philosophies of life. Each philosophy is in essence a theory of irony, which begins by questioning the validity of nature's holy plan, then demonstrates the utter caprice with which nature disregards the plans of man, and finally implies the attitude that man should take toward this wayward, ironical fate.

The world as Hardy and Conrad see it

Hardy shows man being frustrated; ironies are dramatically clear; they are part of an outspoken plan. Hardy traces irony beyond the bounds of actuality and finds it in metaphysics; he traces it, notably in *The Dynasts* and several of the philosophical poems, to the very throne of the omnipotent It. Conrad shows man being disillusioned; ironies are subtle, all-pervading things, inherent in the world. But Conrad does not get beyond the word fate. His use of ironic fate tends to be a literary device where Hardy's is a personal conviction; hence he reflects much less on the nature of fate and stops one step behind the more venturesome Hardy, who, by finding the origins of irony in the cosmos, tells, as it were, of the elephant that holds the world up, but itself rests upon a tortoise. Yet when Conrad and Hardy look at man's lot upon earth, the classically inspired Hardy seeing it as tragic collectivism and the romantically inspired Conrad seeing it as tragic individualism, they gaze at the same men and the same misfortunes.
They are fascinated by the immense indifference of things, the tragic vanity of the blind groping that is called aspiration, the profound meaninglessness of life. They see man predominantly the creature and the victim of lost opportunities, of the tricky fatality that lurks in obscure impulses, of accidents that have backward and forward connections, all working through the blind force of circumstances in a world composed of riddles. Destiny is "an immense, potent, and invisible hand thrust into the ant-heap of the earth, laying hold of shoulders, knocking heads together, and setting the unconscious faces of the multitude towards inconceivable goals and in undreamt-of-directions." And as inscrutable as fate or as the multitude of stars on a clear night is the soul of man. Man, even to himself, is a palimpsest, having an ostensibly writing and another writing between the lines.

Chance is against man; so is its ally, Time, that cannot be hurried, and its enemy, Death, that will not wait. Hardy in his novels and in numbers of his poems shows tragic events linked with very close timing. Conrad tends more to show the effects of time over longer periods. But whether the time period be long or short, luck is not to be had. Anything is possible at the hands of Time and Chance, except, perhaps, fair play. A Tess or a Winnie Verloc does not choose to transgress, but fate is seemingly partial against her. Good chance would be the only thing worth having on one's side, better than courage, surer than wisdom, stronger than justice— if good chance operated; but the chance in life is predominantly evil. The laws of chance are a universal joke, as Massy ("The End of the Tether") discovered in his efforts.

1. "Typhoon", p. 5
to win the Mamilla Grand Lottery a second time, squandering his time and money in the attempt. In life's great lottery ill-luck is inexhaustible, whether men try for the prizes or whether they do not. As Ricardo says,

"It's my opinion that men will gamble as long as they have anything to put on a card. Gamble? That's nature. What's life itself? You never know what may turn up. The worst of it is that you never can tell exactly what sort of cards you are holding yourself. What's trumps?—that is the question. See? Any man will gamble if only he's given a chance, for anything or everything."2

"You never can tell", says Conrad in effect, "what the future will hold, but you might as well expect the worst." Disillusionment is inevitable.

Hardy's questioning and his conclusion

And Hardy agrees. But, as I have said, he goes further and questions the whyfore of all this seeming chaos on earth. He says, in reference to his procedure, that those novels "which impress the reader with the inevitableness of character and environment in working out destiny, whether that destiny be just or unjust, enviable or cruel, must have a sound effect, if not what is called a good effect, upon a healthy mind."3 He does not fear to construct a hypothesis that will degrade a First Cause and accuse it of a lower moral order than man's. He charges that purblind Doom, which allows Crass Casualty to obstruct sun and rain and Dying Time to cast a moan instead of gladness, might just as well strew blisses around the pilgrimage of man.4 If there is a Godhead it has forgotten man. Apparently some vast Imbecility, "Mighty to build and

