

**The Gravity of Oppositions**  
**The Life and Art of Thomas Hardy**

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## **Declaration of Originality**

Declaration: I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and does not contain the work of any other individual. All sources that have been consulted have been identified and acknowledged in the appropriate way.

Signature of Candidate:

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Tony Fleming

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Dedication**

To Karen and some wonderful sunny days with you and the family at Dorchester

## Abstract

A narrative derived from the life and work of a writer can offer deeper insight than looking at his work as a separate study. To concentrate biographically on the superficial details of Hardy's life and times without considering the external influences of Victorian values and attitudes does not attempt to engage with his interiority. A psychoanalytic study of an individual so complex and multi-faceted as Hardy would be too narrow a focus. Therefore, it is probably more beneficial to take Carl Jung's holistic approach to the exploration of the human psyche, rather than a narrower Freudian scientific and medically based case study of the known facts of his life. To explore his genius without conforming to the narrow paradigms of psychology requires a holistic examination of facts, probabilities and speculation. In an evolutionary sense, fresh ideas are derived from practices that have become redundant. The radical ideas that replace them are created and carried forward by iconoclastic visionary artists such as Hardy, who sense that those contemporary social mores have become moribund and outmoded. Genetics, personal experience and the pressures of traditional cultural values establish the character or genius of a creative artist like Hardy, who believed like Heraclitus that character was fate. Henchard, the eponymous *Mayor of Casterbridge* was as the sub-title of the novel declares, a man of character. Hardy's true character will always remain a mystery though it is possible to ascertain an approximation of his essential nature.

Research into the lived life and works of a major writer such as Hardy brings with it a deeper understanding of how his psychic processes operated. It also imparts an intuitive

feeling of what was the genesis of the ideas that motivated him. With references to the Jungian psychotherapist James Hillman, who has further developed Jung's theory of Archetypal psychology, it is possible to make the cogent argument that both Hardy and his major characters were examples of the soul/spirit oppositions; the theory argues that *Puer* characters want to ascend the heights of existence whereas the soul's destiny is to experience life in all its mundane and squalid complexities. Hardy into his eighties epitomised the anomaly that whilst the human form ages the spirit remains perennially youthful. Hardy's ability to accommodate cardinal conflicts, particularly the Freudian Eros/Thanatos dialectic to the end of a very long life was a remarkable achievement. His melancholic disposition transferred to the quiet desperation of most of his characters in the novels. When Hardy's life and works are explored, they bring into relief universal and timeless issues of religious belief and dissent, love and apathy, man and nature. The research elucidates whether a monotheistic or polytheistic perspective works to the advantage of the individual. Whilst the polytheistic soul of Hardy, the well-spring from which the totality of his life and works flowed will always remain a mystery, the challenge to understand its complexity is an invitation to engage with him anew.

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## **Epigraph**

‘For a novel addressed by a man to men and women of full age; which attempts to deal unaffectedly with the fret and fever, derision and disaster, that may press in the wake of the strongest passion known to humanity; to tell without a mincing of words, of a deadly war waged between flesh and spirit; and to point the tragedy of unfulfilled aims, I am not aware that there is anything in the handling to which exception can be taken’ (Hardy, 2008: Preface to the First Edition).



## Introduction

I would begin with a comment from the Lebanese poet Kahlil Gibran who said a divided house is not a house of thieves; it is simply a divided house, and this applies to the gravity of oppositions in the life and art of Thomas Hardy, a topic that is at the core of my thesis. Gibran's comments were ones with which Hardy, formally a religious aspirant, would have identified, and were in direct opposition to the evangelist Mark (3:25) who stated that a house divided against itself cannot stand. This thesis will attempt to discover how Hardy's gravity of oppositions manifested in his life and fiction. For example, his decision not to attend Cambridge University gave the world a great writer but the university world lost an academic. In fiction, Tess's decision to be true to her inner values and reveal her sorry past to Angel on their wedding night was a calamitous one. The oppositions between reflective humanity and unconscious nature are at the core of the Hardyian opus, where the reader is offered an implicit invitation to explore whether the ethical consciousness innate in humanity can arrest the rampant desire of nature to procreate and expand its hegemony. Hardy's championing of Darwinian evolutionary theory was rebutted by his contemporary the poet T.S. Eliot in his poem 'Dry Salvages', taken from *Four Quartets*, which states 'There is no end of it, the voiceless wailing / No end to the withering of flowers / To the movement of the sea, and the drifting wreckage'. Hardy and Eliot clearly set out the life and death cycles but are vastly different in their attitudes. It is arguable that the monotheistic outlook, which Hardy abandoned and Eliot embraced, were what made the Wessex author pessimistic and produced a sense of transcendence in Eliot.

The large market town of Dorchester has impressive statues of two of its favourite sons. William Barnes's (1801-1886) statue is situated in the middle of the market town, between the museum and main church, whilst Thomas Hardy's likeness sits in a less central spot. Barnes' memorial stands two minutes' walk in different directions from the fictional residence of the Mayor of Casterbridge, and the King's Arms Hotel, where the eponymous mayor addressed the citizens from its bay window. Barnes represents what Hardy could have been if he had stayed true to his ambitions to become a clergyman-poet. The two men had so much in common in background, literary gifts, and as provincial writers from rural origins, they understood Nature and sympathised with the conditions besetting agricultural workers in the early to late Victorian period respectively. Barnes would have had a fellow-Christian feeling and affinity with T.S. Eliot who would have believed like John Keats that the world was a vale of soul making which enabled the believer in Christian resurrection to transcend life's greatest difficulties. Hardy fought and resisted this particular bromide throughout his life.

By taking a psycho-spiritual humanist and holistic approach to Hardy's life and literary output, I hope to add significantly to the knowledge of Hardy studies. This approach is non-judgemental, accommodating without prejudice the myriad aspects of Hardy's personhood: intellectual, emotional, spiritual and soulful. The approach will be studious, not conducted from the perspective of one possessing any special expertise in psychology or philosophical certainties. By drawing on the important events in Hardy's life it will be seen how his life conditions at various times impacted on the creation of artistic situations and characterisation. Having read many of the thesis's and biographies already in existence pertaining to Hardy studies and many journals from the Thomas Hardy Society over the last seven years I would claim that this thesis approach is different; it offers a unique perspective, due primarily to its concentration on issues which caused Hardy, his protagonists, and

Victorian society a great deal of soul searching. As a participating member of the Thomas Hardy Society, I have attended various symposia over the years in Dorchester, and during discussions there, many of the emanations arising from the soul and spirit of Hardy were debated without any investigation being *\*made* into his own paradoxes and contradictions, and how and why these coloured his fiction and poetry. This thesis works by way of a two-way process: writer to literary output and its reverse, back and forth.

In Hardy's era, the many references to soul and spirit were almost universally understood, but since then the decline of religion and the rise of a medically oriented scientific approach in psychology to human pathology has substituted the term 'psyche' for those psychic elements of the imagination, almost eliminating them from the common vocabulary. It is arguable that due to the contemporary elevation of scientific facts over the power of the human imagination, individuality has, to some extent, been smothered, a situation that Hardy would have abhorred. Hardy promoted and eulogised his Romantic antecedent Keats whose dictum was 'what the imagination seizes as beauty must be truth'. As this thesis has employed the psychological works of Freud, Jung, Hillman and the psycho-spiritual humanist approach of William James and James Hillman to revert to idioms widely used in Hardy's oeuvre, its intentions are to give an accurate account of what constituted the fundamental spiritual and soulful oppositions residing within the author and by extension, his characters. Hardy's great difficulties within his church and marriage are recycled throughout the major novels in ways that mirrored the problems besetting many individuals as the twentieth century approached.

Different Hardy archives in Dorchester's museum were examined in order to inspect old notebooks and drafts of novels in progress. I attended symposia at four different Hardy biennial conferences in the united church in Dorchester, as well as a conference held in Exeter sponsored by the South-West Victorian Literary Society exchanging views and

gathering academic opinions on Hardy's divided nature. I visited Hardy's former houses at Upper Bockhampton and Max Gate to experience his habitats both as a struggling artist and as a very successful author respectively. On-Line research at the British Museum in London and membership of the South West Victorian Literary Society offered access to original material consulted in the course of the thesis construction. I interviewed authorities on Hardy scholarship; the Professors Michael Irwin, Philip Davis and Rosemarie Morgan and sought the views of Professor Tim Kendall of Exeter University on Hardy's poetry.

I hope to demonstrate the influence of Hardy's life choices and interactions with others on his art. Given his rejection of religion and his embrace of Darwin's theories, there was a moral dialectic involved in both his life and art. I hope to show that the major decisions, acts and tragedies of Hardy's emotional and intellectual lives can be traced to the great themes and characters of his books, and also to the themes of his poetry. By twenty-five years of age, Hardy had let go of the rigidity demanded by Christian monotheism in religious matters embracing agnosticism instead. Hardy was also something of a pantheist, as demonstrated in his concept of an Immanent God; his fiction and poetry consistently alludes to Nature being an expression of both a malign and benign Deity. It will be shown that Hardy's fiction has had a marked effect on English society, as evidenced in the subsequent changes to educational opportunities for the under-privileged, and the paradigm shifts in the marriage laws, and the further loosening of the bonds between church and state.

I hope to demonstrate that his work can be viewed through a series of oppositions between life and art; religion and science; optimism and pessimism; Darwinism and meliorism; and fate and free will. Hardy addressed the relationship of man with himself, and the gravity of oppositions residing within Hardy's interiority pulled him in opposite directions, creating the need to be or not be one person or another, at any given time. This was a dynamic internal developmental process, which meant that his life choices and

decisions were a significant unconscious influence on his imaginary scenarios. His work is full of moral and ethical dilemmas. Love matters remained consistent themes throughout his life and work, and there was a synchronicity between his lived life and literary output, as early enthusiasms for the beloved usually end in disappointments. He projected his internal dialectic debates on to his fictive characters in their thoughts and resultant actions. The fact that those projections emanated from a gloomy outlook and a melancholic disposition is mirrored by the grim and almost unrelenting tragedy of a novel like *Jude the Obscure*. Hardy, in his personal life, possessed a great deal of empathetic compassion for the underprivileged, and for those who were oppressed by the laws of religion, the state, or nature; roles usually filled by the poverty-stricken, unfortunate women, farm labourers, struggling artisans, and intelligent ambitious people of both sexes, with healthy desires to improve their lot by rising in the world. This is a significant ethical strain, which will be traced through his work.

The development of Hardy as an individual and as a novelist-poet was gradual, which shows in his maturing over the years; hence, my approach is broadly chronological. The early to mid-point novels, his early verse, and the autobiographical opus *The Life* act as a historical record of the evolution of Hardy as a novelist, poet and person. He confessed to being immature, perhaps emotionally so, until his mid-fifties, which coincides with the publication of *Jude the Obscure* in 1895. It is probable that this his last novel contains some of Hardy's simmering and agitated resentment that first saw the light of day in *The Poor Man and The Lady*. According to Hardy this unpublished novel was filled with reactionary sentiments which George Meredith warned him would discommode the conservative mind-sets of the ruling classes, who saw nothing amiss with the snail's pace of change that later afflicted the social, religious, and educational lives of Sue and Jude. These troubled characters acted as prototypes for the afflictions of the uncomfortable within society, and it is clear from the 1912 Preface to *Jude the Obscure* that Hardy was pleased with how the novel's central

message had achieved its objective; Hardy realised that public reaction to the novel identified its author as an agent for change, and according to Hardy, some readers felt that Ruskin College at Oxford, for intelligent men with ambition from the poorer classes, should have been called The College of Jude the Obscure. This novel's acceptance was not uniform as many felt the book should have had the title Jude the Obscene. Hardy's work always possessed the potential to afflict the comfortable.

From *Far From the Madding Crowd* and onwards, Hardy wove the anomalies of the times into story-lines arousing the interests of readers as interested in the sub-text as in the narrative; Bathsheba is a strident individualist, full of ambition, whose time has come to lay the lie that women could not be successful at the pinnacle of an agricultural business. Henchard, as the eponymous Mayor of Casterbridge, is probably Hardy's greatest character, full of contradictions whose psychic oppositions pull him one way then the other. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is a covert attack on sexual prudery and the contemporary double standards for men and women. This novel highlights the need for ethical standards to counter evolution's thoughtless reproductive instincts. The novel also illustrates how religion has lost its Christian message, and it highlights the unearned privileges of patriarchy and wealth as represented by Alec who seduces the young teenager Tess. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Hardy used the socio-economic topic of alcoholic abuse and its consequences, in a similar manner to *The Mayor of Casterbridge* as the central causality of both tragedies. Hardy's rural upbringing and later research enabled him to offer feasible economic scenarios of the agri-business in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, in relation to which he would have been hopeful that he was not 'wasting his sweetness on the desert air', an allusion to Thomas Gray's poem 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard', which is apposite as another line from 'The Elegy' furnished Hardy with the novel's title. The oppositions in this novel arose from Hardy's

moods wherein the frenetic excitements in an action-filled novel are contrasted by Gabriel Oak's peaceful demeanour and the occasional tranquillity of the landscape.

Hardy's wide reading of classical and religious texts, combined with his experience as an architect, for which he won a literary prize, is patently clear in the many allusions and eclectic references to Greek and Roman cultural images, as well as in the architectural features throughout the fourteen novels. In his poetry, he encapsulates in more condensed and concrete language, all of his themes that we see in the novels. As Hardy's own life contained major dualities, it was a challenge to explore how the internal oppositional images he experienced were sublimated into coherent poetic scenes and narrative dramas. Starting with Hardy's autobiography *The Life*, and taking note of the voices of critics, contemporaries and friends, it was possible to conclude that the spirit of Hardy the person speaks loud and clear on a multiplicity of issues, which affected him throughout his life; in a real sense Hardy's fiction was an exposition in narrative form of Victorian liberalism for the masses. The early to mid-point novels revealed an artist coming into his strength, one who had not yet fully evolved into the master storyteller, who would incorporate the liveliest and controversial social and personal debates into narrative form. It was important to undertake a close-reading of the major novels including *Far From the Madding Crowd*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and *Jude the Obscure* in order to establish how the dramas reverted back to Victorian life in general, to Hardy's essays and commentaries, and episodes from his life's experience. Poetry was Hardy's first love and he stated it revealed more about him in one hundred lines than in all the fiction, therefore it was essential to examine this genre in order to discover the ideas, motifs, and concerns, which pre-occupied the writer. Unlike the fiction, the verse could not be examined chronologically as many poems like 'Hap' and 'Lyonesse' were published decades after they were written. Whilst making allowances for voices other than the poets in the verse, the poetry overall confirms the Hardyian spirit and

candour of the fiction, even more so. The poems 'The Oxen', 'In Tenebris', and 'I Said to Love' are convincing expositions of true Hardy.

The thesis does not purport to be a biography, nor does it approach Hardy's art from a strictly Darwinian, New-Historicist, Psychoanalytical, Proto-Modernist, Formalist, Modernist, Post-Modernist or other theoretical basis, though it contains elements of all those perspectives. It is rather to quote Hardy himself, a series of seemings and impressions gathered from a variety of sources, but in the first instance from the life and art of the writer. It lays no claims to be a definitive record of the symbiosis between Hardy's life and art due to the impossibility of fully understanding Hardy motives and philosophies, at such a remove in terms of time and culture. Because Hardy alone experienced first-hand the general ethos of the rural communities, which act as the settings for his art, it is in the main a subjective portrait, and consequently the thesis does not seek to establish modern affinities with the characters. To do so would be problematical as even Hardy would have found difficulties separating his personality from that of his protagonists. The thesis lays no claim that it could ever comprehend the complexity of Hardy's interiority, the basis from which it proceeds is that the slant of the stories, poems and essays imply certain qualities possessed and in possession of the author. As an analogy when reading a train timetable the passenger finds it is true by discovering that it does correspond to the physical journey; similarly, when one studies Hardy's life and art certain truths about the man emerge which reveal the general nature of his inner vision, which dictated what, and how he wrote. It is impossible to divine the soul of Hardy, as mystery by its very nature remains obscure.

Chapter One looked at Hardy's background and early conditioning to discover whom and what influenced his ambition to become a writer. Chapter Two's undertaking was to trace his development as a novelist. Chapter Three examined the early to mid-point novels for evidence of Hardy's plot, pattern and subject matter; to see how his life's experience and self-

education gave him material for his fiction. Chapter Four illustrated how alcohol abuse became a central component in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* and it also investigated the pathologies underpinning the alcoholic behaviour in the novels. Chapter Five looked at the oppositions addressed in his work between Nature and human beings, demonstrating how Tess's synchronicity with Nature brought her into conflict with Victorian society's values, which in turn affected her mind and personality. Chapter Six probed the Jungian dialectic between flesh and the spirit in *Jude the Obscure*, using the Jungian psychotherapist James Hillman as an informational source. Chapter Seven looked\* at his poetry, which encapsulates his views that a way to the betterment of humanity could be explored by taking a full look at the worst of the human condition. Hardy can be taken at his word, as what he saw imaginatively was a blighted planet from which a rural community extracted a subsistence sometimes under tremendous difficulties. He offered poetic images on human problems arising from decisions and their shadows. One of his final poems 'So Various', is a typical Hardyan ambivalence, after eight hundred poems, many describing human sorrow and despair, it ends on a note of triumph and hope.

The connection between Hardy's life and art was captured in Thomas and Jemima's conviction that a mysterious negative force stood in the way of their ambitions which was also the invisible nemesis alluded to by the life-defeated Sue Bridehead at the conclusion of *Jude the Obscure*. The volte-face undergone by both Fawley's implies that in the Hardyan universe, desperate people do desperate things. The American writer-philosopher Henry David Thoreau put the Hardyan dilemma succinctly in *Walden* when stating that 'The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation'. Sigmund Freud acknowledged that Thomas Hardy understood the mental processes involved in psychoanalysis. He felt that Hardy had grasped the essential truth that it was within the mind of each individual that the potential for the

happiness, or its opposite, resided. Freud's theory of the dialectic between Eros and Thanatos was the fundamental opposition that Hardy also addressed in much of his prose and verse. For Freud, human subjectivity was divided into the conscious and the unconscious, and this split subjectivity was at the core of the complexity of human behaviour. For psychoanalysis, the cause and effect paradigm of rational science would never be enough in itself to explain the complex, and sometimes self-destructive, behaviours of individuals. Similarly, the moral Manichaeism of organised religion, governed by the binaries of right and wrong, sin and virtue, also did not seem to explain the complex interactions, desires and illogical actions of people in society.

Freud's ideas on repression, condensation, and displacement, where unconscious desires are driven beneath the surface, but surface again in unusual behaviours, which were then in need of interpretation, were significant in their explanation of the complexities, contradictions and seeming inconsistencies in human behaviour. The core point for Freud was that human behaviour was not a given, but rather, that it was in need of interpretation and analysis. He saw the human mind as a text in need of interpretation, as conscious fears and desires are repressed into the unconscious, from where these repressed emotions and instincts reappear in unusual and sometimes opaque form. This reappearance was often difficult to understand, hence the need for interpretation. Freud suggested that our lives are dominated by two basic instincts: Eros (the sexual drive or creative life force), and Thanatos (the death drive). The mythical characters of Eros and Thanatos were used by Freud in his formulation of drive theory to represent the two primary outlets of biological energy: Eros represents life, creativity, growth and increase in tension; Thanatos represents the movement toward homeostasis (elimination of all tensions), dissolution, negation and death. We are constantly stimulated and driven into action by a balance of these energies (Freud, 1961: 54-64).

So Eros and Thanatos (interestingly, Freud himself did not choose this name, he just referred to the death-drive; in Greek mythology Thanatos was an angel of death and the son of Nyx and Erebus the deities of night and darkness), could be reframed as love and death, and from this perspective, the connection between Freud and Hardy, at an intellectual level becomes clear. Hardy's great tragic novels address both of these polar opposites, and indeed, the drive towards love is constantly being contradicted and opposed, sometimes violently, by the drive towards death in all of his major characters. This central opposition is a governing trait in them all. When we think of Michael Henchard, Tess Durbeyfield, Jude Fawley, Sue Bridehead, Bathsheba Everdene, William Boldwood, and Sergeant Troy, what we think of are conflicted characters who act, often against their own interest, at different times in their narratives. These actions, while they may seem to go against common sense, are in fact what make these characters human, and what has made them narrative icons in the English novelistic canon. Freud is correct: Hardy understood the complex processes of mind and body that combine to make us human, and he had the gift to create fictional figures who reflect core aspects of that humanity back to us across the pages of his great novels.

It is arguable that Hardy's narratives and poetry offer a more comprehensive picture of human interiority as revealed in outer actions than Freud's more clinically based examination of the human psyche, which, because it is bound by the root metaphor of medicine to do no harm, cannot fully interpret the boundless complexity of existence. Hardy's decision in his mid-twenties to embrace a wider polytheistic view of life instead of the monotheistic vision of his former religious belief is a significant example of how a mental decision may not be always followed by one's emotions. Hardy's residual emotional attachment to religious experiences meant that a conflict remained between his intellect and emotions that persisted throughout his life. William James's contemporary classic work *The Varieties of Religious Experiences*, on the nature of belief, agnosticism and atheism, offers

remarkable insight on the psyche of the divided self. James's research in the study contains a whole chapter on the divided self and the process of its unification (James, 1985: 166).

It is important to state from the outset that this will not be a Freudian-inspired thesis, nor will there be any sustained critique of Hardy through Freud. The reason for this initial comparison is to point to the connection between Freud's psychoanalytic probing of the conflicts and splits of the human mind, especially in terms of conscious and unconscious, and Hardy's fictive probing of similar conflicts and complexities. This thesis will attempt to demonstrate that Hardy, as a human being, was split into a series of ongoing and unresolved conflicts, oppositions and divisions. In terms of religion, social class, language, belief and marriage, Hardy was a very complex individual, who seldom found harmony, but rather was pulled at different times, by each side of these oppositions. The gravitational pull of these oppositions needed some way in which to be resolved, and it was in his writing and his art that this was attempted. Hardy, like Freud, expressed the view that in modern society and culture, human subjectivity is both created by, and perhaps ultimately also destroyed by, such oppositions, and it could also be argued that it was through such oppositions that Hardy was able to create his great tragic characters, all of whom struggled to find harmony, or some form of dialectical fusion, of the different aspects of their identity.

From an early age, the Dorset writer was split between a desire for social advancement, which involved aspiring to membership of the superior social class, and a strong ethical sense of suppressed anger at the treatment of those on the bottom rungs of the social ladder. He very often espoused causes that would be seen as highly critical of upper-class English society, but at the same time was enjoying the privileged life that accompanied being one of the foremost writers of his generation. Hardy was such a conflicted individual that he could write a character as profoundly atheistic as Sue Bridehead, and as profoundly conflicted as Jude Fawley. Jude, like the biblical Job, despite his many vicissitudes and whilst

regretting being born at all, wrestled with his doubts about the veracity of God's compassion for human suffering right to the end. Indeed, Jude's final moments were not dissimilar to Hardy's own demise as he too sought comfort and identification with a Robert Browning poem which offered consolations in the utility of life and the rewards of old age, and the verses of 'Omar Khayyam' which counselled taking life's pleasure when and where it was offered. Hardy, a self-proclaimed agnostic, still remained emotionally drawn to holy places, attending church services with his wife Emma in what could be interpreted within his own social circle as a couple possessing orthodox beliefs in marriage and religion. This outward show of mutual and religious devotion was at odds with the private reality of their lives.

His attitudes to religion were especially conflicted, as will be demonstrated in this thesis. At a deeper level, Hardy rejected the pains of existence, particularly emotional pain, as he felt that through such pain, humanity's psychophysical development had outstripped its animal senses. As a consequence, he was loath to believe in the concept of Intelligent Design, which if it existed had erred grievously in creating a world of random occurrences where pain more than pleasure was the daily experience for the mass of humanity. It is arguable that Hardy understood, to some extent, that his role was to address and demystify the uncertainties of human existence for those who, through fear and apprehension, were unsure from whence they came or what came after death. The line from 'In Tenebris': 'who holds that if a way to the Better there be, it exacts a full look at the Worst' (Hardy, 1995: 154), represents the fearless nature of a writer who looked into the abyss without blinking. The later novels and more especially his poetry are the abstract manifestations of his internal conflicts, which saw life as difficult and death as a form of deliverance.

Hardy was a multi-talented individual with an accumulative desire for knowledge. He loved folk and classical music and great art; he was familiar with all its schools and trends. He wrote a book on how to construct a house, and as the incidences of architectural detail in

the novels reveal, his time as an architect was well spent. The scientific discoveries by Charles Lyell in Geology, and Charles Darwin in tracing the origin of organic life on Earth, formed much of his developing intellectual perspectives. Lyell's discoveries, contained in *Principles of Geology* (1830-33), had as their maxim 'the present is the key to the past', and his work questioned the age of the Earth as proclaimed by religious theologians, just as Darwin's *Origin of Species* questioned the Adam and Eve religious narrative. Hardy had fully acquainted himself with Greek Mythology, the classic literature of the Greek and Roman periods, and as the readings of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* reveal, he knew the Old and Testaments of the Bible as well as any young minister taking holy orders.

In poetry, his admiration for Shakespeare, Keats and Shelley is seen in both his oblique and clear references to their work, and also to that of his contemporary Algernon Swinburne, who was a poet that he greatly admired. The philosopher John Stuart Mill's ideas were incorporated into the philosophical ruminations of Sue in *Jude the Obscure*, as was Schopenhauer's disposition in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, indeed many critics remark on the great affinity for melancholic reflection between Hardy and his German predecessor. He would have found Mill's essays on the *Subjection of Women* and *On Liberty* philosophical outlooks to be desired, and implemented as soon as circumstances allowed, and he admitted to an admiration for Thomas Huxley and for a while, he was a devotee of Herbert Spencer's interpretation of Darwinian Theory. The influences exerted on Hardy from these eclectic sources were what formed the inner perspective from which he wrote some of the most original and controversial fiction of the Victorian era, as well as insightful, accessible, if pessimistic, poetry in the early twentieth century.

In the light of all of these conflicts and disparate influences, this thesis will set out to explore connections, associations and influences of the life of Thomas Hardy on his art. By taking a broader Jungian and Jamesian holistic view, rather than a narrower Freudian

scientific psychological approach to Hardy's life and works, this study will attempt to explore the interiority of a writer who was vexed and ambivalent on the major social and religious issues affecting society in the Victorian era. It will examine his reflections, influences, friendships and heterosexual relationships, in order to establish the significant areas of connection between the oppositions that split his life, as well as the conflicted characters who bestride his novels. The thesis will offer an in-depth examination of how the inner life of Hardy developed, and will probe how this development brought with it opportunities, problems and disappointments. It will suggest that much the same can be argued in the case of his great protagonists, for whom talent and opportunity were nearly always dogged by the shadow of misfortune. Aristotle's dictum 'the definition of man is the definition of his soul' (Hillman, 1997: viii), and Carl Jung's life-long search for individuation, will be important points of reference throughout in order to comprehend the essences from which the life and works of the Dorset writer emanated.

Any meaningful examination of Hardy will show how a multiplicity of inner forces, not always complementary to each other, contended for supremacy within his psyche. It is arguable that in order to sustain his emotional balance, much of this inner turbulence was redirected onto his literary characters, and into his ambivalent verse, through a form of psychological transference. Hardy's poetry represents a direct channel from the soul of the writer and two poems in particular capture his intrinsic oppositions. The poignant sadness of the recollection of happier by-gone days is contained in the poem 'The Self - Unseeing' (Hardy, 1995: 152), where pleasant memories mingle with the deeper reality of personal loss. 'During Wind and Rain' (Hardy, 1995: 465) also expresses the inexorable movement of life and time, with its intermittent brief episodes of optimism and pleasure ultimately erased by the natural cycles of birth and death: a case of gloomy reality tempering one's brightest hopes. The line from this poem 'And the rotten rose is ript from the wall' combines beauty

and ugliness as time and its agents, the elements of wind and rain, wreak havoc on the once beautiful flower. Implicitly, the ephemeral and painful nature of human existence is lamented rather than celebrated.

Hardy's personal and artistic development was progressive. The basic talent and inner vision which formed his personal philosophy, and from which he created the unpublished *The Poor Man and the Lady*, continuously evolved throughout his career as a novelist, though his fundamental desire to convey a good story and give oxygen to the many religious and social anomalies provoking his conscience was a constant ambition up to his final novel *Jude the Obscure*. The thesis will look at the novels selectively and individually from the first published one *Desperate Remedies*, to *Two on a Tower*, which marked the mid-point position of his fictive history. Whilst the examination of this particular tranche of fiction will reveal trends and patterns bearing the Hardy trademark of a good storyteller, it is arguable that none of these texts achieved the literary stature of greatness, which is illustrated by four of the later works. What the early novels reveal is the way in which Hardy drew on his country background, and also the importance of nature in both its benign and malign moods as it affects the fates of humanity.

The chronology of Hardy's fiction sees him deal in preliminary ways with issues that emerge with progressive clarity and candour as he matured as a novelist. Hardy considered *Desperate Remedies* to be a mistake, as he was trying to achieve commercial success by imitating Wilkie Collins, the leading contemporary exponent of the thriller genre. In writing to someone else's formula, he was not in harmony with his own native talents, and though the novel contained some of the better aspects of Hardy's fictive writing, overall, it was poorly received. *Under the Greenwood Tree* is one of Hardy's finest pastoral novels and the different rhythms of the seasons evoke different responses from the locals. The novel also demonstrates Hardy's fascination with heterosexual love matters. *A Pair of Blue Eyes* was

largely biographical as it coincided with his courtship of his wife Emma. This novel was daring for its era, as it had its heroine, Elfrida, divest herself of undergarments to use as a makeshift rope to rescue her imperilled boyfriend Henry Knight.

The early to mid-way novels are harbingers of Hardy's developing ideas. In *The Return of the Native*, Hardy illustrated the great daily battles for survival and hegemony in Nature, and created human parallels amounting to a form of social Darwinism in a rural society where survival of the fittest and the most unscrupulous points to a lack of ethics in both man and nature. The Darwinian-themed later novel, *The Woodlanders*, is also a bleak study of survival against great odds, 'the lichen ate the vigour of the stalk, and the ivy strangled to death the promising sapling' (Hardy, 2009: 48). *Jude the Obscure* deals with a lack of Christian and moral values that correspond to nature's survival of the fittest, where baser animal survival and predatory instincts prevail over the vulnerable; the sensitive Jude is crushed by the coarsely sexual Arabella who in turn is exploited by the promiscuous and unscrupulous quack Vilbert. Therefore, the thesis will offer a concise examination of the selected novels up to the mid-point of Hardy's fiction, and then progress to an in-depth analysis of the four great novels, beginning with *Far From the Madding Crowd*.

*Far From the Madding Crowd* was the novel that brought major commercial success, prestige and enhanced confidence to Hardy. It is arguably one of his four outstanding works of fiction. It ambitiously deals with both repressed emotionality and sexuality, and their return, in the character of William Boldwood. Bathsheba Everdene is a modern prototype as a female authority figure in a predominantly male-dominated agricultural world. Bathsheba, in more traditional female guise, follows through on her emotions in loving the duplicitous Frank Troy to her own detriment, and that of everyone else in the novel, only to be saved in the *denouement* by the steadiness of Gabriel Oak. There are Gothic elements in the coffin-opening scene, and allusions to invisible forces acting out their desires in the life of Fanny

Robin and her child. In the romantic entanglements of Troy with Fanny and Bathsheba, and in the conflicted nature of the choices made by all three characters can be seen the conflicts and debates that were rife in Hardy's own psyche. It was a novel that drew comparisons between George Eliot and Hardy.

Michael Henchard, in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, is a *major tour de force* as a character in Hardy's mature depiction of insecurity, strength, aggression and softness. He is a \*Greek like mythic figure in terms of archetype, and of Shakespearean stature, resembling King Lear on the heath, as he wrestles with his emotions, possessiveness, morality and destiny. His internal oppositions oscillate between love and hate; selfishness and selflessness; pride and humility; and duty and opportunism. Hardy highlights the issue of alcohol excess, as shown in Troy's irresponsibility in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, and shows how this also caused the gravest problems for Henchard. His character is replete with the metaphorical representation of many of the elements of nature. In the 1912 preface to the work, Hardy states that the story was 'more particularly a study of one man's deeds and character than, perhaps, any other' of those included in his 'exhibition of Wessex life' (Hardy, 2008: 3-4).

In my opinion, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* was the character closest to Hardy's concept of an ideal woman. Her portrayal as a combination of Artemis and Aphrodite juxtaposes purity and sexuality respectively. Hardy would have known how, in Greek myth, those Goddesses of the harvest and chastity become jealous when their influences and promptings are ignored by humans. Angel Clare refers to Tess as being the reincarnation of Artemis and Demeter, both icons of purity and wholesomeness (Hardy, 2008: 146). Aphrodite is the goddess of sexuality and sensuality whose needs must also be catered to by humans, as otherwise she may grow jealous and wounding. Hardy endows Tess with a Cyprian image alluding to Venus and Aphrodite (Hardy, 2008: 326) opposing her higher self with the earthiness of competing goddesses. Tess wants to be treated as a human and not as a divinity,

which is the opposite of what her lover Angel Clare wishes her to be. The fault lines in their rarefied relationship are caused by a mutual idealisation of each other. The shadow of their ideals is seen in their rude awakening on their wedding night, when Tess's unrealistic expectations are confronted by the possessiveness and jealousy of Angel. His ideal of a perfect wife is destroyed by Tess's honest admission of her previous sexual history, thereby erasing his spotless idealist values, and releasing the shadow of his haughtiness and misogyny. His perfectionism is opposed by Tess's realism and this is another opposition that is central to the narrative of the star-crossed lovers. Alcohol abuse is a symptom of the dysfunction in the Durbeyfield household, as mother Joan and Father John imbibe to the point of recklessness. They are poor role models to a daughter who has spiritually inherited the aristocratic nobility of her D'Urberville ancestry, marking her out as an opposition to their peasant ways. The story ends with an allusion to the injustice of the gods towards humanity and how the President of the Immortals (in Aeschylean phrase) had ended his sport with Tess (Hardy, 2008: 420).

*Jude the Obscure* was the controversial culmination of Hardy's novelistic career. The novel encapsulates all the causes important to Hardy. There was a certain irony in how Hardy was living two lives, one as a very successful man of letters, a socialite, magistrate, *bon vivant* and attendee at church. When he sat down to write his final novel, he was drawing events from past memories, when, as a young man, he struggled to create a literary niche for himself. The early life of Hardy is replete with experiences that are part of the fictive journeys of Jude and Sue, specifically experience of the social divisions in the Victorian era, religious dubiety, disappointments in love, poor educational opportunities and the difference between the treatments of the sexes. These issues were fermenting in Hardy from the time of the rejection by Chapman and Hall's reader George Meredith of *The Poor Man and the Lady*. Whilst the controversial, and in some cases vicious, personal attacks on *Jude the Obscure*

would deter most authors from setting themselves up as a future target, the possibility exists that an astute and determined literary operator like Hardy was having a final fling, highlighting the social anomalies that he found reprehensible. He could afford to do so because in the interim between his first novel in 1869, and his last in 1895, he had become very rich, influential, and a worldwide icon of literature. He was now a person of substance whose views were sought and respected. To a certain extent, Jude and Sue Bridehead's painful sufferings arose out of Hardy's highly developed sense of moral justice. His innate melancholic disposition meant that worldly success and acclaim never went to his head, and the shadow of failure remained for an author, who could just as easily have drifted into the anonymity of obscurity like Jude.

From the first to the last novel, Hardy's value system was skewed in favour of the under-dog. Both his prose and verse demonstrate empathy and compassion for the mistakes and erroneous judgements of humankind. This thesis will show the affinity of his life, era and art, and will establish how the connections were symbiotic, as one fed the other two. The contents of the books and essays illustrate how widely read and informed he was on historical and modern ideas in philosophy, psychology, religion, love, science, sociology and farming methods. This meant he was familiar with the leading contemporary ideas in geology, architecture, Darwinian Theory, and the innovative ideas of John Stuart Mill's treatises on liberty, and the emancipation of women. He was a Renaissance man and a polymath in his learning and erudition with a particular talent for depicting the sadness and aloneness of humankind in times of trial, tribulation and isolation. This work will tease out the connections between his own intellectual internal debates, and the complex characters of his work.

The great volume of biographies on Hardy over a hundred years especially those by Florence Hardy, Michael Millgate, Claire Tomalin, Ralph Pite, James Gibson and many others all depict the connections between his early life, family history, religious dubiety,

romantic encounters, marital difficulties and an analysis of the craft he employed in prose and verse, and references will be made to these works throughout the thesis. The critical articles by D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot, G.K.Chesterton,Rosemary Sumner and Terry Eagleton illustrate that in the case of Hardy, it was hard not to have an opinion. This thesis differs from these works in methodology, as it takes a psycho-spiritual humanist and holistic approach to the artist and his work. By looking at Hardy and his characters in the round from a non-judgemental perspective, it will reveal much about their motivations; studying the outward acts of the author and his protagonists can reveal the inner desires, which create their actions. Its primary purpose is to reveal the concordances and coincidences between his personal life, the fiction and poetry. Its purpose is to imaginatively reveal how the inner life of Hardy, an individual who was a polytheist, accommodating disparate, conflicting mental ideas and emotions, and who possessed the artistic talent to transfer inner unresolved psychic entities into believable, sometimes implausible characters and situations in fiction, is a core resource for the understanding of his great characters and works. As a writing therapy, he was externalising the competing functions of his psyche. It was an act he repeated first in the novels and short stories, and later in poetry. He allowed the gravity of oppositions in his existentialist outlook to influence his art, though he never found a cause or personal mission strong enough to jettison his own contradictions. He did not seek a psycho-synthesis for the oppositions that were both his strengths and defects, and this thesis will explore this through the following chapters. I use the term ‘gravity of oppositions’ to demonstrate how he was pulled by these opposing forces internally in his mental and emotional life. There was an ongoing dialectic at work in Hardy, as he was pulled, with gravitational strength, first one way and then another and this was a force that he was unable to defeat. The pull of oppositions on his psyche and his unconscious worked in a manner similar to the pull of the earth’s gravity.

Chapter One, looking at formative influences, will examine Hardy's early childhood influences with particular attention being given to his mother Jemima, and to the religious influences of his family's involvement with the church and the local community. It will reveal how his childhood environment awakened the potential poet within, as seen in his first poem 'Domicilium', an atypical poem, and much different in character from the majority of his later collections. It will also highlight the remarkable impression left on Hardy by his early schoolteacher Julia Martin. It will look at his early career as an apprentice architect and the influence of Henry Bastow, the Reverend William Barnes and Horace Moule. It will deal with an era up to his mid-twenties when religious doubts formed, probably due to the influence of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and also to the secular outlook and anti-religious poems of Algernon Swinburne. Formative influences also included John Stuart Mill, Hubert Spencer and Thomas Henry Huxley. The fact that he had to struggle for literary success and financial security would have left an indelible impression on the sensitive author.

Enough is known about the unpublished *The Poor Man and the Lady* to suggest that within its covers lay the inner vision and motivation that formed the template for his art. In chapter two, its place in his artistic evolution will be traced. His apprenticeship to successful novel composition was by no means a straightforward exercise. The rejections by publishers of what they considered salacious or religiously irreverent offerings, and censorship by magazine editors and the lending libraries like Mudies, led to Hardy having to bowdlerise his work. In many cases, it was only when the novels appeared in volume format that we get close to what Hardy really meant to say. Hardy was at times melancholic in nature, and as he often remarked, his work was never a gospel according to Thomas, but more of a collection of 'seemings' and 'impressions'. Writing from his gloomy moods was bound to come across as pessimistic, a state of mind attributed to him during and after his lifetime. That should not

detract from a point of view in which he saw life as full of emotional pain for many, with inevitable death as the final human destination. The counselling of Hardy by George Meredith after the rejection of *The Poor Man and the Lady* was not initially positive, resulting in the hybrid *Desperate Remedies*. Immediately afterwards he published *Under the Greenwood Tree*, a pastoral novel with the true Hardy stamp which was well received.

Chapter Three looks at Hardy's early to mid-point novels. There are many autobiographical aspects to *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, which was serialised in Tinsley's magazine from September 1872 to July 1873. It contained his name on the title page, which equated with his growing reputation as a novelist of quality. It has its setting on the Cornish coast where Hardy courted his first wife Emma. In the novel, the architect hero Stephen Smith's romancing of Elfride Swancourt has parallels with Hardy and Emma. The novel was an important statement by Hardy to Emma, and in communication with the publishers, he suggested that money was not the only consideration in seeking its publication. This novel has two important features as it explores relationships in courtship and marriage. In a subversion of contemporary novelistic trends that denied women sexual reality, Elfride emerges in the story as woman with sexual desires.

The following year 1874 was very significant as he married Emma and published his first major successful work *Far From the Madding Crowd*. The settings are very close to where Hardy grew up, attended school and obtained his first job: Weatherbury (Puddletown, a few miles from Dorchester), Casterbridge (Dorchester) and Greenhill (Woodbury Hill, near Bere Regis). In the Preface, Hardy states that it was in this novel that he first adopted the name 'Wessex', which was formerly used in the context of early English history. The novel is remarkable for its time in that it depicts Bathsheba as the boss of Weatherbury Farm, which was a social change of great significance. It also contrasts the immutable nature of the great

barn where workers have worked and celebrated their harvests over the centuries with the church where the spirit and letter were often in conflict.

*The Return of the Native* (1878) represents Hardy's journey into his subconscious conflicts for which Eustacia and Clym Yeobright act as proxies. It is novel of contrasts and conflicting oppositions, and these represent his existentialist opposites, in that her sensual desires contend with Clym's aspirational intellectualism. Hardy later reprised this opposition in contrasting the earthiness of Arabella with the intellectual nature of Jude in *Jude the Obscure*. Eustacia's dark soulful presence, from which she seeks escape imaginatively, is destined to remain tethered to Egdon heath, a place with whom her dark temperament is synonymous. Clym Yeobright's character is in a Jungian sense a *puer* and desires to escape from the bonds of the earth by way of intellectual thought and spiritual fellowship with the denizens of the heath. An even greater contrast resides in the divisions between humanity and nature, where Nature's lack of ethics and care for its issue leads Hardy to conclude that Egdon is untameable and civilisation is its enemy: 'the untamable, Ishmaelitic thing that Egdon now was it had always been. Civilization was its enemy' (Hardy, 2008: 11). Looking at the dialectic between the earth and humanity, it is arguable that Hardy saw the human newcomer as superior to an entity that he felt evolved spontaneously without intelligent design. As Tess later said to her brother Abraham, humans were unlucky to find themselves on a blighted star.

It was his deep interest in astronomy that afforded Hardy the opportunity to write *Two on a Tower* (1882). It was a fresh venture in literary art which focused on the vanities of humans when seen in the context of the immensities of cosmological dramas where stars are born and die. Hardy's depiction of human passions against a cosmic background was at the time subversive to English prudery on unorthodox sexual relations. The creation-entropy oppositions of the universe mirror the Eros-Thanatos dialectic in the natural world, with its

cycles of birth-growth-death corresponding to the universal macro picture. The heavenly settings are counterpointed by an intense romance between an older married woman and a younger man scarcely out of his teenage years. It contains the inevitable staple Hardy offering of great social oppositions within the plot, a constant theme since *The Poor Man and the Lady*. It was controversial because the heroine, Lady Viviette Constantine, being bored through her husband's absence shooting lions in Africa, commits adultery with the young hero Swithin. In a convoluted plot, the lovers later separate and Viviette marries a bishop, a plot development which brought opprobrium on Hardy's head, as it was unthinkable that a bishop could marry a 'fallen' woman. Viviette had married the Bishop of Melchester, even though she was pregnant with Swithin's child. Elements of tragedy and comedy combine to make the novel exotic to the point of being implausible.

Chapter Four deals with the consequences of Alcoholism and other mental neuroses in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1884) which is a magnum opus in the Hardy *oeuvre*. The central character Michael Henchard dwarfs everyone else in the novel. He is a conflicted individual who is full of contradictions, which is why, despite the harmful acts he has perpetrated on those closest to him, he retains an attraction for them to the very end. Henchard is both a drunk and a sober man whose excesses in alcohol lead to irresponsible acts of self-destruction with calamitous consequences all round. As a study of the two contrasting days in an alcoholic's life, the depiction of Henchard is singular and carefully delineated. Hardy's psychological insight as to the underlying causes of Henchard's acting out his unresolved mental issues is superb. His insecurity, aggression, cunning and generosity, as well as his remorse for wrongs committed, elevate Henchard to the tragic level of Shakespeare's King Lear. All of his negative experiences flow from the alcoholic behavior of selling his wife and child. His crime against nature and humanity was the working out of a fantasy, and was one which he did not intend. The effects of alcohol in the furmity tent caused him to dictate a

ruinous action to his larger sober self. Henchard's cunning can be seen in his collusion with the firmity woman, and his remorse is captured in his heart-breaking search for Susan and Elizabeth-Jane afterwards. His decency can be observed in his atonement to all concerned, and his vow of abstinence was his version of natural justice. Whilst the novel deals with references to the Corn Laws, and with new agricultural methods superseding old ways, it is more than anything else, the tale of a man of character.

The fifth chapter, 'Nature and Human oppositions in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*', probes the opposition between the religious, teleological view of human development and Darwin's theory of natural selection. For Hardy, it left a vacuum and in a sense this very explicit novel filled the need for an alternative paradigm for those who were increasingly of the outlook, following Nietzsche, that God was dead. The novel is a cry for justice for the abused Tess Durbeyfield, a violated victim of men, and of religious and civil society. If it was natural selection which brought her careless and self-indulgent parents together, then Tess's isolation required some social intervention based on ethics to protect her from predators of one kind or another. Tess upbraids her mother Joan for not informing her of the risks that predatory men like Alec Stokes posed to young females. The novel was immediately controversial, because it brought into confrontation the apologists for the observance of the rules and letters of the religious and civic ordinances and an intelligent but simple country girl, uninitiated in the ways of society.

The contemporary Idealist philosopher Seth Pringle-Pattison in his admirable book, *Man's Place in the Cosmos* (1902), debates the ethics of Tess's natural behavior and self-acceptance which violated the tenets of religion and the morals of organized secular society. Pringle-Pattison outlined his position on the cause of misalignments between humanity and nature which differed from the views of Huxley and Hardy. Pattison, in reviewing *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, explores this division, criticizing Hardy's tendency to assimilate the moral and

the natural forces, even elevating the natural above the moral law. The exploitative and rapacious oppression of a simple country maid is central to the novel, and is a paradigm of Darwinian Theory in the preying of the strong on the weak. Hardy's plea is for the need for human ethics to combat the grossness of nature. The novel takes a swipe at the harsh judgments of conventionality and so called civilization:

But this encompassment of her own characterization, based on shreds of convention, peopled by phantoms and voices antipathetic to her, was a sorry and mistaken creation of Tess's fancy—a cloud of moral hobgoblins by which she was terrified without reason. It was they that were out of harmony with the actual world, not she ... She looked upon herself as a figure of guilt intruding into the haunts of Innocence (Hardy, 2008: 97).

*Tess of the D'Urbervilles* starkly reveals Hardy's philosophy on life: 'whatever may be the inherent good or evil of life, it is certain that men make it worse than it need be' (Millgate, 2004: 379).

In Chapter Six, the challenges and crises faced by Jude in *Jude the Obscure* correspond to how an autodidact like Hardy found the attempts to pursue a career at university in order to take holy orders overwhelming. Hardy's poem 'Nobody Comes' (Hardy, 1995: 704) which refers to personal isolation in times of loneliness and despair has a resonance for Jude Fawley who was isolated in achieving his ambitions, unlike Hardy himself who was helped by his family, as well as by the Reverend William Barnes, Horace Moule, George Meredith, Leslie Stephen and others in tuition, career guidance, and literary matters, and all of these supports were significant in his success. Jude, on the other hand was reduced to his one-man efforts to scale alone formidable twin challenges of being accepted at Christminster University (Oxford), and of being accepted by his near cousin Sue Bridehead in marriage. In the *denouement*, he found both missions beyond his resources. In a sense, he is a shadow figure of failure, a possible incarnation of a Hardy who did not achieve success, but spent his life desperately in pursuit of this chimera.

Hardy develops the context of Jude and Sue's crises which arose primarily from their poverty. The marriage laws of the era come under scrutiny, as they operated on the basis that marriage, even for people barely out of their teen years, was inviolable and for life. The rigidity of the laws made no exceptions if, for different reasons, people fell out of love. The unfortunate partners were then condemned to a life of disgruntlement and bitterness. The essays of the liberal philosopher John Stuart Mill, such as *On Liberty* and *The Subjection of Women*, are implied or quoted in the text. Jude and Sue debate the contemporary issue of personal freedoms sought by the women's suffrage movement. The novel's message is that patriarchy has had its day, and it also makes a strong case for birth control. Hardy's view was that sexual abstinence for single people in a time when their sexuality was highest was not easy, and that though marital monogamy was acceptable to many, there were those who found it a huge challenge. The novel concentrates on the rejections encountered by Jude, beginning with his Aunt Drusilla, who states it was a pity he was ever born. Other rejections include the Christminster Don and several rebuttals by his beloved, the conflicted Sue.

Chapter Seven will demonstrate how the poetry of Hardy flowed from a quality of mind that was open and adaptable to change. The bulk of his over eight hundred poems concern the trials and tribulations of mankind. The poem 'The Oxen', for example, which many look to as an emblem of religiosity, is essentially a sad exposition; a case of hopeful imagination in opposition to the predominantly rational side of Hardy. This poem in particular reveals Hardy as entertaining the myth of the Nativity and just as quickly dismissing it as an unsubstantiated narrative.

Hardy's frankness on how all the fondest human hopes end in death is his way of enunciating Freud's Eros-Thanatos opposition. His poetry exposes with much greater clarity the disappointments he felt, and it will be argued that as a genre, it was more suitable for this direct mode of expression than his fiction. It can be argued that Hardy's poetry has death at

its core, and consequently, throughout the different collections of verse, various signals of modest disappointments which act as a preparation for the last great human tragedy can be observed. What he thought about life can be seen in the final lines of a poem written when the poet is dead and buried. The poem, 'To-Be-Forgotten', from the collection *Poems of the Past and the Present* contrasts the first and second deaths; the first lasts as long as someone living remembers the deceased, the second when all remembrances are forgotten. It ends in similar manner to the last lines of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* alluding to the tragic sporting of fate with humanity:

We were but Fortune's sport;  
Things true, things lovely, things of good report  
we neither shunned nor sought...We see our bourne,  
And seeing it we mourn. (Hardy, 1995: 132)

## Chapter One: Formative Influences

It is arguable that the Victorian era as a whole, and his local environment in particular, were the most important factors in the creation of Thomas Hardy as man, novelist and poet. The writer-psychologist James Hillman describes the nature of the Victorian epoch:

After Darwin had dug out man's ape ancestors and Nietzsche had announced that God is dead, and after the rational materialism of the nineteenth century....The psyche had become alienated from the world about it, for this world had lost its soul(Hillman, 2011: 112).

Hardy's novels, beginning with the unpublished *The Poor Man and The Lady*, demonstrated the social, religious, psychological and natural oppositions resulting from the divide between what was conventionally acceptable, and the demands of personal conscience. The Oxford Movement had reached the Dorset clergy when Hardy was growing up, and Evangelicalism had spread across England by 1840, the year of his birth. For Hardy's family, religious orthodoxy was an important feature of life. His family were of the yeoman class, and his father, a small builder, frequently led a band of musicians, who played jigs and reels at county fairs. His progenitors on the male side played in the church choir at Stinsford church for a couple of generations. Indeed, his mother met his father when he played in the choir. *The Life* refers to Hardy's detailed drawing of the west gallery, as it was in 1835. In his home at evening time, young Hardy would sometimes sit by the staircase reciting hymns to himself(Hardy, 2007: 15).

For the Hardy family, religion also meant belief in the community, and this set the scene for his early life, where the natural ethos was to attend church on the Sabbath day. Hardy

was zealous in furthering his religious knowledge, foreshadowing Jude in *Jude the Obscure*, and he continued to debate religious dogma, scripture and church traditions on commencing work as an apprentice architect in Dorchester. In such an environment, Hardy's religious doubts would have been repressed, a condition which lasted until he moved to London at the age of twenty-three. In liberated London, Hardy experienced the return of the repressed, which caused him a lifetime of doubt, prompting ongoing inner reflection on the existence of God, and on the possibility of his non-existence. It will be argued that Hardy's fiction is representative of what was termed 'The Age of Doubt'.

The young Hardy led a charmed life, as he was thought to be dead at birth until the sharp vision of a mid-wife saw that his seemingly lifeless form was still breathing. Later in his childhood, his mother found a snake curled up and sleeping in his cradle. This raised the possibility that unconsciously \*he was an unwilling participant in life from the beginning, and his poem 'To an Unborn Pauper Child', from *Poems Past and Present* (1902) expresses this view explicitly: 'breathe not, hid Heart: cease silently' (Hardy, 1995: 116). Paradoxically, *The Life* chronicles a much more positive temperament: 'though healthy he was fragile, and precocious to a degree, being able to read almost before he could walk, and to tune a violin when quite of tender years. He was of ecstatic temperament, extraordinarily sensitive to music' (Hardy, 2007: 15). Hardy's comments to his mother that he did not wish to grow up and acquaint himself with more than the half-dozen people he already knew, suggest a moodiness that remained with him throughout his life. His ecstatic-sensitive nature showed in his desire to communicate and write from early on probably as a therapy to release unconscious vistas, much as Dante excavated his unconscious mind as material for *The Divine Comedy*.

Hardy's early novel, *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), comes very close in its description of the Hardy family's early environment. The descriptions of East and West

Mellstock closely resemble Upper and Lower Bockhampton, and also the location of Hardy's heart final resting place in Stinsford churchyard. Hardy's earliest poem 'Domicilium' (1857) was reprinted in *The Life* as a footnote, describing his home place as follows:

Our house stood quite alone, and those tall firs  
And beeches were not planted. Snakes and efts  
Swarmed in the summer days, and nightly bats  
Would fly about our bedroom. Heathcroppers  
Lived on the hills, and were our only friends;  
So wild it was when first we settled here (Hardy, 1976: 4).