2. Victory, pp. 146-147
3. Life and Art, p. 66
4. "Hap", (N. P.)
blend, but impotent to tend", has framed us in jest and left us to
hazardry; or an Automaton, unconscious of our pains, has produced man;
or if a Godhead did make man, it is dying downward and man is the living
remains after brain and eye have already atrophied. At any rate, noth-
ing appears to indicate that a cognizance has organized mundane things;
rather things show that

like a knitter drowsed,
Whose fingers play in skilled unmindfulness,
The will has woven with an absent heed
Since life so was; and ever will so weave.

Some great dominating force exterior to the world, a set of preadjusted
laws which may be called the Immanent Will, rules over man and his ac-
tions, and rules carelessly, concerned only with cause and effect and
not at all with the consequences in organic life. It determines all
that man does. Hence a great and terrible metaphysical irony, that no
matter what man attempts, believing that he is free, all is determined
and his freedom is illusion. Fundamentally, freedom of will or of
self is non-existent. Might-have-beens do not exist, and even regrets
are baseless. The basic irony of The Dynasts is that despite all the
plans and wars of Napoleon and all the counterplans and counter-wars of
his opponents the whole sequence of events is fated to happen only in a
certain way. The Spirit Ironic can well ask at the end, "Ajaccian Bona-
parte, Has all this been worth while?" And it could ask the same of
Tess or Bathsheba or Jude.

6. Dynasts, Foroscope, pp. 8-9
The profound and unreasoned stream of life, the stream restless and
obscure, deepens, expanding over the surface of the stream, cutting
command lines through that life as obfuscate and that people are unaware of this.

The intellectual view of the universe, invisible at last in the

The personal reaction is different, he remarks.

The command, "like mercury, finds no mortal triumphant in this world, though

"Rock."

A deepety weere not eaven in impartible flowtecter upon the face of a

Love's green stage, did he see as the initial word of each one

进程of beginning new, with a green stage, command and strength are

when man, in this green stage and the is overjofed at the

and hand in hand, but command to accept fate at once, once,

to desisted. men and horizons and interestent ones, so rise leads men

feeling for determination. as the Lore-philton makes Tiffinan and Idale

of friction as well as to the can. For meant in command is strong

Hardy's conception about the universe

Command's conception about the universe
unreasoning and invincible, surviving the test of disillusion, defying the disenchanted that lurks in every day of a strenuous life, facing love's delights and love's anguish. Just as Plato's Socrates ironical-
ly directs a discussion and comes to no definite conclusion, so Conrad leads his people to ends that are ill-defined and, for that very reason, disillusioning. Conrad stresses, as Hardy does not, certain compensa-
tions in life, for he has a different attitude toward man—a more prag-
matic attitude.

Conrad's view of man

Conrad admits the depth of human error, man's continual perplexity and distress in the toils of nature, the disjointed destiny that fits t
the round peg into the square hole and the square peg into the round hole—admits in all life the sense of cosmic implasability; and like Hardy he smiles and pities with ironic commiseration, with infinite dis-
illusionment, but unlike Hardy he observes without moralizing, senti-
ment, or fear. Conrad sees the immediate troubles of the world in man himself, and the pragmatic consolations are in man, too. "For suffer-
ing is the lot of man, but not inevitable failure or worthless despair which is without end—suffering, the mark of manhood, which bears with-
in its pain a hope of felicity like a jewel set in iron...", he says in Romances. Conrad is merciful to frail humanity. He advises it to forget the inevitable end and aim at more immediate goals. Life is then worth living with zest, even if it be ironic, yet, in a world where "joy and sorrow pass into each other, mingling their forms and their murmurs in the twilight of life as mysterious as an overshadowed
ocean, while the dazzling brightness of supreme hopes lies far off, fascinating and still, on the distant edge of the horizon." Man's reward lies in defying fate; his satisfactions come from the active life, whether he wins or loses. Defeat is an illusion too; it can be a moral victory. Actual success for humanity is unattainable, but man must not admit its unattainability and should make illusions his ideal. "Those visions, delicious or poignant, are a moral end in themselves." Man should cultivate in himself and admire in others the courage and simplicity of faith that launches little cockle-shell boats upon a limitless and angry sea. "No man succeeds in everything he undertakes. In that sense we are all failures. The great point is not to fall in ordering and sustaining the effort of our life," for our very illusions have a practical meaning. Illusion is the very life blood of youth; it is the consolations of maturity. Marlow does not regret his youth. There were good things in it. Conrad's conclusion is that man should avoid philosophical worries and face life for what it is worth, not allowing irony to drown his faith in actuality. The result is a tempered optimism which sees the beauty in butterflies at the same time that it sees the futility in chasing them. A romantic philosophy. As Conrad writes on the last page of Romance,