The Vicar of Stinsford, the Reverend Shirley, registered the very bright Hardy at thirteen years for confirmation, enrolling him with his own sons for Bible readings as a Sunday school teacher (Tomalin, 2007: 39). The Reverend Shirley was not merely incidental to the Hardy family, having been asked by Hardy's parents to give a reference for his sister Mary, when she applied to a Teacher Training College. At the age of sixteen, Hardy heard Shirley give a sermon attacking the presumption of the lower classes for aspiring to join the professions. Young Hardy took exception to Shirley's remarks, finding them so humiliating that he did not talk about them until the last years of his life. Shirley's name is never mentioned in any letters or recollections, although the clergyman remained in Stinsford until his death in 1891 (Tomalin, 2007: 42). Shirley's implicit criticism of Hardy's upwardly mobile ambitions caused the writer to reflect on his entitlements as a member of the Christian church. It probably helped crystallise in his mind the existence of social oppositions in the class system, and to hone his awareness of the role of the church in these oppositions. The struggles of the Durbeyfield family in *Tess of D'Urbervilles* clearly illustrate how children and grandchildren were victims of an insidious mode of multi-generational discrimination against them due to their birth into poor circumstances.

At face value, Shirley's comments reinforced the social class divide, which institutionalised these serious impediments to upward mobility for the clever and ambitious

Hardy. When taken in tandem with Hardy's lack of faith in the supernatural, it represented another strand of opposition towards the exclusivity and dogmatic attitudes of the church. The portrayal of the church's narrow-mindedness on sexual matters, snobbery and hypocrisy, is demonstrated in Hardy's characterisation of clergymen from *Desperate Remedies* to *Jude the Obscure*. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the clergyman's private conscience and human decency clashes with contemporary Church of England doctrines, and here the clergyman demonstrates his individuality and independence of mind, suggesting a small victory for an informed private conscience, an example of true Christianity. The debate within the vicar's conscience results in an accommodation between Tess's wishes and the clergyman's humanity: 'The man and the ecclesiastic fought within him and the victory fell to the man' (Hardy, 2008a: 109), and I would contend that this inward debate is symbolic of Hardy's own ruminations on the oppositions existing between an informed private conscience and the precepts of the church. Tess's natural compassionate spontaneity is in contrast to the vicar's guardedness, and his tacit acquiescence to Tess's intentions to baptise and bury her terminally ill son, Sorrow, encapsulates the yawning divide between the spirit and letter of the religious law. Their unspoken cooperation leaves them feeling they have solved a difficult conundrum in a human way. A plea for a more compassionate inclusivity transcending the mundane cultural, religious and socio-economic circumstances which made Tess and Sorrow victims of victims, is expressed by the narrator: 'so passed away Sorrow the Undesired – that intrusive creature, that bastard gift of shameless Nature who respects not the civil law; a waif to whom eternal Time had been a matter of days merely, who knew not that such things as years and centuries ever were' (Hardy, 2008a: 108). Hardy's anger at societal injustice reverberates in this choric summation; there is a bleakness and an awareness of the harshness and cruelty of life, and the indifference of the privileged towards the plight of the poor, that are such an important aspect of Hardy's mature style. The importance and significance of baptism have

their source in Hardy's own early life, as embodied in his heated debates with Henry Bastow, raising the issue if children should be left unbaptised until their adulthood.

Hardy, as a late teenager, had met a young fellow architect named Henry Bastow, who was three years older, and became his closest friend. When Bastow emigrated to Australia, they kept in touch, and a letter from Bastow in 1861 quoted in *The Life* reveals Hardy's interest in the classics:

Really you are a plodding chap to have got through such a lot of Homer and all the rest. I am not a bit further than I was in Dorchester; indeed, I think I have scarcely touched a book-Greek, I mean-since. I see you are trying all you can to cut me out (Hardy, 1984: 36).

They read Greek and Latin together, and argued vociferously on the merits of Paedo versus Adult Baptism:

At this time [July 1856] when Hardy was sixteen and had recently joined the firm] the Revd William Barnes, the Dorset poet and philologist, was keeping school next door. Knowing him to be an authority upon grammar Hardy would often run in to ask Barnes to decide some knotty point in dispute between him and his fellow pupil [Bastow]. Hardy used to assert in later years that upon almost every occasion the verdict was given in his favour. (Hardy, 2007: 29)

*The Life* sets out clearly how Bastow's friendship and his spiritual and intellectual qualities left a life-long impression with Hardy:

'November 17. Today T. H. was speaking, and evidently thinking a great deal, about a friend, a year or two older than himself, who was a fellow-pupil at Mr Hick's office. I felt as he talked that he would like to meet this man again more than anyone else in the world. He is in Australia now, if alive, and must be nearly ninety. His name is Henry Robert Bastow; he was a Baptist and evidently a very religious youth, and T.H. was devoted to him' (Hardy, 1984: 262).

Hardy's fervent debates as a teenager with his young architect friend Bastow, on the intricacies of paedo versus adult baptism, possibly inspired the opposition between the vicar's official religious views and those of Tess's natural desire to baptise her child. *The Life* recounts, 'however, he got hold of as many notes on paedo-baptism \*as he could, and though he was appalled at the feebleness of the arguments for infant christening (assuming that New

Testament practice must be followed) he incontinently determined to “stick to his own side” as he considered the Church to be, at some costs of conscience’ (Hardy, 19984: 38). The switch from theoretical debate with Bastow to practical application of Hardy’s outlook on infant baptism is illustrated in *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*. The vicar represents the triumph of Hardy’s humanism over dry and unyielding church rules. The humane vicar, on hearing the infant was ill, had earlier gone to the house but was refused entry by John Durbeyfield, recently returned in an inebriated state from Rollover’s Inn: ‘No parson should come inside, he declared, prying into his affairs just then, when, by her shame, it had become necessary than ever to hide them. He locked the door and put the key in his pocket’ (Hardy, 2008a: 105). Prior to baptising the child Tess cries: ‘O merciful God, have pity upon my poor baby! Heap as much anger as you want upon me, and welcome; but pity the child’ (Hardy, 2008a: 93). With her siblings as her witnesses, she says: ‘Sorrow, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost’ (Hardy, 2008a: 94). When Sorrow dies, Tess mused on the christening a good deal and later enquired of the vicar: ““And now sir” she added earnestly, “can you tell me this-will it be just the same for him as if you had baptized him?” His reply “My dear girl”, “it will be just the same”” (Hardy, 2008a: 108). The vicar’s humanity shone through, demonstrating that his free spirit was still intact. The pull of oppositions between family loyalty and religious compliance was immensely tasking for Tess, whose main desire was to have Sorrow baptised. The grandiosity of the alcoholic Durbeyfield, abetted by his manipulative wife Joan, revealed that society’s opprobrium was directed at the wrong Durbeyfield. The clash between religion and humanism, long the topics of arguments in the life of the young Hardy, became the stuff of fiction in the mature writer. For Hardy, compassion would always trump any form of legalistic religiosity, but the internal debate within his consciousness would become an evolving and ever-present trope in the narratives of his characters, as well as in the thematic landscape of his poetry.

The sub-title of *Jude the Obscure*, 'The letter killeth', was taken from 2 Corinthians 3: 6, and the novel proceeds to castigate a society that obeys the letter of the law above the spirit of Christian or humane compassion. The vicar of the local church applied the letter of the law dictating the course of lives regardless of personal circumstances; the more rigid the vicar the more unbending was the application of church laws. Hardy's position was straightforward with respect to people in a marriage who discover they have chosen badly; he felt that the unfortunate partners should be given another chance. He opined that general rules make no concession to people's emotional lives, and this is clear when Jude pleads with Sue to make room for real emotions above the aridity of the law: 'Sue, Sue: We are acting by the letter; and "the letter killeth"' (Hardy, 2008c: 376). Hardy's fiction represented vicars like Shirley as snobbish and supercilious, with the parson in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873) being a good example. They were an obstacle to upwardly mobile talented people like himself. Shirley is an embodiment of the mythical figure with an arm raised, who was seen by Hardy and his mother impeding the progress of the Hardy family in general. Both of them imagined a figure that stood in the way of their progress with an arm uplifted to knock them back, and this personification was quite real to them. This figure was a good illustration of the social divide omnipresent in Hardy's fiction, it accrued from the early upper-class snobbery locally, and oppressive privilege directed in their direction:

Mother's notion, & also mine: that a figure stands in our van with arm uplifted, to knock us back from any permanent prospect we indulge in as profitable (Hardy, cited in Wilson, 2002: 432).

The young Hardy and his family's long involvement with the church at Stinsford would have included viewing the crib at Christmastime, and thus internalising its symbolic message. The poem 'The Oxen', showed that Hardy longed to believe in a rational cohesive deity, 'wishing it might be so' (Hardy, 1995: 439). He felt that the compassion and loving-kindness of Christianity, minus its supernatural aspects, represented humanity's best

aspirations. Horace Moule and Hardy debated John Henry Newman's *Apologia* and whilst Moule found its argument compelling, Hardy, while admiring its logic, completely rejected its supernatural undertones. The era's scientific discoveries had eroded his religious belief and brought him to agnosticism, removing any interventions or consolations of divine justice. The loss of Moule through suicide was a tragedy for Hardy, as Moule was more than just his closest friend. Though at times condescending, Moule's friendship elevated Hardy socially and intellectually, awakening him to new possibilities of a university education, and encouraging him to read the classics, Greek and Latin languages and creative fiction. Moule, who was only forty-one when he died, was familiar with how ethics influenced the nature-nurture debate, and had strong socialist leanings, which made him a very significant figure in Hardy's growing intellectual understanding of himself and of the world. Hardy's relationship with the urbane Moule influenced his perceptions of love problems, dipsomania, class differences, religion and university aspirations in his life and fiction. Moule also affirmed many of Hardy's socialist ideas. At a career-defining moment, Moule suggested that Hardy continue to pursue his architecture so that he would have an alternative if a career as a novelist did not transpire. *The Life* states: 'He had secretly wished that Moule would advise him to go on with Greek plays, in spite of the damage it might do to his architecture; but he felt bound to listen to reason and prudence' (Hardy, 1984: 38).

While the reviews of *A Pair of Blue Eyes* were generally positive, Horace Moule's brother Charles wrote to Hardy suggesting he would be wiser to keep up some sort of steady professional work. This letter is interesting because of its postscript, which demonstrates a concern for observing social proprieties and is intrinsically dismissive of Hardy's ambitions: 'I trust I address you rightly on the envelope. I conjectured that you wd prefer the absence of "Esqre" at Upper Bockhampton' (Tomalin, 2007: 123). Charles Moule's letter demonstrates the barriers that Hardy faced in his efforts to educate himself and achieve a

parity of esteem socially. If friends like the Moule brothers considered his station in life inferior then in the greater and strange echelons of London society which as a successful novelist he had increasing access to, his pedigree would always be commensurate with one from the lower classes.

In an encounter in Trafalgar Square, after a long gap in their contact, and at a particularly low point in his novelistic career, Moule sagely and presciently counselled Hardy that if his eyesight failed him he could dictate a novel or poem whereas he could not dictate a geometrical design (Hardy, 1984: 90). *The Life* states that 'Moule, a scholar and critic of perfect taste firmly believed in Hardy's potentialities as a writer, and said he hoped he still kept a hand on the pen' (Hardy, 1984: 90). When Hardy attended Moule's funeral in 1873 he did so with a heavy heart, *The Life* recalls 'It was a matter of keen regret to him now, and for a long time afterward, that Moule and the woman [Emma] to whom Hardy was warmly attached had never set eyes on each other; and that she would never could never make Moule's acquaintance, or be his friend' (Hardy 1984: 98).

Hardy was a sceptic on supernatural beliefs in religion and Paula Power, his heroine in *A Laodicean*, similarly considers herself 'one of that body to whom lukewarmth is not an accident but a provisional necessity, till they see a little more clearly' (Hardy, 1997: 376). *The Life* records Hardy's perspective on creation and evolution from an agnostic's perspective:

After infinite trying to reconcile a scientific view with the emotional and spiritual, so that they may not be interdestructive, I come to the following: General Principles. Law has produced in man a child who cannot but constantly reproach its parent for doing much and yet not all, and constantly say to such a parent that it would have been better never to have begun doing than to have overdone so indecisively; that is, than to have created so far beyond all apparent first intention (on the emotional side), without mending matters by a second intent and execution, to eliminate the evils of the blunder of overdoing. The emotions have no place in a world of defect, and it is a cruel injustice that they should have developed in it ... If Law itself had consciousness, how the aspect of its creatures would terrify it, fill it with remorse (Hardy, 1984: 153).

It is obvious from the excerpt that Hardy reflected at length on the Creationist-Evolutionist debate, and being of a largely rationalist disposition, he leaned towards the scientific view inferred in Darwinian Theory. He was nonetheless deeply troubled by the argument because he found his emotional attachment to religion tenacious and difficult to abandon. It is arguable that for Hardy personally his greatest schism was a spiritual-religious opposition. Hillis-Miller in *Distance and Desire* (1970) felt that both Hardy and his characters were mostly concerned with external happenings, neglecting to internalise the lessons they received, and so adjust their inner visions. The writer and therapist Thomas Moore (1992) wrote on what he considered the building of character:

Just as the mind digests ideas and produces intelligence, the soul feeds on life and digests it, creating wisdom and character out of the fodder of experience. Renaissance Neoplatonists said that the outer world serves as a means of deep spirituality and that the transformation of ordinary experience into the stuff of soul is all-important (Moore, 1992: 205).

Hardy understood that life was lived mostly through the emotions, and he also felt that they were a psycho-physical reaction to external stimuli; in other words, what for other creatures was an unpleasant momentary experience amounted to a tragedy for humans. Evolution, as a natural phenomenon without ethics, only seemed to desire the reproduction of species, caring little for those who had their emotions invested in values arising from participation in communities. In this sense, evolution seemed to posit a natural world that was at best unconcerned with, but at worst, positively hostile to, human ethical, moral and emotional standpoints. However, without emotions, Tess would never feel the pain of her violation, nor the deepest sorrow of carrying a child that died at infancy. Hardy's perspective, remarkable for one who was childless, is grounded in an engagement with the very personal emotions of human parenthood and of love for an individual child, in opposition to the more generic evolutionary imperative of survival of the species that is found in nature. He also champions the essence and uniqueness of the

individual and his or her emotional rights, in the face of a grinding moralistic and religious repression of emotion and feeling. It is a *locus classicus* of his stylistic ability to conceptualise abstract concepts through narrative characters and interaction. This further reinforces my own argument that so many of his characters and their interaction in the novels are drawn from his own internal debates about issues of morality, ethics and religion. I will further contend that these same internal debates are also the source of much that is good in his poetry.

Hardy was more religiously ambivalent than the term 'agnostic' suggests, as paradoxically, he became more engaged with religious questions when he had moved furthest away from his Christian roots. The renowned critic Irving Howe wrote:

Because Hardy remained enough of a Christian to believe that purpose courses through the universe but not enough to believe that purpose is benevolent or the attribute of a particular Being, he had to make his plots convey the oppressiveness of fatality without positing an agency determining the course of fate ... The result was that he often seems to be plotting against his own characters (Howe, 1985, cited in Tomalin, 2007:220).

Hardy embraced metaphysical and scientific debate, studying the French sociologist Auguste Comte (1798-1857). Comte divided the history of human intelligence into three chronological stages: first, the theological, committed to first and final causes; next the metaphysical, in which supernatural agencies were replaced by abstract forces; and finally, the positive state, when the human mind gives up its search for absolutes respecting the origin and destiny of the world, and confines itself to the discovery of real facts, and the actual laws that govern them (Davis, 2004: 78-79). Hardy was a pragmatist, exploring and indirectly expounding on the facts of life; in particular, how evolution affected the emotional life of human beings. As an alternative to supernatural religion, he was reasonably warm towards Comte's secular Positivism. *The Life* states:

If Comte had introduced Christ among the worthies in his calendar it would have made Positivism tolerable to thousands who, from position, family connection, or early education, now decry what in their hearts of hearts they hold to contain the germs of a true system. It would have

enabled them to modulate gently into the new religion by deceiving themselves with the sophistry that they still continued one-quarter Christians, or one-eight, or one twentieth, as the case might be. This is a matter of policy, without which no religion succeeds in making way (Hardy, 2007: 148).

Hardy's 'Apology' to *'Late Lyrics and Earlier'* (1922) demonstrated that he had an affinity with Comte's view that genuine human growth and maturation lay in attempting to synthesise an individual's psycho-spiritual approach to religion with scientific views. Hardy felt that progress towards the integration of science and religious belief was never in a straight line but rather was a process of stepping back in order to spring forward (Hardy, 1995: 531), a dialectical mode which his own thinking embraced, and indeed became crucial to his intellectual and creative work. *\*It can be argued that Hardy's fiction and poetry is a form of psychological transference from author to reader; The Life also reveals much of Hardy's personal philosophy.*

The root metaphor of Hardy's viewpoint was that human behaviour is understandable because it has an internal meaning: a consciousness begetting conscience. A complex intellectual character, he did not naturally entertain a simple orthodox faith. The dialectical conflict between Hardy's instinctive, familial attachment to religion, and his intellectual rejection of it, persisted throughout his life. The section 'Birth and Boyhood' in *The Life* demonstrates the seriousness of Sunday devotion:

...Thomas was kept strictly at church on Sundays as usual, till he knew the Morning and Evening Services by heart including the rubrics, as well as large portions of the New Version of the Psalms. The aspect of that time to him is clearly indicated in the verses 'Afternoon Service at Mellstock', included in 'Moments of Vision' (Hardy, 1984: 23).

Hardy came from a Genesis-inspired cultural background, which taught him that God made the world, and that it was good to behold. The perspective that everything under the sun was providentially directed including the monarchy, political life, and one's place in the scheme of things, was an invisible ideology that controlled people's lives. His conversion to a perspective that life was probably meaningless and random had a slow gestation, commencing

as young boy lying on his back in the sun, contemplating nature, and wishing he did not exist. Irwin's introduction to the *Life of Thomas Hardy* (2007) states that Hardy placed significant importance on this particular moment:

One event of this date or a little later stood out, he used to say, more distinctly than any. He was lying on his back in the sun, thinking how useless he was, and covered his face with his straw hat. The sun's rays streamed through the interstices of the straw, the lining having disappeared. Reflecting on his experiences of the world so far as he had got, he came to the conclusion that he did not wish to grow up. Other boys were talking about things they would do when they would be men; he did not want at all to be a man, or to possess things, but to remain as he was, in the same spot, and to know no more people than he already knew (about half a dozen) (Hardy, 2007: 16).

The instinctive melancholy that was evident from his childhood years was given a conceptual and scientific justification through his reading of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859, and Hardy's intuition may have grasped the depressive facts inherent in evolutionary theory from an early stage. By his early twenties, his conception of the pointlessness of things hardened into a rejection of religious faith. Furthermore, there were bound to be psychic oppositions lurking in the dialectic between the successful author, man-about-town socialite, and his disgruntled alter ego who profited from his melancholia, including the highly successful autodidact who was sometimes vague about his origins. If religion was based on fanciful aspiration, and if life was therefore meaningless, then the only alternative was to strive for perfection in art, which was possibly an attempt to resolve the oppositional dialectic. Thus, an over-emphasis on perfecting the plot for *The Woodlanders* led to a form of depression. Irwin's *Thomas Hardy* (2007) records a diary entry of November 17 to 19 1885 as stating: 'in a fit of depression, as if enveloped in a leaden cloud.... Am working from half-past ten a.m. to twelve p.m. to get my mind up on the details' (Hardy, 2007: 181). A related entry for the same month November 21 to 22 reads 'Sick Headache' (Hardy, 2007: 181).

Hardy remembered himself as a solitary child, though only eighteen months separated his sister Mary and himself. A solitary child can feel strangely isolated from his society, often

observing it from the outside. There were about twenty other children in his vicinity, but Hardy refers to it as 'a lonely and silent spot' (Tomalin, 2007: 18), and that, 'there was my playground when I was a child' he said later, and Tomalin suggests it is significant that he used the personal pronoun singular as opposed to plural: it is not 'our playground' (Tomalin, 2006: 18). There is a narcissistic aspect to this mind-set, a unique sense of specialness, which does not change until the victim begins to see himself as other. The Myth of Narcissus is used as a psychological metaphor for rigidity and inflexibility. Moore writing on Psychological Archetypes in his book *Care of the Soul* (1992) describes aspects of Narcissism extrapolated from a clinical study: 'he presents an image of narcissism that has not as yet found its mystery. Here we see the symptom: a self-absorption and containment that allows no connection of the heart. It is as hard as rock and repels all approaches of love' (Moore, 1992: 58). Hardy was very single-minded in his approach to writing; from his teen years to his later life, he nurtured and developed his great talent, relegating all other considerations below the desire to perfect his art and become commercially successful. Entering his second marriage, Hardy remained as single-minded about his life as ever, writing poetry all day, sometimes into the evening, leaving Florence more solitary than a newly wedded wife would have reasonably expected. Florence said that Hardy's explanation for his lack of attention was 'he says that when the wheels are turning it is a mistake to stop them' (Tomalin, 2006: 321). Florence added that 'he is working practically all day until after dinner ...and yesterday feeling very much inclined for work he did not even go for a daily walk' (Tomalin, 2006: 321).

This personal single-mindedness in his life was also to prove a very fruitful trope in his art, as he demonstrates in the portraits of Henchard and Farfrae representing Narcissus and his shadow respectively. Within the duality of those protagonists lay a recurring trope of Hardy's fiction: when imaginatively seized by a central dominating figure or a particular

idea, he seized the imagination of the reader, subverting their previous vision. These debates are external mirrors of his own internal conflicts, most of which can be traced back to issues of ethics and basic honesty, the very issues that plagued the internal debates of Thomas Hardy. The characters debate what should be done with the 'growed wheat' in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. The sprouted wheat makes it inferior, but Henchard wants to pass it off as normal, whereas Farfrae rebuts Henchard's dishonest intentions. Hardy, who disliked Victorian expansionism, creates a capitalist versus humanist tension between the protagonists. Henchard pursues his ambitious agenda whereas Farfrae understands that he is a link in a communal chain that must not be weakened through dishonesty. Henchard's feverish desire not to lose money is assuaged by Farfrae, who suggests they call the wheat second-class, thereby saving face all round. Another example of an inability to adapt to life's vicissitudes, illustrating Darwinian social adaptability, occurs when Farfrae spontaneously constructs a roofed enclosure as a means of protection from the rain for the party revellers. His careful planning means that his guests remain dry with the sudden advent of rain, whereas the impulsive Henchard, who has not thought of this eventuality, is forced to cancel his rival celebration.

The oppositions of the modern approach to farming with archaic methods are also embodied by Farfrae and Henchard, but are secondary to Henchard's internal oppositions. At the mayoral dinner, as he replies to the question of what recompense he intends to make for the bad bread arising from selling the growed wheat to local bakers, he answers disingenuously: 'if anybody will tell me how to turn grown wheat into wholesome wheat, I'll take it back with pleasure. But it can't be done' (Hardy, 2008b: 36). Farfrae, listening to Henchard's rigidity on the issue knows that he has an answer to Henchard's dilemma. Being in the corn business, he demonstrates to Henchard a method whereby growed wheat can be salvaged into good second-class corn (Hardy, 2008b: 45). Henchard states, 'Well it has great

importance for me just now. This row about my grown wheat, which I declare to heaven I didn't know to be bad till the people came complaining has put me to my wit's end' (Hardy, 2008b: 44). Farfrae's innovation alters the situation: 'These few grains will be sufficient to show ye with.... There, now you taste that' (Hardy, 2008b: 45). Henchard is impressed, and admits that the wheat is now 'quite restored, or-well-nearly' (Hardy, 2008b: 45). Here the modernist scientific approach to farming triumphs over the more elemental methods espoused by Henchard, and is symbolic of the onward sweep of modernity, sometimes at the expense of originality or individuality.

Henchard's bluff and much-touted statement that his word is greater than a written contract is undermined by his disreputable intentions over the inferior corn. Later, Henchard's selfish motives result in his desire to frustrate Newson's search for his natural daughter Elizabeth-Jane, resulting in the telling of a deliberate lie. In reply to Newson's enquiry as to the whereabouts of Elizabeth-Jane he answers falsely: "Dead likewise", said Henchard doggedly. "Surely you learnt that too?" (Hardy, 2008b: 272). Newson was also duplicitous, and like Henchard, he too was acting out of love as he deceived Susan and Elizabeth-Jane in allowing them to think that he had perished at sea. The religious theme that no motive can excuse a lie is in opposition to the emotional reality that a white lie is acceptable in extenuating circumstances. The internal dialectic that preoccupied Hardy is embodied in this clash between different world-views, and the fact that neither character acts purely as a cipher for Hardy's own real-life concerns is a tribute to his skill as a novelist. The connections between his life and art are present, but they are both reflected and refracted by his art as a writer. There is also, I would contend, a significant unconscious dimension at work here. Hardy, from early in life, would have had to contend with his mother Jemima's strong and outspoken views on what career he should follow, and her oppositions to the liberal views which he was not shy in declaring, was the cause of some friction between them. *The*

*Life* records his regret that he had upset Jemima by sharing his private thoughts on the meaninglessness of existence. This is especially ironic, and a source of one of those oppositions which drove him on, given that, his parents had early hopes that he might become a clergyman himself, a profession that was often the ticket to a middle-class life

A delicate physical constitution, a bookish nature and a nearly flair for imitating the local clergyman, made Hardy's parents decide that he could become something in the church. This, in addition to other aspects of his life, acted as a template for aspects of the plot of *Jude the Obscure*. Young Jude's personality and character is an embodiment of the gravity of oppositions: he is a man torn between his attractions to the sexual promiscuity of Arabella, and the intellectual refinements of Sue. Above everything else, the mettle of Jude's religious belief is challenged to breaking point by random catastrophe and tragedy. No human could foretell that his own child would eventually kill his siblings prior to taking his own life. Jude's continued resistance to Sue's objections to his Christian worship is redolent of a deeply-held core belief colliding with his desire to please her: 'Jude looked pained. "You are quite Voltairean!" he murmured' (Hardy, 2008c: 147). Conversely, Sue accuses Jude of trying to convert her to Christianity:

"Yes you are!" she cried, turning away her face that he might not see her brimming eyes. "You are on the side of the people in the Training School—at least you seem almost to be! What I insist on is, that to explain such verses as this: 'Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?' by the note 'The Church professeth her faith' is supremely ridiculous!" (Hardy, 2008c: 146).

Hardy's reference to the allusion by Sue of the enigmatic juxtaposing of the Song of Solomon with how the church professed her faith in Christ, was more a matter for a theologian than a young intellectual agnostic like Sue, and it stems from the gravity of oppositions in Hardy's own conscience when dealing with matters of faith and reason.

Sue and Jude's life experiences were arguably a lifelong search to discover their psychic identities, and attain spiritual wholeness in line with Jung's theory of 'modern man in

search of a soul' (Jung, 2001), and in this process they share a core aspect of Hardy's own life journey. Hardy puts their individual lives under the microscope in a dialogue that describes how life's events alter their perspectives: In a reprise of Hardy's own experience with religious faith, Jude finds himself at the crossroads of decision: 'That may have been my view; but my doctrines and I begin to part company' (Hardy, 2008c: 206). Jude seized her hand and kissed it, 'I'll never care about my doctrines or my religion any more! Let them go! Let me help you, even if I do love you, and even if you ...' (Hardy, 2008c: 206). Hardy draws the distinction that loving someone in no way imparts the right to influence his or her independence of mind. The rebellious Sue's epiphany sees her regret her youthful impetuosity and naivety: 'So I rushed on, when I got into that Training School scrape, with all the cocksureness of the fool that I was! I am certain one ought to be allowed to undo what one has done so ignorantly. I daresay it happens to lots of women, only they submit and I kick' (Hardy, 2008c: 206). The questioning and rejection of their earlier principles was in line with Hardy's impression from his first novel, *Desperate Remedies*, that people were transforming ethically as they developed socially: 'to discover evil in a new friend is to most people only an additional experience' (Hardy, 1998: 7). This is a theme which pervades contemporary literature, as in *Krapp's Last Tape*, Beckett's anti-hero declares: 'Just been listening to that stupid bastard I took myself for thirty years ago' (Beckett, 1984: 56).

It is possible that initially, Hardy personally confused spirituality, soul and religion. His fiction is permeated with views on psychic interiority though it did not mean he understood or integrated psychic oppositions. If Hardy's scientific humanist approach ruled out Intelligent Design, then it also obviated a belief in a providential deity. Therefore, his inconsistency, accusing the President of the Immortals of sporting with Tess, was to say the least ambiguous and logically flawed, but it was also a signifier of the oscillations that he experienced with regard to issues of faith and reason. It is reasonable to argue that the sensitive Hardy would

not wish to annihilate his reader's Christian belief at a stroke; therefore, he was using different terms to chip away at moribund beliefs, with the President of the Immortals being an allegorical reference to the wrathful God of the Old Testament. The central issue in *Jude the Obscure* is whether the eponymous hero, as a representative of progressive, working class manhood, can overcome the negative influences of social and psychological dichotomies that he is destined to encounter. Sue's return to her religion in the aftermath of the killings-suicide is not a religious conversion, but merely a pathetic attempt at coping with an outlandish tragedy. Their *volte-faces* suggest that, as adults, they cannot go home again like penitent prodigals, but must face the consequences of their decision.

At the age of eleven, Jude underwent the pains of separation as his only friend, the schoolteacher Phillotson, left to pursue a career at university, which he hoped would culminate in ordination. Hardy creates a fallow mood from the outset of *Jude the Obscure*, opening with the fracturing of their relationship: 'the schoolmaster was leaving the village and everybody seemed sorry' (Hardy, 2008c: 3). Aspects of Hardy's own early academic and ecclesiastical ambitions are caught in Phillotson's statement:

Well-don't speak of this everywhere. You know what a university is, and a university degree? It is the necessary hallmark of a man who wants to do anything in teaching. My scheme, or dream, is to be a university graduate, and then to be ordained. By going to live at Christminster, or near it, I shall be at headquarters, so to speak, and if my scheme is practicable at all, I consider that being on the spot will afford me a better chance of carrying it out than I should have elsewhere (Hardy, 2008c: 4).

Realising that young Jude will not grasp the statement's full import, Phillotson advises him: 'to be a good boy and be kind to animals and birds' (Hardy, 2008c: 4). The naturalist in Hardy surfaces in the sensitive innocence of Jude guarding the farmer Troutham's corn from the crows. 'He was a boy who could not himself bear to hurt anything' (Hardy, 2008c: 11). However, there is a further connection here between life and art, as while expecting natural order, Jude instead found chaos, and he exclaims: 'how ugly it is here' (Hardy, 2008c: 8). Jude's naive expectation of harmonious co-existence between humanity and nature was

filtered through the consciousness of a lonely and unhappy Hardy as a child. Hardy and Jude were of comparable age when Hardy wrote 'Domicilium', and Jude gets his first job guarding the corn. His Aunt Drusilla often told him she had no interest in him, and he identified with the unwanted crows as fellow rejects: 'a magic thread of fellow-feeling united his own life with theirs' (Hardy, 2008c: 9). In substituting solidarity with the birds for unavailable human friendship, he separates himself from crucial human emotional interaction, and this places Jude at a further disadvantage in a world in which he is already hampered by social background and poverty. A tenderness of heart is a quality that also works against him in a competitive adult world. Jude aligns with the birds, allowing them to eat the corn unhindered, and subsequently receives a thrashing from Farmer Troutham (Hardy, 2008c: 10). His reasonable defence to Troutham while being beaten is: 'I – I – m sir – only meant that – there was a good crop in the ground – I saw them sow it – and the rooks could have a little bit for dinner – and you wouldn't miss it, sir – and Mr Phillotson said I was to be kind to 'em – O, O, O, !' (Hardy, 2008c: 10). Jude, when rejected by his aunt, seeks consolation with another species, a common occurrence amongst depressed people. "Poor little dears"! said Jude aloud. "You *shall* have some dinner you shall! There is enough for us all. Farmer Troutham can afford to let you have some. Eat, then, my little dear birdies, and make a good meal" (Hardy, 2008c: 9). Jude can be seen to reflect on aspects of his creator's desire to be kind, but also of a pessimistic sense that actions always have consequences, and not all of them positive.

Hardy's mother, Jemima Hand Hardy, was a woman of strong personality and resolution, and she was the greatest influence on Hardy's early life. From as young as four years old, Hardy possessed a strong negative attitude towards existence. Outlining his lack of social ambition to Jemima, he was disappointed by her reaction:

Afterwards he told his mother of his conclusions on existence, thinking she would enter into his views. But to his great surprise she was very

much hurt, which was natural enough considering she had been near death's door in bringing him forth. And she never forgot what he had said, a source of much regret to him in after years (Hardy, 2007: 16).

There are parallels between Jude's sadness at Phillotson's departure and the abrupt fracturing by his mother of Hardy's relationship with the Church of England school-mistress, the tender-hearted Lady Julia Martin of Kingston Maurward, which has already been noted. The Martin's house was the model for Knapwater House in Hardy's first novel *Desperate Remedies*, a sprawling group of buildings, which dated from Elizabethan times, had seen better days and was in need of refurbishment:

In front, detached from everything else, rose the most ancient portion of the structure—an old arched gateway, flanked by the bases of two small towers, and nearly covered with creepers, which had clambered over the eaves of the sinking roof, and up to the gable to the crest of the Aldclyffe family perched on the apex. Behind this, at a distance of ten or twenty yards, came the only portion of the main building that still existed—an Elizabethan fragment (Hardy, 1975: 126).

At nine to ten years of age, Hardy would have been besotted by Martin's warmth, class and prestige. As a teacher, without children of her own, she would have listened to his ideas and plans. She taught Hardy how to write, and she was disappointed and quarrelled with Jemima when she took Thomas away and sent him to the inter-denominational British School founded by Isaac Last in Dorchester. Julia Martin felt that not only did Mrs Hardy desert her school, but that she had also abandoned Anglican precepts. Hardy's family were Anglican or High Church, though not excessively pious. This was Hardy's first unconsummated love affair, Julia was thirty-eight and childless, and Hardy only nine, Julia's show of affection was maternal, though Tom never forgot her effect on him. The record of their mutual affection was deleted and subsequently restored to *The Life*. One could see the struggle between these two women for his affections as having implications for many such similar struggles in his novels.

In *The Life*, Hardy states that his feelings for Julia were almost those of a lover, and as she had known him from his infancy 'she had been accustomed to take [him] into her lap and

kiss [him]until he was quite a big child' (Hardy, 1984: 23). Love demands a submission that is total, a commitment to which the younger Hardy responded by staying up half the night, and going without food and drink at a harvest-supper at the Martins, to be with his beloved teacher. Young Hardy was known as Tommy, and *The Life* states:

More over under her dignity lay a tender heart, and having no children of her own she had grown passionately fond of Tommy almost from his infancy-said to be an attractive little fellow at this time-whom she had been accustomed to take into her lap until he was quite a big child. He quite reciprocated her fondness (Hardy, 1984: 23).

*The Life* implies that afterwards the landed Martins withdrew the estate building work from Tommy's father. Hardy's young age allowed him to bridge the social divide, though his mother's action would have been seen by the Martins as the petulant act of a social inferior. This early exposure to the limits and boundaries of social class has resonances in his later novels. In *Desperate Remedies*, an interview between Edward Springrove, an architect with some likeness to Hardy, sees Miss Aldclyffe describes her lingering snobbery:

Miss Aldclyffe, like a good many others in her position, had plainly not realised that a son of her tenant and inferior could have become an educated man, who had learnt to feel his individuality, to view society from a bohemian standpoint, far outside the faming grade in Carriford parish, and that hence he had all a developed man's unorthodox opinion about the subordination of classes (Hardy, 1975: 212).

Jemima's fracturing of Hardy's relationship with Martin revealed her controlling nature, something she shared with the fictional Miss Aldclyffe of *Desperate Remedies*. The Marxist writer George Lukacs remembered his own mother in a similar context, stating that: 'very early I was ruled by feelings of strong opposition' (Lukacs, cited in Hillman, 1996: 69). As an adult, Hardy met Martin again, but their moment seemed to have passed. *The Life* states: 'in spite of his lover-like promise to her ladyship the two never met again till he was a young man of twenty-two' (Hardy, 1984: 25). In several ways Martin's fascination for Hardy was replicated in his middle age by his close relationship with Florence Henniker, who shared many traits with Julia Martin.

Parallels between Hardy's early life, and how he committed those experiences to art, can be found in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, and in his first poem 'Domicilium', which were pastoral in nature, drawing on Hardy's early life experiences. 'Domicilium' chronicles the appearance of his paternal home as described to him on walks by his grandmother when she was a girl. Hardy fondly remembers her description of what his ancestral home looked like to her fifty years previously, while also lamenting her loss: 'Long gone -my father's mother, who is now Blest with the blest would take me out to walk' (Hardy, 1976: 3). There is a Darwinian allusion in the first stanza to the wish of the honeysuckles for hegemony over the apples trees:

It faces west, and round the back and sides  
High beeches, bending, hang a veil of boughs  
And sweep against the roof. Wild honeysuckles  
Climb on the walls, and seem to sprout a wish  
(if we may fancy wish of tree and plants)  
To over top the apple-trees hard by (Hardy, 1976: 3).

His early reading of Darwin at nineteen, however, imparted a worldview that was fundamentally different from 'Domicilium' (1856) which was written three years beforehand. Darwin's *Origin of Species* revealed the natural world as being in a constant state of warfare, with each species preying on the other in the struggle for survival. He looked at this natural world in detail in his early novel, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, and the publication of this book also gave rise to another mentoring relationship, similar to that he enjoyed with Julia Martin.

*Under the Greenwood Tree*, one of Hardy's finest pastoral works, was commercially unsuccessful, but led to a life-long mentoring relationship and subsequent friendship with Leslie Stephen, editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*. Stephen liked *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *The Life* records his opinion 'thinking the descriptions admirable', and it was 'a long time since he had received more pleasure from a new writer' (Hardy 1984: 97). According to

Tomalin 'Stephen was a dry as a gentleman should be' (Tomalin, 2007: 134), which was an ideal counterbalance to the emotional Hardy in terms of his literary efforts. Stephen's first wife Minny, a daughter of the celebrated author Thackeray, described in a letter to her sister her impressions of Hardy, whom she met at a dinner the Stephens gave for Thomas: 'the evening was one of wild chaos. I tried to drown my cares in drink but it only affected my feet and not my head. Mr Hardy is a very damp young man and dampness I abominate' (Tomalin, 2007: 134); in the parlance of the day dampness equated with an excess of emotionality. Tomalin avers that Hardy was nervous when confronted by a daughter of the great Thackeray, concluding that 'her remark was snobbish: a gentleman is not damp' (Tomalin, 2007: 134). Stephen castigated him for restoring an excerpt from *Far From the Madding Crowd*, replying impatiently to Hardy's objections: 'I spoke as an editor, not as a man. You have no more consciousness of these things than a child' (Tomalin, 2006: 135). Hardy was still an apprentice writer and as he had not yet married his knowledge of married people was from the outside looking-in. Stephen detected something of a kindred spirit in Hardy, inviting him to write a story for the *Cornhill Magazine*. Stephen opened many doors for Hardy:

When he commissioned *Far from the Madding Crowd* Leslie Stephen had been editor of the *Cornhill* for two years; though only in his early forties, he was a dominant figure already in the London literary world. Stephen's wife was Thackeray's daughter; his friends included notable men of letters, like John Morley and George Meredith ... Stephen's eminence impressed Hardy and assisted him: when the serial *Far from the Madding crowd* began to prove a success, Stephen was ideally placed to help Hardy make the most of it (Pite, 2006: 210).

James Gibson writes of Hardy's friendship with Stephen including his composing of a poem 'The Schreckhorn' (1897) which he wrote for Maitland's *The Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen* (1906). In Hardy's reply to Virginia Woolf, who had written to him thanking him for the kind sentiments expressed about her father in 'The Schreckhorn', the Dorset man describes Stephen as 'having a peculiar attractiveness for me' (Hardy, 1999: 222). Stephen

had advocated that Hardy become true to his feelings, and he became a formative influence on Hardy's subsequent work. Hardy quotes Stephen's thoughts on poetry: 'the ultimate aim of the poet should be to touch our hearts by showing his own, and not mimicking the notes of his predecessors' (Stephen, (1879) cited in Hardy, 1984: 131). Hardy adhered to this piece of advice particularly when writing poetry, but also in his novels. Emotions, though often strong, are seldom coherent and rational, and this could explain the depth of his great tragic characters, who similarly are true to their emotions throughout their tragic journeys. In an example of fortuitous coincidence, Stephen entered Hardy's life as Horace Moule died in 1873. Hardy, deeply afflicted by the loss of Moule, was for a while in a state he later attributed to Jude: 'Save his own soul he hath no star' (Swinburne quoted in Hardy, 2008c: 70), but his developing association with Stephen filled that particular void:

Stephen was the same age as Horace Moule, with a similar if more achieved educational background, and in one way he stepped easily into Moule's role as mentor and critic, and with the real power of literary patronage; but, although he returned Hardy's liking, he did not have Moule's charm (Tomalin, 2006: 133).

Stephen had a marked philosophical influence on Hardy, and shortly after their first meeting, he asked him to be his witness when Stephen abjured the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Christian Faith. It demonstrated how Hardy's own religious stance had altered since his years at Hick's Architects in Dorchester, half a life earlier. This incident may well contain the genesis of Hardy's description of Angel Clare's abnegation of Article Four of the Thirty-Nine articles governing the Church of England to his sorrowing father in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*: 'No, father; I cannot underwrite Article Four (leave alone the rest) taking it 'in a literal and grammatical sense' as required by the Declaration'; And therefore I can't be a parson in the present state of affairs' (Hardy, 2008a: 132). Article Four 'Of the Resurrection of Christ', states that Christ was physically raised from the dead (Hardy, 2008a: 428). This was precisely the religious issue that remained the sticking-point of unbelief for Hardy. It was also a point on

which Horace Moule and Hardy differed. Issues of religion had long been a significant factor in Hardy's own life, and very often, these issues were enunciated through argument and debate. The fact that Stephen was willing to discuss such moral and ethical issues with Hardy is a significant factor; as such discussions can be seen throughout the books and poems. In addition, the fact of Stephen acting as a mentor is significant, as mentors, father-substitutes and guides figure strongly in Hardy's life and art.

The Reverend William Barnes was a mentor and life-long friend to Hardy; he was an intellectual, a poet and a spiritual counter-weight to the agnosticism of Leslie Stephen. Hardy initially saw himself as a poet-parson successor in the way of Barnes. Tomalin (2006) writes: 'for a while he had the fantasy of giving up architecture, and devoting himself to writing poetry ... becoming a clergyman on the model of William Barnes' (Tomalin, 2006: 78). *The Life* records their different perceptions of their home-place: 'so far did he carry this idea of the unity of Wessex that he used to say he had grown to forget the crossing of county boundaries within the ancient Kingdom-in this respect being quite unlike the poet Barnes, who was Dorset emphatically' (Hardy, 1984; 126). As a friend of the school owner, and later Christian minister Barnes, Hardy was elevated socially in the Dorchester area in an era where class origins were of paramount importance. The life of Barnes affords an approximation of what Hardy's own life would have been had he followed his mentor's spiritual path. There existed a moment in Hardy's life when he decided to become a writer instead of a Christian minister. Tomalin comments on Hardy's growing ambivalence (arising from those oppositions which I see as central to his aesthetic): 'he felt the draining away of the old joyous certitudes as well as pride in the new clear thinking' (Tomalin, 2007: 78). This meant that he rejected an academic career at University, or the one followed by Barnes in which he combined religious ministry and poetry composition. Barnes and Hardy choose divergent paths. That Hardy retained such strong affection for the avuncular Barnes, to the extent of visiting him

regularly, writing his obituary, and also writing a poem celebrating his life, demonstrates how opposites can attract, and also suggests Hardy's attraction to contrary positions.

From his mid-twenties onwards, Hardy expanded his intellectual limits, embracing the contradictions and paradoxes of both religious belief and intellectual secularism. From those oppositions arose his creativity, and it is arguable that his conflicts were best left unhealed. His early mentor and role model, the polymath Barnes stayed close to a Christian monotheistic path, and lived a fully realised existence as a poet, linguist, antiquarian, folklorist, phoneticist and Christian minister. Their lives were shadows of each other in a Jungian sense; the person they choose to be created a dark double in the shape of the person they could not now become. Both men produced work consistent, even synonymous, with their inner convictions. Similarly, their lives accorded with their values. While the paths of Hardy and Barnes were ostensibly opposite, their art paradoxically represents individual's possessing great human insight tinged with compassion. Hardy always admired Barnes's integrity arising from his mentor's monotheism if eschewing it personally:

And some day hence, towards Paradise  
And all its blest-if such should be-  
I will lift glad, afar-off eyes,  
Though it contain no place for me (Hardy 1995: 222).

His different mentors, and the women in his early life, all dealt with oppositions in their own way, and all influenced him in complex and unusual ways, and they were significant formative influences on the development of Hardy as a novelist in the early stages of his career.

Unlike Barnes, Hardy eschewed a monotheistic perspective on life where the integration of disparate and conflicted psychic aspects are gradually allowed to synthesise. He over-balanced, falling into the negative territory of consistent pessimism, a view clearly represented in the poem 'In Tenebris' (1896). This poem dared to look at worst of human

existence, and it illustrated how humanity replicated themythic gods of love and anger, who quarrel, cheat, and are vengeful.Irwin (2006) writes: ‘he writes too many poems in which the emphasis on the decay of beauty, the decline, the likelihood of mischance and the certainty of death is so unrelieved and automatic as to be tiresome’ (Irwin, 2006: xiv).This begs the question as to whetherHardy losta fullness ofsoulby abandoning religion, and pursuing material goals, concentrating on the negatives of existence.*The Life* is sometimes deficient in self-honesty; Tomalin (2006) writes that‘losing faith in Christianity was like shedding a protective skin: intellectually necessary but a melancholy process’ (Tomalin, 2007: 78).She argues that Matthew Arnold’s *Dover Beach* (1867) captures the real extent of Hardy’s loss, as opposed to the sanguine and complacent account rendered by *The Life*.Hardy’s experience after rejecting religion parallels Arnold’s description of a world without faith, having ‘neither joy, nor love, nor light, / Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain’ (Arnold, 1867, cited in Tomalin, 2006: 78).

For Hardy losing religion was like shedding his personal armour;it was intellectually necessary but a sad process, which left him to a degree emotionally and intellectually naked.Arnold’s poem coincided with Hardy’s religious crisis:

Wandering between two worlds, one dead  
The other powerless to be born,  
With nowhere yet to rest my head  
Like these, on earth, I wait forlorn(The Victorian Web, 2002).

Hardy revelled in the ranks of the intellectually enlightened, but also cherished the memory of simple Christian belief and ritual (Tomalin, 2006: 78), and this opposition remained with him throughout his life.Conversely, Jude suffering through the vicissitudes of unfulfilled religious and academic ambitions, and grave disappointments in love, is still in the final analysis, in possession of an intact sense of soul.The religiously minded author Gilbert Keith

Chesterton linked Hardy's agnosticism with depression, drawing strong reactions from Hardy:

As to pessimism. My motto is, firstly diagnose the complaint-in this case human ills-and ascertain the cause: then set about finding a remedy if one exists. The motto or practice of the optimists is: Blind the eyes to the real malady, and use empirical panaceas to suppress the symptoms (Hardy, 1984: 413).

In his own life in Dorchester, he would have been very familiar with the use of these 'empirical panaceas', and of the havoc which they could wreak in a life. It is arguable that above all else, Hardy was an individualist and individuality requires courage. Hillman frames the dilemma for highly conscious people like Hardy: 'Some choose life because they are afraid of death and others choose death because they are afraid of life' (Hillman, 2011: 64).

Barnes was a benign presence to Hardy, and the parallels with Jude and Phillotson's relationship in *Jude the Obscure* are marked. Hardy had several reasons to be grateful to Barnes who had shown him what could be achieved as an autodidact from a Dorchester base. Barnes worked as a schoolmaster, and was also an original writer who achieved world renown as an authority on linguistics. He became a Cambridge graduate B.D. 1852, after attending the university part-time over many years. Barnes's verse is mainly pastoral, expressed in tender terms, whereas Hardy's poetry usually contains a cutting edge. The contrast with Hardy's more material outlook is captured in Barnes' dialect poem 'Zickness' (Sickness) (1879):

'An' bags of money at the end of time  
Can't buy a soul'  
Nor meake amends vor crime (Barnes, 1844) (Poems of Rural Life in the Dorset Dialect).

Coming from an even poorer farming background, Barnes' successes endorsed Hardy's self-taught expertise, just as Phillotson encouraged Jude, fostering his desire to attend Christminster and take Holy Orders. Hardy invested greatly in Barnes as a person and tutor,

whose integrity and success against great odds were exemplary. The divergent paths followed by the writers resulted from forced decisions, as Tomalin notes:

He [Barnes] was an example of someone who had worked hard to break out of the constraints of his life to achieve his ambition and succeeded, but the usual route to a career in the church depended on family money. No one in Tom's [Hardy] family had ever attended a university, and neither his father's imagination nor his income would stretch to having a son prepared for a university education that would make him financially dependent well into his twenties (Tomalin, 2007: 41).

Barnes experienced poor health, and the early loss of his wife left him with five children to support from meagre means, especially when his school closed from a lack of local support. Barnes' poems, even those marking his wife's early demise, always look for, and find, consolations. His poem 'Woak Hill' (1844) celebrates the occasional flames in life, acknowledging his wife as a guiding spirit, whereas Hardy's marriage was difficult and childless, though materially he became very successful. His personal life had more than its fair share of awkwardness, much of it due to a solitary and inward-looking disposition. Jemima Hardy's warning to her children not to marry, recycled in Aunt Drusilla's advice to Jude, was in many ways sound counsel, given his temperament. Hardy's poem 'We Sat at the Window' (1875), from *Moments Of Vision*, probably refers to Emma, a year into their marriage, and it laments a mutual poor choice of life partner: 'We were irked by the scene, by our own selves; yes.... Wasted were two souls in their prime' (Hardy, 1995: 403).

The 1875 poem, and the novel *Jude the Obscure*, show great unhappiness and disillusionment with married life. Overall, Hardy's opus suggests that the best that can be hoped for in life was an acceptance of its vagaries. Elizabeth-Jane's words at the conclusion of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* probably speak for aspects of Hardy's own perspective:

Her experience had been of a kind to teach her, rightly or wrongly, that the doubtful honour of a brief transit through a sorry world hardly called for effusiveness' ... But her strong sense that neither she nor any human being deserved less than was given, did not blind her to the fact that there were others receiving less who had deserved more (Hardy, 2008b: 310).

These comments naturally alienated some readers of the upper echelons who felt that they lived in the best possible world. Those trapped in unhappy marriages or experiencing religious doubt would have identified with the poem and with the last novel.

Initially Hardy saw Barnes as a precursor and virtuous paragon, whose triumphs over limiting circumstances suggested several possibilities. The following excerpt demonstrates Hardy's life-long admiration for Barnes, as a man he had known from vigorous prime of life to stooped old age:

If I were going to lecture to young men on the examples set by striking characters gone before, I do not know of whom I could select, like Mr Barnes, as so pre-eminent in all that a Christian man's life should be ...some have questioned whether (his) career can be pointed to as successful one; of course that depends on what success in life is taken to mean ...In regard to his school work, he had the faculty of interesting his scholars, and not only of causing them to understand, but to love what he taught. I can testify to this from my own experience as his pupil, and I feel confident of the supporting testimony of many others whom he taught. If this be so, what scholastic success could be greater? (Hardy, 1886, cited in Hearl, 1996: 325)

Pite states that Hardy's parents could not afford the fees at Barnes's academy, and the teenage Hardy, who was growing emotionally distant from his parents, and increasingly separate from them culturally, began seeking out surrogate fathers. Barnes was arguably the first of these 'fathers', as his intellectual powers, artistic sensibility, and innate human kindness were magnets for the grateful autodidact (Pite, 2006: 72).

Despite *The Life's* assertion that, like Barnes, he could have attended Cambridge University, Hardy deeply regretted he had not done so. Hardy valued Barnes's friendship, adopting him as a role model, 'these decisions suggest some impulse towards discipleship on Hardy's part, though discipleship was something he never liked to confess' (Pite, 2006: 70). Pite continues: 'because Hardy took the idea of becoming a clergyman seriously, he was dejected when it proved impossible' (Pite, 2006: 122). *The Life* and a surviving letter to his sister Mary give conflicting accounts of why he abandoned religious aspirations:

About this time Hardy nourished a scheme of a highly visionary character. He perceived from the impossibility of getting his verses accepted by magazines that he could not live by poetry, and (rather strangely) thought that architecture and poetry—particularly architecture in London—would not work well together. So he formed the idea of combining poetry and the Church—towards which he had a leaning—and wrote to a friend in Cambridge for particulars as to Matriculation at that University—which with his late Classical reading education would have been easy for him, and knowing that what money he could not muster for keeping terms his father would lend him for a few years, his idea being that of a curate in a country village (Hardy, 1984: 52).

Hardy's letter to Mary described 'this notion far-fetched' (Pite, 2006: 121), adding that it seemed 'absurd to live on now with such a remote object in view' (Pite, 2006: 121). Pite questions *The Life's* statement:

This is evidently disingenuous. Even though, by 1866, Hardy was no longer a confidently committed, believing Christian, he had been so very recently. While his faith lasted, entering the Church would have made sense to him on idealistic grounds to pursue artistic interests, so perhaps it would prove a better place than architecture for the exercise of Hardy's talents (Pite, 2006: 121).

Hardy's enthusiasm for the idea that he could benefit materially by combining professional writing and Christian ministry was undermined by his desire to widen, rather than lessen, his horizons. Barnes was a poet and chronicler of traditional local customs, and never lost touch with his roots or his intrinsic values, remaining popular throughout Dorset for recitations of poetry written in the local dialect, and for being a knowledgeable antiquarian.

Hardy's approach to fiction had a much greater appeal globally than Barnes's localism, as it depicted the ordinary modern individual in conflict with the oppression of religion and society. In *Jude the Obscure*, the religious non-conformist Sue finds conventional expectations somewhat of a straitjacket, and Jude finds that translating his academic dreams into reality is impossible. Barnes also discovered that being a ten-year man at Cambridge made him vulnerable, and he received several rejections from the University. Under an archaic Elizabethan statute that allowed him study for a Doctorate in Divinity, Barnes was housed in a decrepit part of the university. The statute was abolished in 1858. There is

affection and gratitude, combined with the supernatural suggestion of light from the east, in Hardy's (1886) final paean to Barnes, 'The Last Signal':

...Then, amid the shadow of that livid sad east,  
Where the light was least, and a gate stood wide,  
Something flashed the fire of the sun that was facing it,  
Like a brief blaze on that side.