And, looking back, we see Romance—that subtle thing that is mirage—that is life. It is the goodness of the years we have lived through, of the old time when we did this or that, when we dwelt here or there. Looking back it seems a wonderful enough thing that I who am this and she who is that, commencing so far away a life that after much sufferings borne together and apart, ended so tranquilly there in a world so stable—that she and I should have passed through so much, good chance and evil chance, sad hours and joyful,
Hardy, a poet, on the contrary, is severe and unromantic.

Hardy's view of men, on the contrary, is severe and unromantic.

Condensed Fox's view.

commanded, the axiom—'what's the axiom—yet there's no attraction and pity.

and I really mean the presence of death, can mean whatever one feels.

The most common, the most common, however, however, however.

The axiom upon the mind and soul of man and shows the contrasting

secret agent, the axiom. In books like 'Theforeground', the shadow line, the

guarded and bent by fate in general complete which render boredom and hom-

Condensed, above this romance in the characteristics of men who are con-

that is life. That's too, it is romance.

all I need down and sweet away into the little head of that
clarity of vision somewhat out of character, voices the protest of man on the stormy night when she crosses Egdon:

"How I have tried and tried to be a splendid woman, and how destiny has been against me! I do not deserve my lot! O, the cruelty of putting me into this ill-conceived world! I was capable of much; but I have been injured and blighted and crushed by things beyond my control! O, how hard it is of Heaven to devise such tortures for me, who have done no harm to Heaven at all!"

There is no glamour in life for Hardy as there is for Conrad; he takes from man the illusions which Conrad gives to him. Chance is always adverse, destiny always unfair. Retrospection only shows the same horrors in the past that he must expect in the future. Hardy pitied all men as he pitied Tess, but he can offer no practical light to break the grave-yard gloom, except fatalism. Misfortune simply is to be, and fatalism seems to be the only attitude to take in a universe where determinism ironically counterbalances free-will. "As Tess's own people down in those retreats are never tired of saying among each other in their fatalistic way: 'It was to be.'" There lies the pity of it. Joan Durbeyfield becomes a symbol of humanity when Tess returns home after her disastrous break with her husband.

Joan began to take the mishap as she took all such mishaps after her first burst of disappointment, as she had taken Tess's original trouble, as she would have taken a wet holiday or a failure in the potato crop—as a thing which had come upon them irrespective of will, or law, or desert, or folly; a chance external impingement to be born with; not a lesson." 9

Hardy's philosophic irony, then, more formidable and less cheering than

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8. The Return of the Native, p. 442
9. Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 293
that of Conrad, a logical system in contrast to an emotional one, is pessimistic in its view of man. Activism gets Henschard nowhere, passiv-
ism Tess nowhere, idealism Jude nowhere.

The problem of evil. Comparative standards

Basic in the irony of Hardy and Conrad is the problem of evil. Suffering and death are the grist of their tragic matter. They face the same question of evil and unmerited suffering that the ancients did. And still the Sphinx of fate gives no answer to the queries of man: the smile of irony remains on her lips. Hardy tries to interpret the smile, and both he and Conrad try to express it in their writings. For they agree that in a world where nothing is certain but an eternity which levels all things, good and bad are comparative and there are no absolute standards. Commendable and deplorable are in everything. Hence Hardy and Conrad introduce very few conventional villains into their works, and those few into their inferior work, notably Manston, Dare, and Heemskirk. Festus Derriman and Schomburg are comic villains who are too cowardly to be evil at heart and who, naively selfish, are bad mainly with their tongues. Though men like Ricardo and Falk and some of the men in Hardy's short stories are cold-blooded enough, their motives have some justifications. Yet there is abundance of evil in the novels. The great mass of the characters, activists or pessimists, does evil quite unconsciously, elected to do wrongs by suffrages of accidents beyond their immediate perception. Characters like Elfrida, Troy, Boldwood, Venn, Grace Melbury, Arabella, Kurtz, Willems, Nostromo, Verloc feel the urge to live, act, and be happy. No person deliberately
wills to bring trouble to his fellows. Some, such as Mrs. Yeobright, Lady Constantine, and Lingard, bring trouble where they actually intend good. Wildeve, Troy, Mrs. Charmond, Jack Durbeyfield, Almayer, Tuan Jim, Giselle, Viola, Razumov are unconscious of the woe they are bringing upon themselves and others. Evil comes from men's motivating desires and aspirations being at cross-purposes, Clym's and his mother's, Verloc's and Winnie's. Generally the cause is concealment, due to physical contingencies (Geographical separation or misdelivery of letters), personal delicacy, or sense of honor. Lack of frank confession or adjustment or compromise allows small dislikes and disagreements to grow into monstrous proportions. In a complicated novel like The Woodlanders, Tess, or Nostromo the desires and social reactions of many persons produce a set of scenes that is ironical for its cumulative negation of hope and desire. If culprits must be found, then, in Conrad and Hardy, the leading characters are responsible. But the only offense these people commit is to be alive, as the naturalist tells Almayer.

The villainy of fate

Evil is inherent in fate, not in man, though ironically enough, men hold one another responsible, because they fail to see ultimate causes. Time and Circumstance and the villainy of events can be blamed for bringing trouble to man—and they act blindly. From man's standpoint fate is the only villain. Man may blame his fellows, but not always. Lingard, standing over the dead Jaffir, finds no one to reproach him; and Clym Yeobright, indirectly responsible for the death of two women, "had no enemies, and he could get nobody to reproach him, which
was why he so bitterly reproached himself." Even old Humphrey, the
furze-cutter, says after Clym has repeated his self-reproaches, "No, Mr.
Clym, don't fancy that about driving two women to their deaths. You
shouldn't say it."

Here again, in this matter of evil, Hardy is one step beyond Con-
rad; and where Conrad identifies fate and evil, Hardy shows fate itself
the puppet of the Will which is in turn irresponsible. The Spirits of
Ironic and Pity and Malice and the Ages are all emanations of the all-in-
cluding and unreasoning Immortal Will. But in practice the two autho-
res are in accord in never castigating a man though he do wrong or become
distorted morally. They may deplore, criticize, or let other characters
denounce his actions, but they do not attack his inner nature, for it
is not to blame.

Philosophic basis of ironic satire

On the same sense of comparative standards that they base their
treatment of evil, Hardy and Conrad base their ironic satire of society.
They see the incongruities resulting from man's one-sidedness—his en-
thusiasms, follies, rules of honor, firm beliefs, set social standards,
traditional institutions, none all bad, and none all good—and they turn
their revealing on many things, love, marriage, the church, scholarship,
the sea, youth, business...their object is to unveil, not to reform.