Looking hard and harder I knew what it meant-  
The sudden shine sent from the livid east scene;  
It meant the west mirrored by the coffin of my friend there,  
Turning to the road from his green

To take his last journey forth-he who in his prime  
Trudged so many a time from that gate athwart the land!  
Thus a farewell to me signalled on his grave-way,  
As with a wave of his hand (Hardy, 1995: 444).

Other formative and mentoring influences on Hardy's life and fiction up to the publication of *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874), included the counsel of George Meredith after the unsuccessful publication of *The Poor Man and the Lady* (1867). The novel's reception, some of which was recycled in *Desperate Remedies*, revealed societal oppositions to Hardy's work. A mutual admiration also existed between Algernon Swinburne and Hardy; Hardy loved Swinburne's racy and atheistic poetry, and Swinburne admired *Jude the Obscure*. They were both seen as decadent by right-wing moralists, but were praised by the liberally minded, as rebelling against Victorian prudery, promoting the joys of sexuality. Swinburne's poem 'Hymn to Proserpine' laments the rise of Christianity, and is quoted by Sue in *Jude the Obscure*; Sue continued: She, or he, 'who lets the world, or his portion of it choose his plan of life for him, has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation' (Hardy, 2008c: 215). In the context of the love triangle involving Sue, Jude and Phillotson, the latter's retort elevates their debate above philosophical argument: "What do I care about J.S. Mill!" moaned he. "I only want to lead a quiet life! Do you mind my

saying that I have guessed what never once occurred to me before our marriage – that you were in love, and are in love, with Jude Fawley”” (Hardy, 2008c: 215).

John Stuart Mill, author of *On Liberty* (1859) and *The Subjection of Women* (1869), was another intellectual hero and mentor to Hardy. Mill was greatly admired by the Victorian intelligentsia as an agent for radical change. The 1860's were a time of public disorder at meetings in support of reform. The rapidly changing times were shaping new concepts, and encouraging the movement of people like Hardy from rural communities, with established patterns of local worship, to impersonal urban centres eroded religious faith. Sue Bridehead embodies Hardy's desire for reform in religious, social and educational attitudes. She tells Jude that the railway station is the new and popular communal venue as the cathedral has had its day (Hardy 2008: 128). She repositions a Christian picture in her room, replacing it with pagan statues of Apollo and Venus, and criticises the repetitive and recycled teaching methods of Christminster University, describing it as 'new wine in old bottles' (Hardy, 2008c: 144). Conversely, Jude holds tight to his dreams, 'I still think Christminster has much that is glorious; though I was resentful I couldn't get there' (Hardy, 2008c: 145).

Leslie Stephen's *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (1876) would have been an intellectual beacon to Hardy, and Stephen's courage in disavowing his Anglican priesthood obtained at Cambridge in 1865 was a very significant gesture for Hardy. Stephen encouraged Hardy's simplicity of approach in fiction, advocating that Hardy be true to his feelings, and Hardy integrated much of Stephen's philosophy and literary criticism. He was surely impressed that his mentor Stephen lectured at The Working Men's College in the 1850s, later becoming a board member. Stephen's other work included the celebrated *The Science of Ethics* (1882), dealing with evolutionary ethics in the late nineteenth century which would have fascinated the Darwinian in Hardy. Not all critics were as admiring as

Stephen of Hardy's fiction; his later work drew the opprobrium of major writers of the era amongst them G.K.Chesterton, and T.S.Eliot, who wrote:

The work of the late Thomas Hardy represents an interesting example of a powerful personality uncurbed by any institutional attachment or by submission to any objective beliefs; unhampered by any ideas, or even by what sometimes acts as a partial restraint upon inferior writers, the desire to please a large public (Eliot, 1933: 54).

Chesterton, Eliot and Henry James were formidable and formative influences to the extent that they articulated opinions that established the boundaries of acceptable taste and style. They also gave a context as to why Hardy wrote in the manner and style he did. Private and public discourse in London's literary circles shaped Hardy's fiction as it in turn gave an articulate voice to the oppressed and marginalised.

## Chapter Two: The Evolution of Hardy the Novelist

Sensitive defenders of Hardy's reputation contend that there are sufficient biographies in existence already, while also admitting that establishing facts from existing biographies is a hazardous enterprise, as there are many contradictions and aporias to be found in the different versions of his life. Hardy discouraged biographies to the extent that he destroyed most of his papers, and dictated his autobiography during his lifetime to Florence Hardy who published it after his death under her name. Despite *The Life's* intentions to render a sanitized version of Hardy's life as fact, it reveals much through its obfuscations and omissions as it does through its honest recollections. James Gibson wrote: 'Although a man of integrity and honesty (most of the time) in his private life, Hardy the professional writer did not regard himself as being on oath to tell the truth in his public life' (Gibson, 1999: ix). There is a wry irony in the enigmatic lines from 'When Dead', *Human Shows* (1925): 'It will be much better when I am under the bough; I shall be more myself, Dear, then, Than I am now' (Hardy, 1995: 683). There was a symbiosis between Hardy's fiction and his lived experience, his art and life, albeit one that is reflected and refracted and I would maintain that one obviously affected the trajectory of the other from the outset.

It is helpful to read Samuel Chew's 1921 account of the several visits he made to see Hardy at Max Gate Dorchester. Chew was a professor of English at Bryn Mawr University in the United States, and his book, *Thomas Hardy Poet and Novelist*, was the result of interviews at the writer's home. Chew's reminisces of Hardy's utterances on the rejected *The Poor Man and The Lady* (1867) remembered Hardy describing it as an incoherent production

full of revolutionary and anti-social theories (Chew, 1964: 20). This anecdote suggests that Chew considered Hardy as a writer very much at one with the ideas about which he wrote. Chew's impression was that Hardy when writing the novel was internally opposed to the society that he described. This view was similar to that of George Meredith, who as reader for Chapman & Hall Publishers, rejected the publication of novel because it was too subversive. The politically correct Meredith said much later when Hardy was a great success that the novel was promising, whereas Hardy described it as 'very wild' (Chew, 1964: 21). Hardy made no further effort to get this novel into print.

There is a great deal of biography throughout the fiction, starting with the three early novels *Desperate Remedies*, *Under the Greenwood Tree* and in particular *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. This also applies to the unpublished *The Poor Man and The Lady*, which formed part of Hardy's literary apprenticeship. What is inferred and nuanced in the early novels hardens into bolder statements in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Millgate reports Hardy saying in 1894 that *Desperate Remedies* had contained 'many passages exhibiting a similar plainness to Tess' (Millgate, 1971: 32-33). The symbiosis between fact and fiction can be observed in Cytherea Graye's statement to her careless and nasty brother Owen in *Desperate Remedies*: 'But ah, Owen, it is difficult to adjust our outer and inner life with perfect honesty to all' (Hardy, 1976: 253). This opposition between the inner and outer life of Hardy the man had moral consequences, particularly in his marriages, where he accommodated rather than integrated competing aspects of psyche and spirit. Cytherea Graye's statement on the harsh judgement of others is particularly insightful: 'Nobody can enter into another's nature truly, that is what is so grievous' (Hardy, 1976: 254). The connections between Hardy's life and his fiction continued, reaching an apogee, despite Hardy's denials, in the final novel, *Jude the Obscure*.

No manuscript of *Desperate Remedies* survives, Hardy himself having destroyed it (Hardy, 1975: 404). In comparison to his great novels, it is bit of a hybrid, similar in content to the 'sensation novels' popular in the 1860's. However, in terms of my argument about the intertwining of the art and life, there are significant areas of value to be found in this early work. The incidences of architects and the description of church architecture from *Desperate Remedies* (1871) onwards are drawn straight from his life-experience as an architect. At Bloomfield's Architects in London, Hardy won prizes from the Royal Institute of British Architects. A Mr G.R. Crickmay took over John Hick's Architects practice when he died, and Hardy the architect worked for him, advising on the finer points of Gothic architecture and church restoration in general. *The Life* suggests that the hero in the novel, Edward Springrove, was based on a new assistant who came to work for Crickmay (Hardy, 1984: 65), though there are also many aspects of Hardy's own character interwoven with the hero Springrove's persona, for example the pessimism we see in Springrove's declaration that there are phases when 'there is nothing in the world worth living for' (Hardy, 1975: 73). Later making a reference to Milton's *Lycidas* (1637) Hardy's alter ego declares 'that he "mediates the thankless Muse" no longer' (Hardy, 1975: 74). Whilst Hardy continued to write verse, when he changed from a career in architecture to that of novelist, he only published fiction until after his disgust at the unfair critical treatment afforded to *Jude the Obscure*. Hardy's description of Springrove 'he's a thorough bookworm-despises the pap-and -daisy school of verse-knows Shakespeare to the very dregs of the footnotes. Indeed he is a poet himself in a small way' (Hardy, 1975: 55), mirrors Hardy's own life experience to this point, and his aspiration to become a successful publishing poet whenever the time was opportune.

Springrove, I would contend, is also Jude Fawley in embryo, as Hardy is dealing in a preliminary way with the problems encountered by young Victorian men attempting to transcend the difficulties of leaving one class in order to become part of a new social

milieu. He illustrates how their ideals are challenged by a society whose doors are closed to them due to their inferior background. Cytherea's, and her older brother's Owen's, language in conversation is redolent of a class above Hardy's own background. In their depiction, Hardy has adopted the values and manners of his new profession: 'that's a great deal to say of an architect, for all the professional men they are, as a rule, the most professional' (Hardy, 1975: 53). Another example of Hardy's fiction deriving from his own life-experience can be seen in the comment that 'I think he is a very worthy fellow; and though he is not a public school man he has read widely, and has a sharp appreciation of what's good in books and art ...this man is rather of a melancholy turn of mind, I think' (Hardy, 1975: 53). Springrove's perfect woman, according to the author, would be 'a child among pleasures and a woman among pains' as this was the 'rough outline of his requirement' (Hardy, 1975: 53). The woman most likely to fill all of those exacting requirements, in his fiction, was Tess.

Hardy was never happy with this novel, though it afforded him the opportunity to step back in order to move forward. *The Life* described it as 'the melodramatic novel quite below the level of *The Poor Man and the Lady*' (Hardy, 1984: 66). His employment as an architect in Weymouth by the sea gave him a new lease of life physically and artistically. Even more life-changing was Crickmay's commission to survey the rebuilding of a church in St. Juliot, in Cornwall, during which he met Emma Gifford for the first time. The seaside settings and the experiences of the four architects in the novel, in my opinion, were drawn from Hardy's time spent with Bloomfield, Hicks, and Crickmay in Dorchester, London and Weymouth respectively. The story contains many elements of church refurbishment seen again in *Jude the Obscure*. Like all good writers, Hardy was impartial, laying out the facts of social inequality without judgement.

The manner of how the embryonic novel later deals with the impregnable class divide is already in evidence. The cast of Hardy's first published novel connect with each other and

with the life of the writer; Miss Aldclyffe is a snob and feels superior to the intellectual Springrove, but she intuitively knows that a change in her attitudes towards people of a class formerly deemed to be subordinate is required. Edward Springrove, as an architect and the hero of *Desperate Remedies*, invites comparisons with Jude Fawley and with aspects of Hardy himself. 'Shakespeare to the very dregs of the footnotes' (Hardy, 1975: 55) suggests an autodidact with ambitions to raise himself socially through the power of consciously acquired knowledge. Springrove came from a small farming background, whilst an architect is still an artisan, while Jude was a stonemason like members of Hardy's own family. Hardy and Jude were both involved in church restoration. The idealist that is Springrove was developed further in Jude, and Hardy's makes clear the latter's reading history, which formed part of his strategy to improve his lot. He wishes to go to university and become a clergyman like the younger Hardy. He studies Greek and Roman, and the classics, much like Hardy studied under Horace Moule. In 1862, Moule gave the twenty-two year old Hardy a copy of *The Golden Treasury* anthology of poems. The departing Phillotson also gives Jude a present of a book and Jude wishes to follow his mentor to Christminster eventually (Hardy, 2008c: 4). It is the lack of suitable mentoring such as Hardy obtained from Barnes and Moule in real life, which is Hardy's *cause celebre* in the novel.

Love is omnipresent in Hardy's fiction. Miss Aldclyffe quotes from Shelley's poem in *Desperate Remedies* suggesting love is a fine madness:

Love's passions shall rock thee  
As the storm rocks the ravens on high,  
Bright reason will mock thee  
Like the sun from a wintry sky (Hardy, 1975: 111).

This first published novel is notable for the references to female sexuality and the subtle way Hardy represents Miss Aldclyffe's desire for physical contact with her companion Cytherea Graye. The later scene in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* where Farfrae tenderly brushes detritus

from the winnowing-machine off the clothes of Elizabeth-Jane, illustrates the sensitivity involved in initial sexual encounters. The author's eye for a fine building and how its appearance can harmonise the inner and outer aspects is captured in the description of the Three Tranters Inn in *Desperate Remedies*; 'This "many gabled", medieval building is a handsome specimen of the genuine roadside inn of bygone times' (Hardy, 1975: 144). In *Far from the Madding Crowd*, the Barn serves as multifactorial utility, possessing a holistic quality which neither church nor town hall surpasses. In *Edward Springrove*, we see the embodiment of how talented people like Hardy himself were seeking to integrate themselves into the upper echelons of a society that was resolutely determined to keep them in their place.

In 1873, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* was serialised by *Tinsley's Magazine* with his name on the front page. Hardy wrote the first two chapters of the novel in an evening in London and the rest of the story was composed later in the peaceful seclusion of Dorset. *The Life* states that it later became the favourite novel of the poets Tennyson and Coventry Patmore (Hardy, 1984:94). Writing to Hardy after her husband's demise Mrs Patmore observed:

...It shows how constant he was to his *loves*. From 1875 [when he first met with the book-*vide ante*] to 1896 he continually had *A Pair of Blue Eyes* read aloud to him. Each time he felt the same shock of surprise and pleasure at its consummate art and pathos. In illness when he asked for *A Pair of Blue Eyes* one knew he was able to enjoy again (Hardy, 1984: 325).

*The Life* records the comments of the influential *Saturday Review* on this pastoral tale: 'pronouncing it to be the most artistically constructed novels of its time' (Hardy, 1984: 98). Hardy the proto-Modernist innovates by exploring what shape exists under the layers of a young woman's clothing: 'Elfride had absolutely nothing between her and the weather but her diaphanous robe or costume' (Hardy, 1994b: 250). This is because Elfride has shed her underclothes, fashioning a rope to save Knight who observes that she is as 'small as an infant' (Hardy, 1984: 249). Knight, in turn, represents the mind-set of many eligible Victorian

men in his comments to Elfride: 'That a young woman has taken to writing is not by any means the best thing to hear about her' (Hardy, 1994b: 175). When Elfride asks what is the best thing Knight says, 'I suppose to hear that she has married' (Hardy, 1994b: 175). Tomalin writes that 'Hardy's own view was certainly closer to the modern one' (Tomalin, 2007: 123). She argues that, in this novel, Hardy dealt with feminine-masculine issues in a new way; 'Hardy was raising a question, which must have puzzled many young men at that time: what was the real shape and size of a fashionably dressed young lady? It was one which no other writer of the period felt able to consider, and Hardy's readiness to do so shows what an original approach he had' (Tomalin, 2007: 123). The scene's titillating effect upon the male reader of the time parallels Oscar Wilde's contemporary play *Salome* (1891). Hardy's intuition would have led him to demystify the mysterious again; in this case having a full look at the best. The similarity between Knight's rejection of Elfride, and Angel's dismissal of Tess for spurious reasons, is marked and it confirms the author's support for gender equality.

The year 1873 was when Hardy came into his full strength, shrugging off many previous influences and self-doubts. He began to write *Far from the Madding Crowd* and his long distance relationship with Emma was growing apace. In the novel, Hardy tried to be true to the society from which he came, where overcoming work and social problems was a daily occurrence. The novel extolled the Dorset landscape, offering a strong contrast to his bleak description of the land over twenty years later in *Jude the Obscure*. *Far From the Madding Crowd* dismisses hopes of justice or fair play from castle or church for ordinary people, and Hardy's humanist leanings substitute the large barn on the farm for the local church as the centre of rural community, a substation that proleptically echoes Sue's comments on the railway station in *Jude the Obscure*, as already mentioned. It houses the fruits of their labour,

doubling as a venue for meetings on work matters and social gatherings; and offering communal support, music and dancing:

One could say about the barn, what could hardly be said of either the church or castle, akin to its age and style, that the purpose which had dictated its original erection was the same with that to which it was still applied. Unlike and superior to either of those typical remnants of medievalism, the old barn embodied practices which had suffered no mutilation at the hands of time. Here at least the spirit of the ancient builders was at one with the spirit of the modern beholder (Hardy, 2008d: 143).

Hardy's *The Return of the Native* (1878) implies the absence of ethics in nature, whilst *The Woodlanders* (1887) is replete with a deadly fight for survival in nature with echoes of social Darwinism. In order to more fully comprehend the complexities of the nature-nurture dialectic as secondary research investigations I have made a study of Thomas Henry Huxley's work *Evolution and Ethics* and Seth Pringle Pattison's *Man's Place In The Cosmos and Other Essays*. I have perused the ideas contained in Michael Irwin's *Reading Hardy's Landscapes*, Philip Davis's *The Victorians and Memory and Writing*, as well as Gillian Beer's *Darwin Plots*. Hardy views of Darwin's thesis in *The Descent of Man* (1871) were typically conflicted. Intellectually he felt there was not a shred of evidence to support the belief but emotionally he clung on to the assurances it offered. Davis states:

In Darwin's *Descent of Man* even the higher aesthetic sense descended from the advantages that beauty offered in the sexual selection of mates. Man had originated out of animals and mind had originated out of sensation and body. In his *Principles of Psychology* (1855) Herbert Spencer argued that passions came in bursts and thoughts felt like blows because our whole life was originally physical, developing inwardly from a long series of shock to the nerves. Even individual conscience gradually evolved as an internalisation of the tribe's approval or disapproval (Davis, 2004: 87).

For Hardy, Darwinian Theory translated into the formulation of a new paradigm; that of the ascent of man to the position formerly occupied by God. Ethically, he was influenced by leading Victorian intellectuals such as Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) who philosophised in *The Principles of Psychology* that 'life is the continuous adjustment of internal relations to

external relations', advocating a social Darwinism paralleling that of nature. Affinities and oppositions between humans and nature are common in the later fiction, where Hardy's ideas and settings are in opposition to Wordsworth's 'Natures Holy Plan'. Tapping into the prevailing intellectual mind-set Hardy's work was in conflict with traditional beliefs and practices. The later fiction was in its own way progressive Victorian thinking presented in a narrative form for the masses.

There were always the darker elements of evil and hatred to be accommodated within the individual human psyche and collectively in the world at large, and these negatives forces became the staple of Hardy's fiction; T.S. Eliot felt there was a whiff of sulphur about Hardy's work though Hardy's own life was never as dramatically directed and altered, as was the socially marginal Henchard by his compulsions. He never outwardly demonstrated Sue's religious rebellion, nor the extremes of Alec's or Troy's sexual and egotistical torments. Outwardly, Hardy possessed their shortcomings and character defects in minor degree. The consequences of his subversive fiction were two-fold; in dismantling religious and marital traditions, he left a vacuum, as for many in his era the consolations of religion, and the security of marriage, were fixed points in a time of rapid flux. Hardy was the quintessential Victorian success story, an egocentric achiever, driving himself at times with grim and clenched determination, coping with the serialisation of his novels and the demands of Victorian censorship arising from religious prudery. It would also have been a challenge for Hardy to accommodate the views of Emma, an active Suffragette, who had marched for greater women's rights with George Bernard Shaw, even though as we have seen, he looked favourably on women in terms of equality. His external meekness was often a cloak for the conflicts that raged internally, and it was these conflicts that drove him to engage with many of the core ethical and social issues of the time.

Aspects of his inner life became points of origin for many of the important cruces in the books. Victorian and his own attitudes to marriage, religious vocation versus agnosticism, sexual enjoyment, and drunkenness and educational opportunities come under scrutiny in Hardy's mature work and by his final novel; he was willing to let his true feelings surface regardless of the inevitable criticism. Emma hated Hardy's attacks on religion and his sexual candour in the final book, believing that the novel was somehow connected to their marriage. Emma would have sided with the Bishop of Wakefield's complaints to the newspapers on Hardy's anti-religious outpourings. She was attuned to the Bishop's opinion, which Hardy hated, and she left Bibles open around the house as a semiotic reminder to her husband of her religious faith. Further, in a religious context, Hardy would have been able to study Moule's family from nearby Fordington, who were socially charitable and religiously inspired. Christian exemplars, they became the models for aspects of the Clare family in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Moule was from a family who devoted their lives to religious service at home and abroad. Horace had become drink-dependent, and was unfortunate, swinging from virtue to vice and back again.

Tomalin states 'Another of Moule's offerings to Hardy was a translation of Goethe's Faust which suggests a grim parallel with his condition as he struggled with fiends he could not control (Tomalin, 2007: 80) The contradiction was that he got involved in the temperance revival and later resorted to drink. At times Troy, Henchard, and Jude embody aspects of Moule's characteristics, as their lack of healthy discipline resulting from conflicting desires, sees them engage in unacceptable social behaviour. It was alleged that Moule got a woman pregnant in Fordington, and subsequently that she emigrated to Australia (Tomalin, 2006: 80). In a parallel manner, Arabella tricks Jude into marriage by falsely declaring a pregnancy. Jude's character traits embodied Dionysius (alcohol) and Aphrodite (sexuality), aspects that clash with his Christian ethics. Hence, Jude's reciting of the Nicene

Creed under the influence of drink was an opposition arising from these competing psychic aspects of character. For Hardy, such aberrations never represented the full person, and this is possibly at the core of the attractiveness and complexity of his characters, and this can possibly be traced back to his experience of Moule.

Moule, in his capacity as reviewer for the *Saturday Review*, reviewed Hardy's first two novels: *Desperate Remedies* September 30, 1871, and *Under the Greenwood Tree* September 28, 1872. Moule was an excellent Greek scholar, and by 1857, he began to tutor Hardy in an ex-officio university manner. He tutored Hardy with books such as Jabez Hogg's *Elements of Experiment and Natural Philosophy...for the use of Youth and Schools* (1853). He attended Oxford University and Queens College Cambridge. During their friendship in Dorchester and London, they debated spiritual, philosophical and literary matters, particularly the theology of the prominent Victorian churchman John Henry Newman. Hardy and Moule did not share common views on Newman's *Apologia*. Moule's dampening of Hardy's own intention to follow a career in literature is caught in his advice that Hardy continue as an architect, and this has a resonance with Jude's failure to enter the university system. Moule further suggested that he abandon Greek study, as his scholarship was not adequate, criticisms that stayed with Hardy into his later years (Tomalin, 2006: 54-56). 1873 saw Moule's death by suicide, and Hardy wrote a poem in honour of their friendship. The poem empathises with the departed Moule without rancour or judgement, and is entitled 'Standing by the Mantelpiece', subtitled '(H.M.M., 1873)', Moule's initials, often used by Hardy:

Since you agreed, unurged and full advised,  
And let warmth grow without discouragement,  
Why do you bear you now as if surprised?  
When what has come was clearly consequent (Hardy, 1995: 846).

After the shock of his death, Hardy sought refuge in art, producing four major novels over the next five years.

As noted in the previous chapter, John Stuart Mill was also an intellectual hero and mentor to Hardy. The later novels' themes were congruent with Mill's essays on personal and women's liberty. Mill was greatly admired by the Victorian intelligentsia as an agent for radical change. While living in London, Hardy went to hear him speak at Covent Garden in support of the Reform League in the Westminster election of 1865. Sue Bridehead, a social rebel, whose literary heroes are Mill and Gibbon, makes a comment in *Jude the Obscure* that illustrates the plight of female subjugation; Hardy recycles a quotation from Mill's essay, *The Subjection of Women*:

She, or he, 'who lets the world, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him, has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation'. J.S. Mill words, those are. I have been reading it up. Why can't you act upon them? I wished to, always (Hardy, 2008c, 215).

Hardy's London years saw the provincial young man gradually mature, though it is probable that cramped city life and the absence of family may have taken a toll on his health. He enjoyed several relationships, including a serious involvement with his cousin Tryphena Sparks, the daughter of his mother's sister Maria Hand Sparks. Wright (2002) speculates that Hardy might have given her a ring, which she returned when she became engaged to Charles Gale, whom she later married (Wright, 2002: 289). In the appendix to *Young Thomas Hardy*, its author Robert Gittings states that Hardy and Tryphena took walks on the heath between Hardy's home and hers, a distance of two miles (Wright, 2002: 289). Hardy, as young countryman in London, would have been reticent in socialising with strangers, and he would have felt at greater ease with his cousin Tryphena. Hillis Miller (1970) writes:

In his fiction and in his life this loss of self-possession takes two principle forms: 'falling in love and yielding to the power of music. His love affair with his cousin Tryphena Sparks, if indeed this took place, and his love

for his first wife seem to have been, in their ambiguous complexity, the central events of his personal life' ( Miller, 1970: 23).

*The Life* is economic on the details of Hardy's relationship with Tryphena, its brief mention suggests that Hardy had 'sympathetic telepathy' (Hardy, 1984: 234) on her dying in 1890. He commenced the first four or six lines of 'Thoughts of Phena March 1890', whilst travelling on a train to London (Hardy, 1984: 234). Included in the collection *Wessex Poems*, it begins with 'Not a line of her writing have I', while the second line states, 'Not a thread of her hair', and the first verse later sees Hardy attempting in vain to remember and 'conceive my lost prize', 'when her dreams were upbrimming with light .... And with laughter in her eyes' (Hardy, 1995: 55). Hillis Miller argues that 'certainly these infatuations were the most important cases in which Hardy broke his instinctive reserve The suffering which seems to have followed in both cases can be glimpsed here and there in the sparse evidence about his private life. This suffering gives his life a pattern much like the recurrent form of his fiction (Miller, 1970: 24). In conveying his remembrances to the poem, Hardy made Tryphena immortal whenever the poem is spoken or read.

Whilst working in Bloomfield's office in London, as an architect, and still in his twenties, Hardy abandoned his religious beliefs. He also resented the class divisions he encountered and felt socially inferior in an office where the proprietor's father had been the Bishop of London. He was successful as an architect for the firm, and wrote his first publication *How I Built Myself a House* (1865) which was a humorous satire on a do-it-yourself approach to house construction. His initial encounter with Emma inspired his third novel *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. Elfrida and Emma shared beautiful hair and were both excellent horsewomen. After *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873), and with encouragement from Leslie Stephen, Hardy wrote *Far from the Madding Crowd* for serialisation in Stephen's *Cornhill Magazine*. It represented his first major novelistic success in 1874, though it was serialised anonymously.

Various characters in this novel epitomise the gravity of oppositions in Hardy's art and life. Bathsheba and Troy are fascinated with each other, but it is a fascination that is based on sexual chemistry, as opposed to common sense. The oppositions of patriarchy and female liberation are seen in the psychic resistance of Bathsheba to Gabriel Oak, and to her mostly male workers; she vows to rise earlier, work harder and longer than her staff. The novel brought Hardy to the attention to the Suffragette movement in England. Hardy's depiction of Elfrida in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, and of later heroines such as Sue in *Jude the Obscure*, as embodiments of female insecurity arising from Victorian patriarchy, made him potentially an attractive recruit for the Suffragette movement. However, he gave a little public support to women's rights, letting his fiction express his views, possibly because he was unwilling to alienate the established order. In Elfrida, Bathsheba and Sue, it is the power of female sexuality that gives them power over their suitors. This natural attraction would also engender patriarchal resentment that the second sex, in a Victorian context, could manipulate the smitten males. The worker-landowner opposition is illustrated in Bathsheba's transformation from one role to the other, mirroring Hardy's own move from artisan to artist. In a letter to his friend Charles Kegan Paul in 1881, Hardy spoke of his proud identification with the 'race of labouring men' from which he sprang' (Millgate, 1971: 37). Hardy's comments at forty-one signal how proud he was of his achievements and also suggest a strong identification with his working-class origins.

Elfrida Swancourt's feminine reasoning and tones in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* is an example of female jealousy and guile, with her powerful desires concealed beneath a pleasing façade, and again there are echoes of Hardy's own social behaviour in this position. Victorian patriarchy would have been unsettled by Elfrida's drive and desire to be the number one consideration in Stephen Smith's estimation. Hardy changes the emphasis from personality to

character as Elfrida demands that Stephen Smith cease his constant obsession with Henry Knight:

I don't care how good he is; I don't want to know him, night and day he comes between me and you. You think of him night and day, ever so much more than anybody else; and when you are thinking of him, I am shut out of your mind (Hardy, 1994b: 68).

Set in a different social context, *Far From the Madding Crowd* paints a picture of rustic men and women with little sophistication, singing bawdy songs that brought condemnation from country-folk around Dorchester. *Far From the Madding Crowd* brought early oppositions from the contemporary theologian and man of letters Richard Holt Hutton. As co-editor of *The Spectator*, he said the novel was written by George Eliot, which mystified Hardy. Hardy admired Eliot greatly, but he believed she had 'never touched the life of the fields' (Hardy, 2007: 100). Her country folk had seemed to him, more like 'townsfolk' than 'rustics'; and as evidencing a woman's wit cast in country dialogue, which he regarded as being of the Shakespeare or Fielding sort (Hardy, 2007: 100). The *Athenaeum's* reviewer pointed to Hardy's greater similarity with the novelist Charles Reade, finding the idiomatic speech of the rustic characters incompatible with their occasional 'sophisticated expressions' (Wright, 2002: 92). Hardy's social acquaintance, Henry James, writing for the *New York Nation*, found the book 'diffuse', and Bathsheba 'artificial', though he praised Hardy's skill as pastoral novelist. James considered the human element 'facetious and insubstantial', but declared that Hardy had 'gone astray very cleverly' (James, cited in Wright, 2002: 92), and that the novel was 'a really curious imitation of something better' (James, cited in Wright, 2002: 92). Perhaps what James had in mind was Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749) or William Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1848). It seems that Henry James did not consider Hardy's elephantine memory when it came to slights or critical rejections.

In 1874, Hardy married Emma Gifford and published *Far From The Madding Crowd* anonymously over several months in the *Cornhill Magazine*, it was an exciting time in

Hardy's life when his capricious relationship with Tryphena Sparks was fading onto memory. Their mysterious and close affection for one another coincides with a period in his life, which on the surface, remains significantly unknown. Pite writes in the context of Hardy's emotional mood towards his first cousin, that love can mysteriously disappear, and speaks of how lovers could be abandoned by love itself (Pite, 2007: 165). In *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Troy's romance and marriage to Bathsheba is based on misdirected affection, as he really loves Fanny Robin. This has prophetic echoes of Angel's rejection of the country girl Tess, whom he has idolised, and continually idolises though the dream fades as reality impinges. Such chimeras are common in Hardy's art, illustrated again when in the early stages of *Jude the Obscure* Jude envisages the twinkling lights of Christminster as his New Jerusalem.

*Far From the Madding Crowd* explores the oppositions of pain-pleasure and work-leisure, arriving at the conclusion that a loving relationship arising out of shared interests, like farm husbandry, is superior to sexual fascination or cerebral compatibility. It alludes to shared work as being a spiritual relationship. Oak and Bathsheba eventually find their destiny together:

They spoke very little of their mutual feelings: pretty phrases and warm expressions being probably unnecessary between such tried friends. There was the substantial affection which arises (if any arises at all) when the two who are thrown together begin first by knowing the rougher sides of each other's character ...because men and women associate not in their labours but in their pleasures merely ...where however happy circumstance permits its development the compounded feeling proves itself to be the only love which is as strong as death-that love which many waters cannot quench, nor the floods drown, beside which the passion usually called by the name is evanescent as steam (Hardy, 2008d: 383-4).

Conversely, the flashy and inconstant Sergeant Troy complains that marriage to Bathsheba has killed their romance, and he ultimately reveals that he does not love her, but has always loved Fanny Robin. Hardy's portrayal of Bathsheba's love for Troy suggests that it emanates from her soul rather than her mind, as even at the end when all is revealed, and Troy lies

dying, she nurtures hope that she will not lose the mendacious manipulator. Only unconditional love could survive the deceit and usury perpetrated by Troy on Bathsheba. She removes Troy's body from the murder scene, breaking the law in the process. Apprised of her unlawful act she states 'law was nothing to her, and she would not let her dead husband corpse bide neglected for folks to stare at for all the crowners in England' (Hardy, 2008d: 370). She undresses Troy's corpse laying him out for burial. The surgeon Mr Aldritch, observing how Bathsheba has shown great reverence to the corpse of her dead husband, says: 'the body has been undressed and properly laid out in graveclothes. Gracious Heaven – this mere girl! She must have the nerve of a stoic!' (Hardy, 2008d: 371).

When prising open the coffin of her dead rival Fanny Robin and her infant, Bathsheba's determination to know the truth overcomes her primal fears. Hardy juxtaposes two fears within Bathsheba's desire to know the truth about Troy's deceit, and her forceful nature trumps her primordial feelings toward death. The unsuitability of Bathsheba and Troy to each other is a conflict in embryo that bewilders observers; they just do not fit together, suggesting that love is blind. The young protagonists have not, as yet, acquired life principles based on insight and conscience, unlike the grounded Gabriel Oak. Their conscience is being forged through their experience of tragedy, and thus Bathsheba and Fanny Robin were exemplars of how love challenges death, with each of their fond memories alleviating death's emotional sting. The Eros-Thanatos divide is bridged by the two women as their love for Troy survives up to Fanny's death and Troy's murder. Hardy's work in great part was in line with Freud's theory of Thanatos suggesting that the goal of life itself is death. Hillman writes: 'The principle for Freudians carries so many of the negatives of human nature that when Freud says "the goal of life is death", it is the pessimistic statement of a natural scientist who is led by the network of his system to fight death in the name of life' (Hillman, 2011: 106). Hardy's poem 'Seventy Four and Twenty' from the collection *Satires of*

*Circumstances* (1914) represents the gravity of oppositions within the *puer*'s idealist spirit; of young ambition encountering the *senex*'s (old) uncertainty:

Here goes a man of seventy-four,  
Who sees not what life means for him,  
And here another in years a score  
Who reads its very figure and trim.

The one who shall walk today with me  
Is not the youth who gazes far,  
But the breezy sire who cannot see  
What Earth's ingrained conditions are (Hardy, 1995: 354).

Such complex and emotionally charged relationships, while running against rational thinking, can be related to parallel if different emotional traumas in his own life. Hardy's relationship with his cousin Tryphena Sparks was an early indication of his fascination with women. Their blood relationship was Tryphena's reason for rejecting him (Davie, 1972: 19). Tryphena was of the same social background as Hardy, and whatever the true nature of their love-friendship in the late 1860's might have been, it may well have supplied the germ of the idea for the romance of the near-cousins Jude and Sue. Tomalin writes: 'cousins could be a heaven-sent answer to the need for emotional experiment and sexual adventure in Victorian England' (Tomalin, 2006: 94). There is a consistent blurring of the boundaries in love-friendship, another of those emblematic oppositions, throughout Hardy's life, and Tryphena was the first of many women in that regard. There remains a mysterious cachet concerning his affection for Tryphena, who was eleven years younger. Did Hardy begin his relationship with Emma before he had ended his relationship with Tryphena? It may have caused marital estrangement later. The poem 'The Wind's Prophecy' may refer to Hardy's trip to St Juliot and his romance with Emma, undertaken when he was still involved with Tryphena. The ambiguity of his relationship status is caught in lines:

I say: 'Thus from my lady's arms I go: those arms I love the best!'  
The wind replies from dip and rise,  
'Nay; toward her arms thou journeyest' (Davie, 1972: 17).

Though their relationship ended when Hardy became engaged to Emma, nevertheless Tryphena was important enough in Hardy's life to be poetically remembered in 'Thoughts of Phena at News of her Death' (1890). Clearly, there were several intricate layers of feeling involved in this relationship.

F.R. Southerington's *Hardy's Vision of Man* (1971) contained a photograph of a boy said to be the illegitimate son of Hardy and Tryphena (Wright, 2002: 289). Tomalin dismisses this love episode, stating that the friendship and flirtation between Hardy and Tryphena did not last too long (Tomalin, 2007: 94). Conversely, Pite writes that 'Hardy fell in love with one of his "familiar friends", his cousin Tryphena Sparks' (Pite, 2007: 142). Pite states that Hardy's biographer Millgate was remarkably off-hand concerning Tryphena, while another biographer, Martin Seymour-Smith, refused to elevate Tryphena above other women with whom Hardy may have had love affairs in London in his twenties. Pite continues, 'both biographies are, in my view, playing down Tryphena's importance to Hardy. The truth is that, like many other things in his life, the affair with Tryphena was both outwardly unremarkable and profoundly significant' (Pite, 2007: 142). Hardy would have observed how his cousins, the Sparks women, were unfortunate, and ended almost destitute, emigrating to Australia. Starting to sketch the poem 'Thoughts of Phena', later altered to 'At News of Her Death', on March 5 1890, Hardy said later he had no inkling that Tryphena was dying or that she even was ill (Hardy, 1984, cited in Pite, 2007: 313). Pite's estimation of Tryphena's importance to Hardy's life and work is cogently stated below:

...her death reawakened his feelings for her and his loyalty to what she represented, the distaste for sophistication that marks his writing over the next few years had, that's to say, a positive aspect because it marked a return to the convictions that underlay *The Poor Man and the Lady*, from more than twenty years before. Tryphena had to some extent inspired

Hardy's belief in the virtues of country life and now Tess, the heroine of his next novel, was made to epitomise them (Pite, 2007: 313).

Paralleling the Hardy-Sparks relationship in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, it took the death of Fanny Robin for Sergeant Troy to acknowledge that she was his only true love. Marital circumstances prohibited any similar public acknowledgement by Hardy.

Hardy was pre-occupied with love in both his life and his art, and he had many relationships. His close relationship with Florence Henniker, the daughter of Lord Houghton endured for over thirty years. Hardy fell in love with her, but had to be content with an intellectual and professional relationship. She was a poised and composed woman: 'compared with Emma who at 51, appeared in Dublin in a ridiculously youthful muslin and blue ribbon outfit, Henniker was well-dressed, poised and highly intelligent' (Millgate, 1984: 335). She was one of the many women Hardy met in 'London Society' whom Emma considered 'poison' (Stewart, 1963: 29). In his diary, Hardy wrote of the 'charming, intuitive woman' he had met' (Wright, 2002: 145). With an upper class education, social connections and literary aspirations, Henniker would have been like Julia Martin years earlier, a challenge and a joy to Hardy, as well as a signifier of his class aspirations. Henniker, in adhering to her principles, kept the relationship on a platonic basis demonstrating her integrity.

The prominent Victorian psychiatrist Havelock Ellis, cited in Pierre D'Exideuil, wrote 'it is in the problems of the relations of men and women that, as we might expect, these qualities of Hardy's special genius reach their full expression' (D'Exideuil, 1927: xvi). His initial love for, later estrangement from, and posthumous love poetry to, his first wife Emma, shows evidence of a complicated relationship, replete with strong feelings. Physical attraction always seems to have been in conflict with a more cerebral attraction, and this is seen in different aspects of his work. For example in *Tess of the D'Urberville* there are multiple mentions of the word 'soul' and Tess alludes to invisible processes: 'I don't know about ghosts', she was saying. 'But I do know that our souls can be made to go outside of our bodies

when we are alive' (Hardy, 2008a: 135). The romantic aspect of Angel's character in the novel is also impressed by Tess' spiritual vision, and he said to himself: 'What a genuine daughter of Nature that milkmaid is' (Hardy, 2008a: 136). Hardy's metaphorical representation of the Keatsian dictum of 'beauty being truth' was a good example of how strong his emotional attachment to love really was. Even the rational part of Angel's psyche gives way to his mystical view of Tess:

She was yawning, and he saw the red interior of her mouth as if it had been a snake's. She had stretched one arm so high above her coiled-up cable of hair that he could see its satin delicacy above the sunburn: her face was flushed with sleep, and her eyelids hung heavy over their pupils. The brimfulness of her nature breathed from her. It was a moment when a woman's soul is more incarnate than at any other time; when the most spiritual beauty bespeaks itself flesh (Hardy, 2008a: 187).

It was the competing aspects of the rational and the imaginative that allowed Hardy to plumb the depths of the unconscious processes, occasioning him a life-long exploration of his soul's needs.

Hardy stated in *The Science of Fiction* that 'to see in half and quarter views the whole picture ...it is the intuitive power that supplies the would be story-teller with the scientific basis for his pursuit' (Hardy, 1891: 315). The poem, entitled 'Near Lanivet, 1872', from *Moments of Vision* (1917) is another example of his intuitive imagination that combines Eros and Thanatos, alluding to the inevitable spiritual crucifixion of the beloved. It can be seen as an abbreviated *Jude the Obscure*. The narrator's description of seeing a woman crucified on a naturally occurring sacrificial cross: 'Her white-clothed form at this dim-lit cease of day made her look as one crucified' (Hardy, 1995: 409-10) and her remark, 'When I leant there like one nailed' (Hardy, 1995: 410), is arguably an identification with an evocation of Christ's fate. The companions' prescience finally projects her crucified, as she had wondered she might be' (Hardy, 1995: 410). The contemporary psychologist Thomas Moore sees such suffering as an essential aspect of existence: 'The Christian doctrine of original sin teaches that human life is

wounded in its essence, and suffering is in the nature of things; 'we are wounded simply by participating in human life' (Moore, 1992: 166).

Hardy's extrapolation from Swinburne's poem *Hymn to Proserpine* (1866) in *Jude the Obscure* features the idealistic Sue looking on the pale crucified figure of Christ, regretful that human joy has to be sacrificed for salvation: 'Thou has conquered, O pale Galilean: The world has grown grey from thy breadth!' (Hardy, 2008c: 89). Sue suggests the sacrifice is too great; the role model has taken joy out of life. Hardy's expressionism of a dead figure on a cross in his poem is a metaphor for a lifeless religion. In her regression to childish values, Sue is spiritually crucified in *Jude the Obscure*. This novel deals with how inherited and conditioned traits in religion and love interact, occasioning a gravity of oppositions too powerful to be ever ameliorated.

Finding precise chronology in Hardy's poetry is difficult, as he divided his poems in odd ways. Hardy was thirty-two when he wrote 'Near Lanivet, 1872', but published it much later in the collection *Moments of Vision* (1917). As in the fiction, personal circumstances and delicate timing dictated its publication, and these contextual factors led to a form of life-compartmentalisation. He correctly estimated that Emma would have been shocked to read that her life would possibly end in a crucifixion of sorts. The Hardy's were very new to each other, and whilst the voice in the poem was not necessarily Hardy's own, it was at the very least an aspect of his subjectivity, and a harbinger that their life together was destined to be a path of trials and thorns. The overall mood of 'Lanivet' is similar to the candour of the later fiction, breaching the dam of Hardy's personal repression, by cathartically unburdening himself of angst through his fiction. 'Lanivet' expresses great sadness at the human condition, as Hardy uses the imagery of the woman in an allegory of Christ's crucifixion. What exacerbates the scene's pathos, exciting our pity and sadness, is the

knowledge that Hardy the agnostic saw neither redemption nor resurrection for humanity in all the projected pain and suffering:

And we dragged on and on, while we seemed to see  
In the running of Time's far glass  
Her crucified, as she wondered if she might be  
Some day.-Alas, alas!(Hardy, 1995: 410).

It was this condensed expression of internal conflicts in the fiction, which made it so interesting and vibrant. In Hardy's lifetime, oppositions to his later fiction were arrayed along religious, artistic, philosophical and cultural lines. By his middle years, Hardy had gained wealth, prestige and fame. In a sense, *Far from the Madding Crowd* echoes his success in the relative happy outcome for Bathsheba and Oak. Her role as an emancipated female running a farming enterprise, whilst at the same time turning down men's offers of matrimony, is validated. The novel's description of the community and landscape contrasts with the much bleaker rural scenes in *Jude the Obscure*, where the daily grind is unrelenting and the landscape gives the appearance of corduroy: 'the fresh harrow-lines seemed to stretch like the channellings in a piece of new corduroy, lending a meanly utilitarian air to the expanse' (Hardy, 2008c: 8). The years of Hardy's marital estrangement from, and his apathy towards, Emma are replicated in Henchard's insensitivity towards his wife Susan and also to his lover Lucetta; Henchard makes belated material recompense to both women as Hardy's love poems 1912-13 similarly sought Emma's forgiveness. His atonement for Emma's humiliations in *Poems 1912-13* is quite a common phenomenon. Angel's cruelty in dashing Tess's future hopes corresponds with Hardy's humiliation of Emma when he was awarded the literary prize by Yeats, as he drove Emma from the room. Whilst deeply upset by her husband's agnosticism, she was with the exception of *Jude the Obscure*, very proud of his fiction. Hardy's work elicited similar strong responses outside his immediate family. In this

regard, Hardy would not have welcomed the approval of critics writing from a monotheistic perspective.

Thomas Stearns Eliot felt that Hardy wrote for the sake of 'self-expression' and the self, which he had to express, did not strike Eliot as particularly wholesome or an edifying vehicle of communication (Eliot, 1933: 54). Eliot found an aspect of the sulphuric in Hardy, and unsurprisingly he felt that David Lawrence's work was also diabolically inspired. Eliot saw the deficiencies in Hardy's technical abilities: 'he was indifferent to the precepts of good writing: he wrote sometimes overpoweringly well, but always very carelessly; at times his style touches sublimity without ever having passed through the stage of being good' (Eliot, 1933: 54). Here was also a strong bias against Hardy's fiction, which was later transferred to his poetry because it was atheistic. Irving Howe's position on Hardy's motivation is clear and insightful:

For having written such poems Hardy has been severely rated by critics in the Eliot line, who regard him as tritely heretical and intellectually feckless. They look with distaste upon what one of them R.P. Blackmur, called Hardy's lack of emotional discipline and the structural support of a received imagination (by which immensity I take Blackmur to mean the complex of symbols associated with the Christian tradition). Yet it might be remembered that we cannot always choose the situation in which we live out our lives; that for Hardy, as for many other nineteenth century writers, the loss of faith was an experience of the utmost consequence (Howe, cited in Davie, 1972: 29).

It took Hardy considerable courage to confront his inner doubts on the veracity of the dogmas underpinning the Christian religion, and even more courage to have let his peers share those doubts. The regrets of taking on such a position can be seen to possibly inspire the words of the dead and disillusioned Parson Thirdly in *Channel Firing* (April, 1914): 'instead of preaching forty year, My neighbour Parson Thirdly said, I wish I had stuck to pipes and beer' (Hardy, 1995: 287-8).

Chesterton, who had warned about the coming 'culture of death' saw *Jude the Obscure* as the negative outpourings of a provincial author who was lacking the qualities of a

front rank novelist (Chesterton, cited in Finch 1986, 213). Hardy's support and integration of Darwinian scientific discovery led to his atheism, which resulted in natural, religious and ethical oppositions in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Hardy appeared to elevate his heroine Tess, above any potential criticisms from moralists. The view of the contemporary Idealist philosopher Pringle-Pattison, on the cause of misalignments between humanity and nature differs from the views of Huxley and Hardy. Pattison, reviewing *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, explores this division in *Man's Place in the Cosmos* (1897) and criticised Hardy's tendency to assimilate the moral and the natural, elevating the natural above the moral law. Hillman states that 'Darwin considered the animal expression in physiognomy to be primary' (Hillman, 1991: 68). Buttressing his argument, Pattison cited Matthew Arnold's perspective on man within nature: 'instead of saying that nature cares nothing about chastity, let us say that human nature, our nature, cares about it a great deal' (Arnold, cited in Pattison, 1897: 7).

In terms of achieving a clearer understanding of Hardy's views on interior conflict, the chapter entitled 'The Divided-Self' in *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) by Hardy's contemporary the psychiatrist and spiritual theorist William James, offers a better perspective than those of Freud or Jung. James was religiously neutral and worked at the intersection of psychological investigation and religious belief; he stated that: 'the man's interior is a battle-ground for what he feels to be two deadly hostile selves, one actual, the other ideal' (James, 1985: 171). Hardy's (1895) Preface states that Jude's interiority was a battleground between the spirit and the flesh, involving sexuality and spirituality. Hardy's religious divide meant whilst an agnostic, he still took communion, attending religious services, and whilst enjoying many dalliances with women, his posthumous love poems to Emma suggest he was as conflicted as the terminally-ill Jude, who at the novel's conclusion, conveniently swung back his affection to Arabella. As a poor outsider looking in enviously at the riches in education, material wealth, power and prestige enjoyed by the privileged

minority in Victorian society Jude remained bereft of human support: 'Save his own soul he hath no star' (Hardy, 2008c: 70).

Henry James, a devotee of English classical traditions, felt that Hardy overly concentrated on the problems of ordinary provincial men and women, and that his writing was very loose and mixed. He described Hardy's shortcomings as a writer: 'the good little Thomas Hardy has scored a great success with *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, which is chockfull of faults and falsity, and yet has a singular charm' (James, cited in Eagleton, 2005: 207). James's description was disingenuous, malicious and doubly insulting as Hardy was only five feet in height. Havelock Ellis agreed in part with James, but defended Hardy's genius:

Hardy was not a child of culture nor even, one sometimes thinks, a well-trained workman in literature ...he had never been subjected to any discipline...his education was mainly the outcome of a random, inquisitive, miscellaneous reading, and the love letters he wrote in youth to the dictation of unschooled peasant girls ...His stories lapse at times into extravagance or absurdity ...It is genius that carries him through (Ellis, Introduction to *D'Exideuil*, 1927: xv).

Ellis is an ideal commentator on Hardy, as his skills as a literary reviewer and his deep knowledge of psychiatry meant he understood the motivations of the inner and outer structures of Hardy. His analytical critique is arguably the definitive description of Hardy's art in *Jude the Obscure* confirming the symbiosis between Jude and Hardy.

Hardy was ahead of his time as a writer, and his depiction of Jude's self-talk and projection of mental images of future glories before the pig's pizzle episode was a Modernist rather than Victorian narrative technique, illustrating how random thoughts construct internal images. It was a new style involving his belief that 'a living style lies in not having too much style-being in fact a little careless' (Ellis, cited in *D'Exideuil*, 1927: xv). Swinburne's testimony about the effect on the reader of Little Father Time's bizarre behaviour in *Jude the Obscure* was affirming at a time of great doubts on Hardy's part concerning his future as a writer. Swinburne's writing helped to liberate Hardy from the narrowness of early influences,

though his crediting of Hardy with an abandonment of conventional thoughts after *Jude the Obscure* was mistaken:

The tragedy – if I may venture an opinion – is equally beautiful and terrible in its pathos. The beauty, the terror, and the truth, are all yours alone. But (if I may say so) how cruel you are! Only the great and awful father of ‘Pierrette’ and ‘L’Enfant Maudit’ was ever so merciless to his children. I think it would hardly be seemly to enlarge on all that I admire in your work – or on half of it – The man who can do such work can hardly care about criticism or praise (Swinburne, 1895, cited in Hardy, 2007: 278).

Swinburne was incorrect in his final sentence, as Hardy cared a great deal about criticism. For this reason, his exposé of the anomalies in Victorian society was expensive emotionally, challenging his resolve to continue as a novelist. The shocking murder of his two siblings by ‘Little Father Time’, and his subsequent suicide, may echo a death wish on the part of Hardy, with suicide as an ultimate form of control. This child-character was the allegorical reference of *L’Enfant Maudit* (the damned child) in Swinburne’s letter, praising Hardy’s final novel. By describing this tragic, nightmarish scenario, Hardy was avoiding the repression of a depressive malaise, exposing his dark places to the light of day. Whilst the ‘Father Time’ episode, as Gregor and Irwin argue, did not fit at all comfortably into the plot, overall it was cathartic for Hardy. Eliot recognised the dark and negative forces at work in Hardy, stating that Hardy’s ‘Barbara of the House of Grebe’ in the collection of short stories entitled *A Group of Noble Dames* (1891), introduces the reader to a world of pure evil: ‘the tale would seem to have been written solely to provide a satisfaction for some morbid emotion’ (Eliot, 1933: 58).

Hardy was drawn to Swinburne as a writer and an individual who also rebelled against religion and Victorian social conventions. Swinburne, in his unconventional lifestyle, was the obverse of the publicly correct Hardy, and he seemed to have affinities with Hardy’s close friend Moule in the sense that he was literarily brilliant, scandalous, eccentric, and his physical well-being was threatened by alcoholism. The close friends and influences of Hardy,

Moule and Swinburne, share with the characters of Troy, John Durbeyfield, Henchard and Jude, a tendency to imbibe to the point of drunkenness occasioning many tragic outcomes. At twenty-six, Hardy read Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads* (1866), laden with eroticism and outspoken atheism. The effect on Hardy was considerable, and much of his enthusiasm for Swinburne's poetry lay in the latter's explicit rejection of Christianity, which he found liberating and euphoric (Pite, 2006: 127). Hardy had a sense of discipleship towards Swinburne, sending him a copy of *The Woodlanders* in 1887, and *The Well-Beloved* in 1897, with the comment that if it had 'any faint claim to imaginative feeling', then it would owe 'something of such feeling to you' (Wright: 2002: 297). Hardy quoted from Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865) in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, which crystallises his anti-Christian stance. Swinburne was contemptuous of conventional morality favouring sensuality and paganism. Hardy admired the wild abandonment in Swinburne's poetry recalling, [the] 'buoyant time of thirty years ago, when I used to read your early works walking along the crowded London streets, to my imminent risk of being knocked down' (Norman, 2011: 34). Their mutual affinity is captured in Swinburne's *Hymn of Man* (1880): 'Glory to Man in the highest! For Man is the master of things' (Norman, 2011: 34).