Where man thinks of his creations and his ideas as perfections and fixed
entities, Hardy and Conrad see them from a shifting standard which de-
tects their errors and their ill-proportions. Conrad isolates his men
and turns his ironic analysis upon the man himself. Hardy analyzes man
among his associates and turns his irony more upon the idea in conven-
tion.

Of narrative method

The philosophy of Hardy and Conrad is not only thus a clue to their
ironic satire, but to their whole narrative methods. They want to justi-
fy the misfortunes of their characters, to illustrate life as they see
it. Conrad's discursive story-telling and his retrospection arise from
a scrupulous regard for justification. F. M. Ford testifies that Con-
rad "was never satisfied that he had really and sufficiently got his
characters in; he was never convinced that he had convinced the reader;
this accounting for the great lengths of some of his books. He never
introduced a character, however subsidiary, without providing that char-
acter with ancestry and hereditary characteristics, or at least with
home surroundings—always supposing that character had any influence on
the inevitability of the story."¹⁰ In like manner Hardy is prolix of
incident, assembling countless minutiae through which ancestry, occupa-
tion, character, and biographical incidents focus on a series of points,
for his purpose is to justify his view of fate, his thesis against fate.
Hence Hardy cannot be charged with violation of truth and with manipu-
lation of his characters and overworking of coincidence; he feels that
life is as he shows it. In a strictly deterministic universe, there is
really no such thing as coincidence. He is not insincere. He collects
omnipresent data that man overlooks, tampers with the accepted natural

laws, and becomes a diminutive providence in his own sphere; and he does
this to call to man's attention the true reality of things. As a phil-
osopher he can be attacked only for his conceptions as a whole, not for
his constant use of coincidence. But as an artist, he can be charged,
as Conrad cannot, with immoderate and ill-balanced use of irony and co-
incidence in style, as when he uses them prodigally in *The Mayor of
Casterbridge*.

**Ironic in nature**

Hardy and Conrad devote little space to philosophic contemplation
of nature, but in the few passages I have found they see it a fellow
sufferer with man. Fate breeds discord in nature as well as in man.
Animal life does not escape brutal ironies. Gabriel's young sheep dog,
meaning to do well, chases the flock of pregnant ewes to death in a
lime-pit and is promptly killed by Oak. The dog that saves Fanny's
life by aiding her the last eight hundred yards of her struggle to
reach Casterbridge is stoned away the next morning by the man who finds
the two. The finch that Henchard takes as gift for Elizabeth-Jane's
wedding dies in neglected starvation. In *Tess* wounded partridges that
have eluded hunters suffer and die in the cold of winter. In *Chance*
the Fyne's dog happily deserts Flora, leaving her in tears, after she
has refrained from a suicidal leap into the quarry for fear the dog
will be killed by jumping in after her. Plant life is in the struggle
too. In one of his poems, Hardy tells of the great forest tree, two
centuries old, that is soon cut down by a couple of rough men. And
when Malbury and Grace walk into the wood they see plant life suffering
without any agency of man.

Here as everywhere, the Unfulfilled Intention, which makes life what it is, was as obvious as it could be among the depraved crowds of a city slum. The leaf was deformed, the curve was crippled, the taper was interrupted; the lichen eat the vigor of the stalk, and the ivy slowly strangled to death the promising sapling. 11

Similar is the Malay jungle seen by Dain in hiding,

He glanced now and then into the dark shade, so enthralling in its deceptive appearance of coolness, so repellent with its unrelieved gloom, where lay, entombed and rotted, countless generations of trees, and where their successors stood as if mourning, in dark green foliage, immense and helpless, awaiting their turn. Only the parasites seemed to live there in a sanguine rush upwards into the air and sunshine, feeding on the dead and the dying alike, and crowning their victims with pink and blue flowers that gleamed amongst the boughs, incongruous and cruel, like a strident and mocking note in the solemn harmony of the doomed trees. 12