Hardy found Swinburne's poetry affirming and liberating as it dealt with taboo topics proscribed in Victorian society. Swinburne attacked Victorian pieties dealing openly with the issues about which Hardy was reflecting privately. In December 1895, coinciding with the publication of *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy replied to Mr William Thomas Stead, editor of *The Review of Reviews*, stating that church hymns were now mere poetic expressions, devoid of divinity. Hardy's later fiction was widely censured for scepticism on religious faith and explicitness on female sexuality. Swinburne also had a reputation for Bohemian excess and dubious morality, living outside of matrimony with Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Hardy took notes from Swinburne's poem *Chastelard* (1895), noting the eroticism and outspoken atheism

contained in *Poems and Ballads* (1865). He remembered how attacks on Swinburne 'made the blood of us young men boil' (Pite, 2006: 127). Pite writes that Hardy's enthusiasm for Swinburne's ideas came from the latter's explicit rejection of Christianity. His later work accords with the infamous chorus in Swinburne's poem that must have horrified Victorian Christians:

Who makes desire, and slays desire with shame;  
Who shakes the heaven as ashes in his hand?  
Who seeing the light and shadow for the same,  
Bids day waste night as fire devours a brand,  
Smites without sword, & scourges without rod;  
The supreme evil, God. (Pite, 2006: 128).

Pite writes that Hardy repeatedly came back to the first line, 'who makes desire, and slays desire with shame' (Pite, 2006: 128), keeping it with other literary touchstones. The free-spirited Tess in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* epitomises the divide between conditioned behaviour and natural instincts. The sub-title, 'a pure woman faithfully presented' (Hardy, 2008a), describing Tess's intentions as pure and innocent within the context of nature which was subversive of Victorian conventional values. Similarly, Sue in *Jude the Obscure* also desires to love according to her lights, breaking the Church's Sixth and Ninth Commandments, and thereby violating Victorian conventional values. Jude embodies the search for a new paradigm as his interiority is in flux and chaotic. Jude is both reactive and proactive in his desire to fit into a society undergoing radical change. His basic character is ambitious but uncertain; he wants to convert a pleasant emotional desire into a working reality. His divisions result from seeking a clear path that will ameliorate the confused maze of sexual desire and repressions, rage at class distinction, archaic marriage laws, pitiful education opportunities and religious patriarchy. Hardy, possibly realising that *Jude the Obscure* was his final novel, freed himself from habitual censorship restraints arguably demonstrating in parts of this text what really lay behind his own benign facade.

However, such liberation from constraints drew criticism, as has been shown. Chesterton compared George Meredith's novels with Hardy's:

One of them went upwards through a tangled but living forest to lonely but living hills: the other went down to a swamp, Hardy went down to botanise in the swamp, while Meredith climbed towards the sun. Meredith became, at his best, a sort of daintily dressed Walt Whitman: Hardy became a sort of village atheist brooding and blaspheming over the village idiot (Chesterton, cited in Finch, 1986: 213).

Rebutting Chesterton's charge of atheism, Hardy stated, 'much confusion has arisen and much nonsense has been talked latterly in connection with the word "atheist". I believe I have been called one by a Journalist [Chesterton] who has never read a word of my writings' (Hardy, cited in Wilson, 2002: 433). Chesterton's perspective on Christianity was diametrically opposed to Hardy's; his view was that 'the Christian Ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and left untried' (Chesterton, 1994: 37). Hardy, however, felt that two thousand years of Christianity had produced nothing like a utopia for Christians. Religion required a surrender of the mind's rational processes, and the rationalist in Hardy found the abandonment of his faculties to reason was a step that no empirical evidence could substantiate. The tragic-comedy of Hardy's *oeuvre* was that so much time and effort was spent on the issue of belief in a Deity to which he did not subscribe.

Efron's *Experiencing Tess of the D'Urbervilles: A Deweyan Account*, quotes Freud looking up from his copy of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and commenting on Hardy's psychological insight: 'he knew his psycho-analysis' (Efron, 2005: 3). From a psychological perspective, the criticisms and encouragements to Hardy by Havelock Ellis, as already noted, were very important. Ellis, best known for his studies in sexual psychology, produced a wide study of human sexuality in six volumes called *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1897-1928). Acting as a literary critic, he published an article highly favourable towards Hardy entitled 'Thomas Hardy's Novels' in the *Westminster Review* in 1883, and analysed *Jude the Obscure* in 1896. Ellis wrote the foreword to Pierre D'Exideuil's *Human Pair in the Work of*

*Thomas Hardy* stating that ‘the tragic-comedy of life, its joy and its pain, most often have their poignant edge at the point of sex. That is especially so when we are concerned with a highly sensitive, alert, rather abnormal child of nature, with the temperament of genius’ (D’Exideuil, 1927: xv-vi). The plots involving Tess, Jude, Henchard, Bathsheba and Troy revolve around their sexuality. The Victorian and Edwardian eras considered Ellis scandalous, which was a commentary on the sexual mores at the fin-de siècle and the early twentieth century. Ellis met Hardy several times, and wrote that D’Exideuil in 1927 was the first writer to investigate Hardy’s art in relation to the sexual theme at its centre.

Ellis became a world-renowned expert on sexual development and its pathology, and he strongly defended Hardy’s drawing of Sue as realistic. He conceded the vagueness of some of Hardy’s statements attributing it to Hardy’s genius:

For genius feels the things we all feel but feels them with a virginal freshness of sensation, a new pungency or a new poignancy, even the simplest things, the rustling of the wind in the trees or over the heather, which become, since Hardy has revealed them to us, an experience we had never before known (Ellis, cited in D’Exideuil, 1927: xvi).

Hardy’s letter to Rider Haggard cited in the Introduction was an example. Ellis refers to Hardy’s statement in the (auto) biography ‘that a clue to much of his character and action throughout his life is afforded by his lateness of development in virility, while mentally precocious’. ‘He himself said humorously in later times that he was a child ‘till he was sixteen, a youth till he was twenty-five, and a young man till he was nearly fifty’ (Ellis, cited in D’Exideuil, 1927: xvi). Jude’s naivety in terms of sexuality and emotional immaturity probably represents aspects of Hardy’s own development, and the same could be true of Tess complaining to her mother Joan about her lack of sex education at home or in school. Ellis confirmed the veracity of Hardy’s repeated defence of his art, noting that it was not didactic, merely a collection of ‘seemings’ or impressions, as in the following quotation, in response to a critic:

Like so many critics, Mr Courtney treats my works of art as if they were a scientific system of philosophy. Although I have repeatedly stated in prefaces and elsewhere that the views in them are seemings, provisional impressions, used for artistic purposes because they represent approximately the impressions of the age, and are plausible, till somebody produces better theories of the universe... (Hardy, 1994a: 175)

Ellis also defended Hardy's scepticism stating that while 'it is common to speak of Thomas Hardy as a "pessimist", this was not a description that he himself accepted. One may well go further and say that for anyone who is concerned with the real spectacle of life, the term 'pessimism' is as much out of place as the term "optimism" (Ellis, cited in D'Exideuil, 1927: xiii). Ellis justified Hardy's negative vision in the following terms: 'the person who believes that everything in the world is for the best can only have known one hemisphere of it and only have felt half of what it offers; he is a maimed and defective being who has never in any complete sense lived' (Ellis, cited in D'Exideuil, 1927: xiii). *The Life* outlines Hardy's pessimism: 'this planet does not supply the material for happiness to higher existences' (Hardy, 1984: 227), a thought which is further developed in Sue's imagining that the First Cause is hopelessly flawed:

that at the framing of the terrestrial conditions there seemed never to have been contemplated such a development of emotional perceptiveness among the creatures subject to these conditions as that reached by thinking and educated humanity (Hardy, 2008c: 331).

Hardy felt that a writer needed to anticipate living conditions twenty-five or even fifty years hence. Jude states: 'Our ideas were fifty years too soon to be any good to us' (Hardy, 2008c: 388). It is arguable that Hardy's view was that insight was also foresight; there is no doubt that the establishment of the NHS in England about fifty years later addressed many of Hardy's misgivings. Ellis described Hardy as 'modest, quiet, (whose) smiling simplicity was the dominant impression' (Ellis, cited in D'Exideuil, 1927: xv), adding:

The artist, we must never forget, is simply a man who looks at life through the medium of a personal temperament, and is able to describe what it looks like as seen by him. But the artist himself may not know what it looks like from outside (Ellis, cited in D'Exideuil, 1927: xvii).

Ellis wrote, 'it is the business of the analytic critic to trace out underlying tendencies, the more or less unconscious, held beneath and within the work of art he is discussing' (Ellis, cited in D'Exideuil: 1927: xvii). Ellis's comment on Hardy's 'smiling simplicity was the dominant impression' was not at all the true picture of Hardy, who could be devious, angry, self-centred and extremely complex. It is reasonable to argue that Hardy's fiction and poetry were the public manifestations of an inner life that was essentially sad and troubled; letting out his fears and anxieties was cathartic. To this end, also Hardy's life and times are to some degree the seminal unconscious origins of the texts. Hardy was a writer who looked at life through a personal temperament, which was both religiously orientated and sceptical at the same time, and he was wary of letting people know his true feelings. In the mid to late fiction, he had to cater for a national audience that was shy, awkward and even puritanical on the sexual problems of his characters like Sue in *Jude the Obscure*. The scandal of Arabella's flouting her sexuality brought criticism from D.H. Lawrence on Hardy's 'bad art'; Lawrence, analysing Hardy's sub-conscious intentions derived from his study of his last novel saw the episode of the pig's pizzle differently:

He insists that she is a pig-killers daughter; he insists she drag Jude into pig-killing; he lays stress on her false tail of hair. This is not the point at all. This is only Hardy's bad art. He himself, as an artist, manages in the whole picture of Arabella almost to make insignificant in her these pig-sticking, false hair crudities. But he must have his personal revenge on her for her coarseness, which offends him, because he is something of an Angel Clare (Lawrence, 1914, cited in Guerard, 1963: 116).

Lawrence drew comparisons between the intellectual Hardy and Angel coming out of the Victorian atmosphere of repression, obfuscation and the denial of female sexuality. Hardy's allusions to male and female sex drives are couched in terms of timid gentility not aggression; and this could be seen as an example of how conditioned respect governed animal desires. Lawrence argued that Hardy and Jude would not have had more than a fleeting interest in a nubile woman like Arabella, desiring instead the intellectual challenge of a woman like Sue to synthesise their competing psychic aspects. However, this is to deny the irrational but

strong force of desire, which does not always focus on the most socially appropriate target. Sue echoes Hardy's lack of commitment to love, and may have been based on aspects of Hardy's muse, the unavailable Florence Henniker. In fact, as Lawrence observed, Hardy was like his primary audience in terms of conscious and unconscious attitudes to morality and sexuality. Instinctively, he was possessed by an innate medieval sense that dealing openly with sexual matters was unwholesome. Concomitantly, exemplifying Freud's notion of the return of the repressed, this prudish mind-set was challenged by its oppositional shadow, specifically a desire to explore dangerous and unconventional vistas. Lawrence's study of Hardy also brings aspects of Hardy and Henchard's compulsion to become their idea; in Hardy's case publish and be damned, in Henchard's his sense of individuality would never conform to conventional standards:

This is the theme of novel after novel: remain quite within the convention, and you are good, safe, and happy in the long run, though you never have the vivid pang of sympathy on your side: or, on the other hand, be passionate, individual, wilful, you will find the security of convention a walled prison, you will escape, and you will die, either of your own lack of strength to bear the isolation and the exposure, or by direct revenge from the community, or from both (Lawrence, cited in Draper, 1991: 67).

Hardy opposed conventional parameters in novel composition, and as Lawrence said about Henchard, he found he was ostracised by sections of the community who pressured him to change, and to cease from undermining the *status quo*. Sue's aim is to be free to realise her inner ambitions, a desire motivated by a predominant desire to be authentic and individual; she is thwarted by the era's conservatism in religious adherence, and by its rigid marriage laws, resulting in restrictions in the availability of divorce, particularly for women. The dismissal of new ideas was anathema to the side of Hardy that was liberal and freethinking, and this finds expression in Jude's horror at Sue's psychic disintegration:

she was once a woman whose intellect was to mine like a star to a benzoline lamp: who saw all my superstitions as cobwebs that she could brush away with a word ... And now the ultimate horror has come-

her giving herself like this to what she loathes, in her enslavement to forms! (Hardy, 2008c: 388).

Whilst Hardy believed that the story in the novel must come first, two statements in the 1912 Preface to *Jude the Obscure* suggest that he was also aware that he was also an agent for change. He felt that some readers thought that 'when Ruskin College [for working men] was subsequently founded it should have been called the College of Jude the Obscure' (Hardy, 2008c: xlv). Referring to Sue's desire for equal status Hardy wrote: 'Sue Bridehead, the heroine, was the first delineation in fiction of the woman who was coming into notice in her thousands every year—the woman of the feminized movement—the slight, pale "bachelor" girl – the intellectualized, emancipated bundle of nerves that modern conditions were producing' (Hardy, 2008c: xlvi). Sue, in the microcosm of Christminster, was a significant challenge to male dominance as Emily Pankhurst of the Suffragette movement was to the macrocosmic Victorian *status quo*.

Lawrence later developed the theme of dissonance between public morality and private conscience. He criticised Hardy for harbouring a secret prudery that favoured the intellectual Sue over the fleshy Arabella. Lawrence felt that Sue represented the finer aspects of Hardy's psyche, bringing out its intuitive part and compensating for the primitive bearishness he disliked:

Now Jude, after Arabella, and following his own *idée fixe*, haunted this mental clarity, this knowing above all. What he contained in himself of male and female impulse, he wanted to bring forth, to draw into his mind, to resolve into understanding, as a plant resolves that which it contains into flower. This Sue could do for him. By creating a vacuum, she could cause the vivid flow which clarified him. By rousing him, by drawing from his turgid vitality, made thick and heavy and physical with Arabella, she could bring into consciousness that which he contained. For he was heavy and full of unrealised life, clogged with untransmuted knowledge, with accretion of his senses (Lawrence, cited in Guerard, 1963: 73).

Lawrence seems to argue that Sue's questioning undermined Jude's former certainties, refining his rough intelligence and newly acquired learning. By her probing, she dredged the hidden and real character from his depths. Lawrence also seems to suggest that Hardy's own

governing intellect emasculated his emotional and physical desires, inferring that Hardy had buried his sexuality so deep within his psyche that he had almost extinguished it. Whether Hardy fully understood his disposition, as outlined in Lawrence's critique, is doubtful. Ellis refers to a letter from Hardy illustrating what he wrote and how it is perceived by the reader as different:

They (novelists) are much in a position of the man inside the hobbyhorse at the Christmas masque and have no consciousness of the absurdity of its trot, at times, in the spectator's eyes (Hardy, cited in D'Exideuil, 1927: xviii).

William James, writing on the ethics of personality and character in *The Varieties of Religious Experiences*, by extension casts an interesting light on Hardy's life and fiction:

Recent works on the psychology of character have much to say upon this point (duality). Some persons are born with an inner constitution which is harmonious and well balanced from the outset. Their impulses are consistent with one another, their will follows without trouble the guidance of their intellect, their passions are not excessive, and their lives are little haunted by regrets. Others are oppositely constituted; and are so in degrees which may vary from something so slight as to result in a merely odd or whimsical inconsistency, to a discordancy of which the consequences may be inconvenient in the extreme (James, 1985: 168).

Hardy's oppositions and conflicts, which led to his resentments and unexpressed anger, were primarily expressed in an internal dialectic. However, Emma and Hardy also embodied the gravity of oppositions, because as he grew away from religious belief, so she grew in devotion. Emma continued to love Hardy even as he sought out the company of titled women and budding female writers and novelists eager to be tutored by the now famous man of letters. These oppositions are fictively enacted by Henchard, Angel and Jude, who were all seriously inconsistent, and haunted by their regrets. The resultant discordances were the material for their narrative dramas.

Despite Hardy's denials that his fiction contained his basic philosophy, it is clear he found his society's religious belief in its traditional guise to be unacceptable; its marriage laws to be archaic; and its class system, leading to exclusive privilege, and poor educational systems

for the poor to be oppressive. He identified the grosser forms of the various social malaises affecting the working class. Hardy's great challenge and achievement was to identify and clear away the impediments to the dreams of the poor. In a philosophical sense, it was the hope that things could get better that made his protagonists and Hardy endure. He was a radical novelist full of hopes, but he was also realistic enough to know that many aspirations were doomed to failure. He published fourteen novels, about fifty short stories, three major essays and one thousand poems. Enigmatically, the first stanza of his poem 'He Resolves to Say no More' from *Winter Words* (1928) says quite a lot:

O my soul, keep the rest unknown!  
It is too like a sound of a moan  
When the charnel-eyed  
Pale Horse has nighed  
Yet none shall gather what I hide (Hardy, 1995: 887).

In order to understand Hardy's evolution from apprentice to internationally celebrated author Chapter Three will sketch and summarise Hardy's early to mid-point novels offering an analysis on an individual basis.

## Chapter Three: Hardy's Early to Middle Novels

Hardy's early to mid-point novels afford significant insight into the artist as he developed. Consistent themes, initially approached with diffidence, became progressively clearer as he grew in confidence and accomplishment. The six novels in this chapter throw light on how Hardy evolves from dealing with ostensible novelistic failure, initially by way of conformity, to achieving a more complex perspective. The novels which will be discussed in this chapter are *Desperate Remedies* (1871); *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872); *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873); *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874); *The Return of the Native* (1878); and *Two on a Tower* (1882). His ideas concerning the individual's right to autonomy within a repressive society expanded exponentially in these texts, as he perfected his art. From the outset, Hardy's novels concern themselves with the conventionality of love relationships, class divisions, religious matters, and the interventions of a benign, but more often a malign, fate. These particular novels juxtapose belief with superstition, and awareness with passive unconsciousness. *The Life* outlines his intention: 'you may regard a throng of people as containing a certain small minority who have sensitive souls; these, and the aspects of these, being what is worth observing' (Hardy, 1984: 192). These novels, of which only the fourth, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, was artistically and commercially successful, reveal how over time Hardy's embryonic ideas gradually became his fixed inner perspectives. Hardy's life is a rarity, in that his lived-existence was an embodiment of conflicting principles. Thus, despite his agnosticism, he was consistently attracted to Biblical allusions; indeed the three novels after *Desperate Remedies* contain in excess of one hundred scriptural references, therefore it

is appropriate to use the Pauline dictum to describe Hardy's ambivalence: 'What I would, that I do not, but what I hate, that I do' (Romans 7: 15-20). Hardy's Preface to the first edition of *Jude the Obscure* (1895) pithily frames this dilemma: 'to tell, without a mincing of words, of a deadly war waged between the flesh and spirit' (Hardy, 2008c). The invisible war was formulated primarily from psychic dissonance creating a gravity of oppositions.

The early to mid-point novels reveal the inner conflicts besetting Hardy at this time. They bring into focus the budding novelist's problems in seeking to be true to his inspiration and become successful commercially. Empathising with Hardy's disappointment that *The Poor Man and The Lady* (1867) should best remain unpublished, one can sympathise with his haste to get a first novel into print. His first novel of this period, *Desperate Remedies*, was a thriller, containing sensational events such as the burning of the inn, and the midnight burial, seen again in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. It had an indebtedness to the contemporary Victorian novelist Charles Reade's *Griffith Gaunt* (Reade, 1866). Reade was a very popular novelist, whose work was proscribed by many of the lending libraries because they were indecent. There is little doubt that *Desperate Remedies* followed the lead of *Griffith Gaunt* in offending the conventions of Victorian prudery. Two years later, the biographical *A Pair of Blue Eyes* appeared, dealing with the romantic vagaries of an architect visiting the Cornish coast where Hardy first met Emma. This novel was the first to feature Hardy's name on the title page, as the previous two were published anonymously by Tinsley Brothers.

In 1872, he published the well-received pastoral novel *Under the Greenwood Tree* that offers a pleasant snapshot of the rapidly changing rural environment that Hardy had experienced at first hand. The mutually exclusive objectives of commercial success and artistic integrity were put under constant pressure by censorship and editorial oversight throughout the novel's composition. The editorial staff at Mudie's lending library were very active, and George Meredith had already caused a scandal with his poems *Modern*

*Love*(1862), and he also had three hundred copies of his novel *Richard Feverel*(1859) cancelled with a consequent loss of earnings and reputational damage. Hardy could not produce an acceptable, cohesive and unexpurgated novel, as contemporary censorship prohibited material contravening public morality, thus discouraging candour on religious dubiety and sexual explicitness. Writing for magazines and periodicals, which could potentially be read by all the family, led to Hardy's compromising of story lines in an effort to be generally accepted. From the beginning, Hardy's novels tilted at the established order, and by extension, at the fabric of family life, though in a necessarily oblique and covert manner. Confined by the restrictive parameters set by the zealous moralists of publishing houses, Hardy's art suffered. It would be very interesting to read what he would have produced under less censorious conditions.

By 1874, he had produced three relatively successful novels, and had gathered enough momentum to construct in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, a compelling narrative, dealing with women's sexuality, illegitimacy of birth, patriarchal versus matriarchal oppositions, and the conflicts that arise from and contribute to psychic anomalies. In a sense, Hardy's fiction was the bellwether of change, presaging radical changes in education, marriage laws and women's rights. This novel was a psychological study of the constructive and destructive mind-sets that promote and hinder human maturation in the personalities of the reactive Sergeant Troy and the reflective Gabriel Oak. Even more significant was the sense of authority accorded to Bathsheba's role, as she is seen dealing with equality of gender and potential career opportunities and crisis in a man's world, themes which he developed further still in the character of Sue Bridehead. Bathsheba initially rejects Oak's marriage proposal as, in her naiveté and untested egotism, she believes that she has risen above the humble shepherd. The polarities of humility and humiliation are embodied in Oak and Bathsheba; Oak takes setbacks in love and farming as a crisis to be turned to opportunity; Bathsheba is humiliated

by Troy and by problems in the farm into adjusting her arrogance into a cooperative dependency with Oak. Through humiliation, she finds humility, and the abiding trope of this process is the series of oppositions between her and the two male protagonists, and between the two male protagonists themselves.

Of the four major novels, *Far From the Madding Crowd* is the one with the happiest outcome. It is not just a picaresque series of dark deeds and humiliating episodes, where no one learns anything. In its conclusion, it evokes a retrospective on the pattern of country life that imposed regularity and stability on human passions and nature's occasional furious ways; life just went on regardless. Despite Boldwood's deadly obsession, and Troy's glamorous if faithless ways, the majority of the workers reside there in harmony, though Boldwood's erratic behaviour manifests itself in his joining and then withdrawing from life. Conversely, Oak's internal harmony is synonymous with a pastoral scene illustrating the almost sweet passing of time. Hardy's Arcadian scene, 'the shearers reclined against each other as at suppers in the early ages of the world' (Hardy, 2008d: 157), is arguably the last fictional representation where his optimism triumphs over his pessimistic qualities. Oak like Hardy 'was an intensely humane man' (Hardy, 2008d: 41), and Hardy tell us that Oak's humanity 'often tore in pieces any politic intentions of his which bordered on strategy, and carried him on as by gravitation' (Hardy, 2008d: 41).

Oak's actions throughout are directed by harmonious interiority. Conversely, Bathsheba's behaviour is at times mood-directed and Hardy equates Bathsheba's low mood with a stagnant swamp, and highlights her solitariness within nature: 'Bathsheba was lonely and miserable now; not lonelier actually than she had been before her marriage; but her loneliness then was to that of the present time as the solitude of a mountain is to the solitude of a cave' (Hardy, 2008d: 285). Her interiority is at one with the outer world; negative and ugly: 'but the general aspect of the swamp was malignant. From its moist and poisonous coat

seemed to be exhaled the essence of evil things of the earth, and in the water under the earth' (Hardy, 2008d: 296). \*That the evil was visited on Weatherbury by the malign presence of the urban-dweller Sergeant Troy is clear, and Troy is described in the following stark terms: 'Troy hated himself ...He stood and meditated-a miserable man.' 'Whither should he go?He that is accursed, let him be accursed still' was the pitiless anathema written in this spoiled effort of his newborn solicitousness' (Hardy, 2008d: 309).

The love triangles involving Bathsheba, Boldwood, and Troy bring into relief urban-rural divisions, as their characters have been formed from those different environments. Hardy's counterpoints the brilliance of the flashy romantic encounter in Bathsheba and Troy, with the solid and respectful relationship of Oak and Bathsheba, a relationship that developed through their mutually facing the challenges posed in work and life generally. The ways of the country and the town, traditional courtship values mixed-in with ideas on female emancipation are part of Gabriel's and Bathsheba's courtship rites. He is respectful but arrogantly expects Bathsheba to marry him because he wants her to do so. She demurs: "'Why Farmer Oak, "'she said, over the top, looking at him with rounded eyes, "'I never said I was going to marry you.'" ... "'I hate to be thought men's property in that way-though possibly I shall be had some day'" (Hardy, 2008:33).

Eros and Thanatos are manifested in honesty and its shadow, and are the binaries in Sergeant Troy's and Bathsheba's obsession with each other. Eros's love of transparency is opposed by Thanatos' affinity with the dark ways of stealth and dishonesty; if a relationship is not renewing itself, then it is dying. Bathsheba's gradual awakening to Troy's deceit is captured in: 'Troy had by this time driven her to bitterness .... "This is all I get for loving you so well! when I married you your life was dearer to me than my own"' (Hardy, 2008:266-267). Bathsheba and Fanny are genuinely in love with Troy who really loves only Fanny Robin, but his desire for excitement is stimulated by the passing attraction of Bathsheba.

When Bathsheba questions Troy concerning a strand of Fanny's blonde hair on his clothing, and declares blonde hair to be an affliction, Troy's true position is revealed: "It is the hair of a young woman I was going to marry before I knew you....Affliction-what affliction....Why her hair has been admired by everybody who has seen her since she has worn it loose, which has not being long. It is beautiful hair. People used to turn their heads to look at it, poor girl'" (Hardy, 2008:266).

This encounter signposts the fuller revelation of Troy's deceit in the coffin-scene where Troy embraces and kisses the corpse of Fanny in the presence of Bathsheba. Fanny and Troy are in love and love one another in their particular ways and while separated by misunderstandings in life, they are finally united in death. Troy's love for Fanny is deepened by her death, much as Hardy's former love of Emma was reawakened by her passing. In life, Troy and Fanny were rationally in opposition though spiritually in harmony; it was Troy's impatience and insecure nature that caused their split. At the novel's end, order and unity are restored which consoled Hardy's readership. *Far From the Madding Crowd* revealed how even the darkest character secrets always manifests in outer events. Hardy's atonement for his indifference and emotional disloyalty towards Emma was contained in the *Poems 1912-13* which was arguably an effort to restore their psychic connections. 'Beeny Cliff' recalls the apogee of their love for each other: 'The woman whom I loved so, and who loyally loved me' (Hardy, 1995:330).