Or the French woods in a storm,

And from morning till night one could see all over the land black demure boughs, the boughs gnarled and twisted, as if contorted with pain, swaying sadly between the wet clouds and the soaked earth. 13

Tempered optimism and pessimism

Hardy and Conrad, the English architect and the Polish seaman, then, study the manifestations of fate in the world of men and see men blindly pitted against overwhelming odds, suffering from an illogical and unjust fate; Conrad accepts this ironic tragedy of existence; Hardy tries to explore and explain it. Conrad, the man of experience on many lands and seas, comes to the conclusion that life has at least some

11. Thomas Hardy, The Woodlanders, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1895, p. 52
12. Almayer’s Folly, p. 167
13. “The Idiots”, Tales of Unrest, p. 70
pleasureable illusions, that life is worth living. Hardy, the man of thought and the student of philosophy, decides that "Pain has been, and pain is: no new sort of morals in Nature can remove pain from the past and make it pleasure for those who are its infallible estimators."

and yet feels that there must be good somewhere, if only it could be arrived at; hence his exploration of reality, which he finds gloomy and sombre enough, stript of the illusions he will not accept, because he feels that if there is a way to the Better it exacts a full look at the Worst. He refuses to be optimistic until he can find encouraging data, and he never finds it, though his biography indicates that in his later years he clings to the intuitional hope that a hampered God of goodness is striving for consciousness and freedom in order to work for the good of man. Hardy the aged dreamer thus finds an escape which Hardy the mature thinker and writer never finds—from the world's maze of ironies.

APPENDIX

The Works of Joseph Conrad and Dates First Published

(After T. J. Wise, E. A. Wilson, and first editions)

1895  Almayer's Folly
1896  An Outcast of the Islands
1897  The Nigger of the Narcissus (Children of the Sea)
1898  Tales of Unrest
1900  Lord Jim
1901  The Inheritors (with Ford Madox Ford)
1902  Youth
1903  Typhoon and Other Stories
     Falk
     Romance (with Ford Madox Ford)
1904  Nostromo
1906  The Mirror of the Sea
1907  The Secret Agent
1908  A Set of Six
1911  Under Western Eyes
1912  A Personal Record (Some Reminiscences)
     'Twixt Land and Sea
1913  Chance
1915  Within the Tides
     Victory
1917  One Day More
     The Shadow Line
1919  The Arrow of Gold
1920  The Rescue
1921  Notes on Life and Letters
1923  The Rover
     Laughing Anne
1924  The Nature of a Crime (with Ford Madox Ford)
1925  Tales of Hearsay
     Suspense
1926  Last Essays
The Works of Thomas Hardy and Dates First Published

(After F. O. Szasz, *Thomas Hardy, Notes on His Life and Work*, and first editions)

1871 Desperate Remedies
1872 Under the Greenwood Tree
1873 A Pair of Blue Eyes
1874 Far from the Madding Crowd
1876 The Hand of Ethelberta
1878 The Return of the Native
1880 The Trumpet-Major
1881 A Laodicean
1882 Two on a Tower
1886 The Mayor of Casterbridge
1887 The Woodlanders
1888 Wessex Tales
1891 A Group of Noble Dames
1892 Tess of the D'Urbervilles
1894 The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved
1895 Jude the Obscure
1897 The Well-Beloved (re-written from 1892)
1898 Wessex Poems (abbreviated WP)
1901 Poems of the Past and the Present (P.P.P)
1904 The Dynasts, Part I
1906 The Dynasts, Part II
1908 The Dynasts, Part III
1909 Time's Laughingstocks and Other Verses (T.L.)
1914 A Changed Man (stories written 1861-1900)
1916 Satires of Circumstance (S.C.)
1918 Moments of Vision and Miscellaneous Verse (M.V)
1922 Late Lyrics and Earlier (L.L.E)
1925 Life and Art (Edited by Ernest Brennocks)
1928 Human Shows, Far Fantasies (H.F.F)
1928 Winter Words (W.W)
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