In 1878, Hardy produced *The Return of the Native*, a novel exploring the interiority of the female soul of Eustacia Vye, and the ascending spirit of Clym Yeobright. This work was a real psychological study of dissonance, revealing the discord between inner and outer human lives. The title of Chapter Two reads 'Humanity appears upon the scene, hand in hand with trouble' (Hardy, 2008e, 13), and this is a significant moment in the narrative. The novel sees Hardy change from a benign pastoral description of the Heath in his previous novels, to one

where he suggests that the rugged landscape 'was at present perfectly accordant with man's nature ... it had a lonely face suggesting tragical possibilities' (Hardy, 2008e: 11). It has a strong plea for understanding the 'otherness' in others and it suggests that Nature recognises humanity as insignificant in the greater scheme of things: 'the untameable, Ishmaelitic thing that Egdon now was it always had been. Civilisation was its enemy' (Hardy, 2008e: 11). Hardy was thirty-eight when he published *The Return of the Native*, and in Jungian terms, it may have signified the changing of a tide that hitherto went out in search of success and was now beginning to explore what Gerard Manley Hopkins described as his 'inscape'. In the novel, there is a synchronicity between Hardy's return to Dorchester from London and Clym Yeobright's return from Paris to his place of origin, but now possessed with fresh ideas, which challenged traditional concepts. Clym believes he can instruct the \*locals in the ways of life, but eventually learns that the opposite is the case. The story illustrates the psychological problems of modern man and woman, and the main protagonists, Clym and Eustacia, illustrate in a number of ways the exploratory nature of Hardy's fiction. The novel's thrust brings into focus the oppositions outlined in Matthew Arnold's essay *Culture and Anarchy* (1869). Arnold had distinguished between Hellenism derived from Greek culture, which desires to see things as they really are, and Hebraism promoting good conduct and obedience. Hardy was of the late nineteenth century neo-Hellenistic school, but vestiges of the Judeo-Christian culture tenaciously clung to him. Clym represents a study of a spirit that by its nature wants to ascend to great achievements, whilst in the externals of Eustacia's behaviour reside her inner contradictions: 'The perfervid woman was by this time half in love with a vision. The fantastic nature of her passion which lowered her intellect, raised her as a soul' (Hardy, 2008e: 117).

The prominence of Egdon Heath from early in the novel shows the psychological importance of the unconscious mind, and also on the significance of dreams in the

consciousness of the individual. He describes the heath as 'the hitherto unrecognised original of those wild regions of obscurity which are vaguely felt to be compassing us about in midnight dream of flight and disaster, and are never thought of after the dream till revived by scenes like this' (Hardy, 2008e: 11). He writes of the heath's reciprocity stating that 'the storm was its lover; and the wind its friend. Then it became the home of strange phantoms' (Hardy, 2008e: 11). He paints the heath at night as brooding and titanic, particularly unknowable and uncontrollable to humans with great similarities to the human unconscious processes (Hardy, 2008e: 10). The opening section of the novel concentrates exclusively on the landscape, with a slight inference that only the most perceptive of humanity could detect its dynamism. In the humanity / nature dialectic, Hardy repeatedly refers to the insignificance of humankind within the passage of time. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* states that 'a quarter of a mile from the highway, was the historic fort called Mai Dun, of huge dimensions and many ramparts, within or upon whose enclosures a human being, as seen from the road, was but an insignificant speck' (Hardy, 2008b: 289). Freud's remark in 1923 that Hardy knew his psychoanalysis is apposite here, as *The Return of the Native* concentrates more on the psychological issues leading to philosophical problems of advanced thinkers like Clym and Knight in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, with Knight proving to be the proto-type for Clym as he also was for Angel, Sue, and Jude. In Jungian terms, the 'puer's' ambition residing in Clym and later protagonists corresponds to their youthful nature, whereas Hardy's narrators, having experienced it all before, have an affinity with the 'senex' or older person's outlook. It is another example of the gravity of oppositions that permeated Hardy's intellectual core

When writing *The Return of the Native*, Hardy's journey into his unconscious conflict had developed further, Eustacia and Clym Yeobright represent the existentialist oppositions of her sensual desires clashing with his more controlling intellect. Clym's wish to proselytise is in tension with letting the locals develop at their own tempo, embodied in the

form of the sophisticated urbane individual returning to his roots in a rural community. Hardy himself would have reflected how a native of Bockhampton could have become such a free-thinker, a rationalist and agnostic, when his personal history was so closely allied with religious traditions in a farming community. Clym's and Hardy's seduction had radically changed their views on life. In the earlier novels, Hardy brought the individual's intellect to bear on the community, and realising the inherent difficulties of this process, his next step was to examine the nature of the individual within that community, and specifically how Clym's inner life was altered in fraternising with the residents on the heath. Hardy's concept of a brooding landscape marked a change in consciousness from *Under the Greenwood Tree*. The landscape had now acquired a personality to a far greater degree than in the earlier novels.

The first chapter of *The Return of the Native* is a metaphor for the human psyche, and as imagination creates meaning from outer forms, so this novel begins Hardy's exploration of the connection and increasing separation between humanity and nature: 'it could best be felt when it could not clearly be seen.... The spot was, indeed, a near relation of night; and when night showed itself an apparent tendency to gravitate together could be perceived in its shades and the scene' (Hardy, 2008e: 9). There is an allusion to human dreams and waking in this excerpt, as the heath grows more sinister and mysterious throughout the hours of darkness, paralleling the way that dreams never correspond to a rational analysis. Hardy was dealing with changed concepts brought about by Darwinian Theory, stating unambiguously what Darwin was failing to say: that Nature was neither benign nor providential towards humanity. Publically, Darwin was wholly neutral on God's existence, and as his scientific research kept him very busy, he left the explanation of the cultural implications of his discoveries to others. Hardy's concept of a troubled and divided Nature is clear in *The Return*

of the *Native*, as it contrasts the malign and benign faces of nature mirroring human polar dispositions:

The place became full of watchful intentness now. When other things sank brooding to sleep the heath appeared slowly to awake and listen. Every night its Titanic form seemed to await something; but it had waited thus, unmoved so many centuries, through the crisis of many things, that it could only be imagined to await one last crisis—the final Overthrow.... It was a spot that returned upon the memory of those who loved it with an aspect of peculiar and kindly congruity. Smiling champaigns of flowers and fruit hardly do this, for they are permanently harmonious only with the existence of better reputation as to its issues at present. Twilight combined with the scenery of Egdon Heath to evolve a thing majestic without severity, impressive without showiness, emphatic in its admonitions, grand in its simplicity (Hardy, 2008e: 9-10).

Many critics consider *The Return of the Native* as Hardy's first major novel and his treatment of Eustacia Vye as the seductive female was quite scandalous for some readers. She teases her erstwhile lover Wildeve, saying: 'don't you offer me tame love, or away you go' (Hardy, 2008e: 82). Hardy had struggled for years against prudish censorship and anticipating the censor's opposition he radically changed his description of Eustacia from a 'discarded mistress' to a 'deserted beauty' (Hardy, 2008e, xiv). His explicit descriptions of female sexuality and masculine predatory instincts were way ahead of his time; his use of sensual language was his way of getting around the censor. His essay *Candour in English Fiction* (1890) demanded an honest representation of thoughts and actions prohibited hitherto inhibited by conventions: 'life being a physiological fact, its honest portrayal must be largely concerned with, for one thing, the relations of the sexes' (Hardy, 2008: xiv).

Eustacia has echoes of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* who is also tired of the banalities of country life. Eustacia's unconventional attitudes confuse the natives, as 'assuming that the souls of men and women were visible essences, you could fancy the colour of Eustacia's soul to be flame-like' (Hardy, 2008e: 66). Hardy's description of his dark smouldering heroine is very modern indeed: 'the mouth seemed formed less to speak than to quiver, less to quiver than to kiss. Some might have added, less to kiss than to curl' (Hardy, 2008e: 66). In an era

identified with sexual repression, prudery and their dark shadows, pornography and vice, *The Return of the Native* was stoking the fires of public controversy in illustrating what to discuss and what should remain unexamined. Within the novel Hardy juxtaposed freedom of expression and propriety for its own sake:

Eustacia had got beyond the vision of some marriage of inexpressible glory; yet, though her emotions were in full vigour, she cared for no meaner union. Thus we see her in a strange state of isolation. To have lost the godlike conceit that we may do what we will, and not to have acquired a homely zest for doing what we can, shows a grandeur of temper which cannot be objected to in the abstract, for it connotes a mind that, though disappointed forswears retreat. But, if congenial to philosophy, it is apt to be dangerous to the commonwealth. In a world where doing means marrying, and the commonwealth is one of hearts and hands the same peril attends the condition (Hardy, 2008e: 70-1).

Eustacia was an idealist, born out of her time. She was an individual who accepts her internal oppositions by unsuccessfully seeking the soul partner of her inner vision. Due to lack of money, her desire to travel is frustrated. Just as London altered Hardy's consciousness, so Paris changed Clym's perceptions, affording each of them fresh perspectives on their native place: 'the only absolute certainty about him was that he would not stand still in the circumstances amid which he was born' (Hardy, 2008e: 166). In his exploration of the external world, Clym is a free spirit attempting to transform new ideas into positive results for the natives of Egdon, in contrast to Eustacia whose earthy demeanour suggests she wants almost to consume every experience. Hardy constantly promotes the heath's omnidirectional power above all the human shenanigans:

It showed the barrow to be the segment of the globe, as perfect as the day that it was thrown up, even the little ditch remaining from which the earth was dug. Not a plough had ever disturbed a grain of that stubborn soil. In the heath's barrenness to the farmer lay its fertility to the historian. There had been no obliteration because there had been no tending (Hardy, 2008e: 20).

Eustacia's soul is synonymous with the essence of Egdon Heath in wanting to touch and be one with the raw material of life: 'she had Pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries.... This keenness of the corner (of her mouth) was only blunted when she was given

over to sudden fits of gloom ...which she knew too well for years' (Hardy, 2008e: 66-7). Her Saturnine nature echoed Hardy's own periodic bouts of depression, and her life and death were testimony to her soul's destiny to explore the miasma of despondency. Conversely, the tragedy of Eustacia's life was that possessing the spirit of the goddesses she imagined herself to be, she belonged to the Elysium Fields rather than to the daily grind for survival on Egdon Heath. Eustacia's 'celestial imperiousness, love, wrath, and fervour' (Hardy, 2008e, 67) had proved to be somewhat thrown away on backward Egdon, her opposing attributes of love and wrath, attributes of the Gods, were more appropriate to Mount Olympus. Her power was limited, and the consciousness of this limitation had biased her development' (Hardy, 2008e: 67). Her awareness of her lack of power to achieve her ambitions was her particular tragedy.

The perennial theme of love was fundamental in Eustacia 'to be loved to madness—such was her great desire' (Hardy, 2008e: 69). If Clym's transcendent spirit could be integrated with Eustacia's soulful disposition, it would have made a perfect heterosexual union. Clym's myopia mirrors Moule's advice to Hardy concerning his sight, which was prescient, Hardy had experienced an astigmatism of sorts when still practicing as an architect. This novel was a new venture, contrasting the evolution in cosmopolitan thought with the slower philosophical tempo of the local natives; it was an allegory for human progress within the immutability of nature. It took a further four years for Hardy to take the next step, leave *terra firma* and illustrate his concept of man and the universe in *Two on a Tower*. Hardy told his friend Edmund Gosse that his aim was 'to make science, not the mere padding of a romance' but its 'actual vehicle' (Hardy, 1975: 15).

*Two on a Tower* represents an exact mid-point position in Hardy's career as a novelist, and it deals with human passion against the backdrop of a cosmic background. Florence Henniker, perhaps finding points of identification with Lady Viviette Constantine, found it strange that it was not 'more talked of' (Hardy, 1975:

Introduction). The novel was serialised, which resulted in Hardy attempting to include too many astronomical and scientific details. The story deals with age differences between an older woman and young man of twenty-one years. It also highlights the difficulties of marrying someone of inferior class. It is a tale of star-crossed lovers, and is far removed from his traditional and future settings of the rural landscape and country life with a strong cast of humorous and tragic characters. The exploratory nature of this novel in depicting a romance conceived within the context of the inter-galactic observation involving time travel to the unknown dimensions of inter-stellar space was another example of Hardy's stylistic and intellectual development. It also placed more demands on the reader, as some rudimentary knowledge of astronomy was required to understand its language. The novel embodies Hardy's serious interest in astronomy and science and illustrates his intentions to write from a perspective 'fifty years hence'; it is probable the novel would be more easily understood by the average reader of today.

There are eclectic references to biological, astronomical and geological aspects, and Hardy's knowledge of astronomy can be seen in references to Herschel's *Cape Voyage*, which is mentioned three times in the novel. John Herschel was an explorer who surveyed and recorded the stars of the southern skies. Hardy's research for the novel included a visit to Greenwich Observatory to familiarise himself with Victorian ideas on astronomy, and he chronicled humanity's contemporary incomprehension and awe at inter-galactic mysteries. Hardy's 1895 Preface is an ironic comment on human self-importance:

This slightly built romance was the outcome of a wish to set the emotional history of two infinitesimal lives against the stupendous background of the stellar universe, and to impart to readers the sentiment that of these contrasting magnitudes the smaller might be greater to them as men (Hardy, 1976: Preface).

This mid-point novel demonstrated the class distinction common to Hardy's fiction, **\*illustrated in how the inner thoughts** of supremacy and inferiority are manifested in the

actions of Lady Constantine and Swithin St.Cleeve. It unmasked the aristocracy's flawed humanity and the rigidity of archaic marriage laws.

The romance primarily deals with an older titled woman, Lady Viviette Constantine, who is twenty-nine, and finds herself bored as her husband Sir Blount Constantine has left her to shoot lions in Africa. In his absence, she meets a youth Swithin St.Cleeve, observing a cyclone in the sun from a tower on her property. He has ambitions to be an Astronomer Royal, and had inherited a key to the tower-observatory from his great grandfather. In a somewhat convoluted plot, Viviette and Swithin fall in and out of love before secretly marrying. In a church scene, Lady Viviette 'being as impressionable as a turtle-dove' (Hardy, 1975: 97), reads the wall containing the Ten Commandments focusing on the Sixth one: 'Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery', which demonstrates Hardy's awareness of his readership's religious sensibilities. As a sop to the era's sensibility on adultery, Hardy's creates ambiguity on whether Lady Viviette's husband is dead or alive in distant Africa. After a fervid battle between her conscience and her sexual desires, Viviette feels it best to withdraw her love from Swithin and find a suitable maiden for him instead. This opposition of spirit versus the carnal flesh would also **\*form** the basis for *Jude the Obscure* thirteen years later where Sue engages in protracted interior debates on whether her feelings and right to freedom of action and expression should come second to the rigidity of Victorian institutions.

The different expectations of youth and age, and of the upper and lower classes, are addressed and overcome, when the bed-bound Swithin who is in declining health is showered with kisses by Lady Viviette. The release of Viviette's repressed sexuality miraculously restores St. Cleeve to health, suggesting the dangers of sexual repression. Swithin's emotions become reinvigorated when Lady Viviette awakens his dormant sexuality. The lovers prior to finding fulfilment in each other were concentrating on inter-stellar and domestic problems which have all been usurped as Hardy's lovers find fulfilment in their mutual attraction\*,

though they have to smother their natural desires and conform to social and religious mores. Freud develops the theme further:

Civilization demands of individuals of both sexes that they shall practice abstinence until they are married and that those who do not contract legal marriage shall remain abstinent throughout their lives. The position, agreeable to all the authorities, that sexual abstinence is not harmful and not difficult to maintain, has also been widely supported by the medical profession. It may be asserted, however, that the task of mastering such a powerful impulse as that of the sexual instinct by any other means than by satisfying it is one which can call for the whole of man's forces. Mastering it by sublimation, by deflecting the sexual instinctual aim to higher cultural aims, can be achieved by a minority and then only intermittently, and least easily during the period of ardent and vigorous youth. Most of the rest become neurotic or are harmed in one way or another (Freud, 1908: 177).

Swithin and Lady Viviette marry in secret, but have to live separate lives due to the social conventions of the time. In a matrimonial twist of fate, the lovers agree to separate, though Swithin has unknowingly fathered Lady Viviette's illegitimate child, born before he has left England to study the stars of the southern hemisphere, and she eventually marries the Bishop of Melchester because, as she is now pregnant, he is a safer option. F.B. Pinion, in his Introduction to the novel, states '[Hardy] did not mind outraging readers who judged by the letter of the law, for in subsequent editions he took steps to show conclusively that Lady Viviette's child was conceived when she and Swithin knew that their marriage was illegal' (Hardy, 1975: 26). The novel deals with English prudery originating in suppression of sexuality, and iconoclastically, it addresses rigid class divisions and marriage law anomalies. In the 1895 Preface, Hardy outlines what he meant to portray, contrasting it with how it was perceived, complaining that 'people seemed to be less struck with these high aims of the author than with their own morals, and, secondly, it was intended to be a satire on the established Church of this country' (Hardy, 1976). In an example of contemporary Victorian reaction to the scandalous situation of an aristocrat taking advantage of a commoner and later deceiving a Bishop of the Established church a reviewer for the contemporary *St James*

*Gazette* wondered 'whether Hardy intended an insult to the church by having a Bishop marry a fallen woman' (Wright, 2002: 329). This charge was refuted by Hardy.

It is easy to empathise with Hardy's frustrations; in a desire to broaden people's minds to the greater scheme of things he stirred up their prejudices based on existing narrow perspectives instead. On the other hand, it is arguable that he seldom passed on a chance to highlight the absurdities of the arcane laws of church and state prohibiting the expression of natural desires, and condemning partners in a failed marriage, particularly women, to a loveless life from which there was little relief or escape. Like Galileo before the Inquisition, Hardy was labelled a religious subversive. His ironic comment was that if Galileo had said in poetry what he told the Inquisition, namely that the earth revolved around the sun and not the other way around, thereby turning an anthropomorphic universe into a heliocentric one, that no one would have bothered him (Avery, 2009: 4). Hardy's private life seemed to exist at a great distance from his controversial depiction of Lady Constantine; he frequently socialised with the aristocracy who were of the very same ilk as the flawed Constantine.

*The Life* states that 'the misery of it is that, writing for English people, one may not be thorough: reticence's and superficialities have so often to fill places where one is willing to put in honest work' (Hardy, 1984: 189). Hardy's problem was that the censor's prohibition on illustrating what his readership already knew about difficulties in marriage, sexuality, and deviations from the norm, meant his excavations on what lay underneath all the superficialities could not be portrayed in mainstream literature. He wrote that 'Domestic laws should be made according to temperaments, which should be classified. If people are at all peculiar in character they have to suffer from the very rules that produce comfort in others' (Hardy, 2008c: 214). The novel's macro-scale imparts its own message; namely that the convolutions and tragedies of the romantic plots may be seen as comical when viewed from the perspective of the immensity of the cosmos. Hardy's resentment was against the poor

performance of a putative creator who had endowed humans with emotions, thereby registering all the pain and suffering attendant on the human condition generally. Hardy engendered resentments in those readers who lived by the letter of the religious and civil laws of the time, and who expected others to observe similar codes. He understood how difficult it was to write for a readership set in their ways, and which was challenged by writers and thinkers who suggested social and religious change. It is safe to assume that Hardy's sympathies were consistently on the side of the poor in spirit, in educational opportunity and in pocket.

At the time of writing *Desperate Remedies*, Hardy was no literary novice. He had written one novel, an architectural prize essay, and a sketch: *How I Built Myself a House*, as well as a considerable number of poems that, though rejected at the time, were subsequently published. *The Life's* outlines Hardy's precarious state of affairs: 'it was the sort of thing he had never contemplated writing, till, finding himself in a corner, it seemed necessary to attract public attention at all hazards' (Hardy, 2007: 87).

George Meredith, as reader for Chapman's publishing house, demanded that Hardy's first novel should contain more of a plot, and *Desperate Remedies* was the result. Within the novel, there are two narratives, one concerning love and another, a convoluted murder plot which demanded good concentrative powers from Hardy's readership. Hardy achieved his intention to be sensational and internal oppositions resulted; he was writing to a formula used by the successful Victorian novelist William Wilkie Collins, without utilising his own narrative skill as a storyteller. Some reviewers felt he had fallen under the influence of Collins, a charge he would have disliked. The important Victorian critic, John Morley, as editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, was devastating in his criticism of *Desperate Remedies*, feeling that [it was] 'ruined by the disgusting and absurd outrage which is the key to its mystery; the violation of a young lady at an evening party and the subsequent birth of a child'

(Morley, cited in Norman, 2011: 42). Morley felt that Hardy had been highly extravagant in creating the bedroom scene that placed Miss Aldclyffe and her new maid, Cytherea, together in bed (Millgate, 1971: 30). In a Victorian context, 'extravagant' equates with salacious. The novel contains many elements of Hardy's later work, and the seduction of a minor is revisited again in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. The impecunious writer immediately faced several criticisms of his particular style of expression.

The settings in the quasi-gothic *Desperate Remedies* contain a medieval building, an inn, and a fair, locations also used in the later fiction. Hardy contrasts light and dark images in the novel, embodied in the heroine and her nemesis. Here the *puer* and the *senex*, young and old, manipulation and hopefulness are in opposition and Hardy while hinting at mysterious dark powers also presents a rational explanation for the various mysterious episodes, thereby steering clear of any suggestion of supernaturalism. The story turns on the plight of a penniless girl, Cytherea Graye, who finds herself at the mercy of the wealthy Miss Aldclyffe, much in the manner in which Tess is later preyed on by the lascivious Alec D'Urberville. The handsome Edward Springrove is engaged to his cousin, a familial attachment later paralleled in *Jude the Obscure*, and gesturing towards Hardy's own relationship with Tryphena Sparks. The hero's similarity with Hardy is that Springrove is an architect and a poet of unpretentious origins, who knows Shakespeare to 'very dregs of the footnotes' (Hardy, 1976: 55). Hardy's poem entitled 'To Shakespeare' (1916) is full of allusions to his art and comments respectfully on the relative anonymity of the Bard's personal history something he wished for himself. *The Life* quotes from the *Spectator's* scorching review, which suggests that the novel must have been 'a desperate remedy for an emaciated purse' (Pite, 2006: 179). The *Spectator's* reviewer went further, stating that the unknown author had 'prostituted' his powers 'to the purposes of idle prying into the way of wickedness' (Tomalin, 2006: 114). Hardy's 'wickedness' probably lay in his

effrontery in suggesting the possibility that an unmarried woman owning an estate could have an illegitimate child. The review began: 'This is an absolutely anonymous story ...no assumption of a *nom-de-plum* which might at some future time, disgrace the family name ...of a repentant and remorseful novelist' (Hardy, 2007: 86). In the light of the vitriolic attack, Hardy was taken aback but persevered, because of financial necessity, though when he became very successful and was the recipient of similar attacks over *Jude the Obscure*, he decided that novel writing was no longer worth the critical opprobrium.

Hardy sent copies of the reviews of *Desperate Remedies* to the publisher Malcolm Macmillan with what seems like a half-apology. He said his aim was to 'simply construct an intricate puzzle which nobody should guess till the end-& the characters were, to myself mere puppets on pegs to weave upon' (Hardy, cited in Wright, 2002: 55). The author and critic Pamela Dalziel highlights the strong connection between the unpublished *The Poor Man and the Lady* asserting that it was the genesis for *Desperate Remedies*. She stated that that the motif of poor-man-and-the-lady embodies a persistent 'single, undifferentiated socioliterary agenda' that marked Hardy's earliest and last published novels (Dalziel, cited in Wright, 2002: 55). When juxtaposed with the developed characters of Boldwood, Henchard, Jude, and Sue, the *Desperate Remedies* protagonists Cythera, Miss Aldclyffe, and the murderer and future suicide Manston, have a one-dimensional quality. In the character of Manston, Miss Aldclyffe's natural and illegitimate son, Hardy deals in a preliminary way with a man gripped by an over-mastering passion that he later brought to greater realisation in Boldwood. Hardy's inference that the author of *Desperate Remedies* was a puppeteer showed he had not lived his characters' lives in the sense that he internalised the hopes and travails of Henchard or Jude.

*Desperate Remedies* deals with the class divisions, an issue that is consistently highlighted in Hardy's prose. Like Alec Stokes, in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Hardy demonstrates that wealth and possessions do not equate with goodness; indeed, in their

cases quite the opposite is the case. It was remarkable that the physical seduction by Miss Aldclyffe of the eighteen-year Cytherea in the bedroom scene got past the censors:

Miss Aldclyffe removed her arms from Cytherea's neck. 'Tis now with you as it is always with all girls,' she said, in jealous and gloomy accents. 'You are not, after all, the innocent I took you for. No, no.' She changed her tone with fitful rapidity. 'Cytherea, try to love me more than you love him—do. I love you more sincerely than any man can. Do Cythie: don't let any man stand between us. O, I can't bear that!' She clasped Cytherea's neck again (Hardy, 1976: 1209).

The superior morality often belongs to the lower orders, who possess neither the material power nor the education to prey upon their upper class, though psychically flawed, superiors. The dark interiors of characters and their histories contrast with superficial perceptions; for example, Miss Aldclyffe's manipulation and plotting originate in her dark and secretive past. The repression of her mental problems means that they are buried alive. Psychically she is as sick as her secrets: 'I have met deceit by deceit, till I am weary of it—weary, weary—and I long to be what I shall never be again—artless and innocent, like you' (Hardy, 1975: 107). Miss Aldclyffe demonstrates that one does not abandon foolish ways until coping with self-truths becomes easier than living a lie. Aldclyffe later concludes that women generally are flawed: 'You are as bad as I— we are all alike; and I— an old fool— having been sipping at your mouth as if it were honey, because I fancied no wasting lover knew the spot. But a minute ago, and you seemed to me like a fresh spring meadow—now you seem a dusty highway' (Hardy, 1975: 110). In essence, the seduction is almost a mirror image of Alec's seduction of the minor Tess.

*Desperate Remedies*, by concentrating on class divisions and the morality of the haves and have-nots, demonstrates an inversion of proportionality, as the *\*relatively* contented simplicity of the poor is juxtaposed with the troubled complexity of the rich. Aspects of Miss Aldclyffe may have been based on Julia Martin, who was Lady of the Manor and had showered Hardy with kisses when she was ten years old. The lesbian scene may have been a sexual gesture, though it could also have been the reaching out for an emotional response

from a pretty human being. In a similar manner to Boldwood breaking free from his emotional prison, so Miss Aldclyffe, a forty-six year old woman of experience, focuses her desire for human contact and affection on Cytherea Graye, her young companion of eighteen years of age. The novel also casts light on the similarities and differences between George Eliot and Hardy, an opposition that divided critics. A contemporary and judicious reviewer declared *Desperate Remedies* 'almost worthy of George Eliot' (Chew, 1964: 24). The dissimilarities in the writer's style are much greater than their resemblances. Both Eliot and Hardy used the novel as means of communicating their ideas and their later novels sees their core beliefs emerge more clearly. Simply put, Eliot's fiction is more optimistic; she believed the human condition though intractable, was not impossible. On balance, Hardy's *oeuvre* argues a polar view.

The mauling of *Desperate Remedies* by the *Spectator's* critic really hurt Hardy who at the time wrote philosophically 'strictly we should resent wrongs, be placid at justice, and grateful for favours. But I know one who is placid at a wrong, and would be grateful for simple justice; while a favour, if he ever gained one, would turn his brain' (Hardy, 2007: 86). Irwin notes that 'the bitterness of that moment was never forgotten; at the time he wished that he were dead' (Irwin, cited in Hardy, 2007: 86). There was an abiding element of self-pity in Hardy, resulting in defensiveness; Tomalin writes on Hardy's defence of his melancholy:

He was always defensive about it, so much so that when his friend Frederic Harrison attacked him for his pessimism in 1919, saying that the gloom in his poetry was 'not human, not social, not true', and that it sorted ill with Hardy's long, happy and well rewarded life, Hardy reacted by ending his friendship with Harrison (Tomalin, 2007: 223).

*Desperate Remedies* was Hardy's second attempt at the art of fiction but it remains atypical. It failed to a degree because of his hybrid approach, as the Wilkie Collins detective type of thriller did not really suit his typical theme of tragic love, set out upon a richly diverse

landscape. What made Hardy different from Collins was that his characters possessed depth, as exemplified in his description of Springrove as having:

...a keen sense of having been passed in the race by men whose brains are nothing to his own, all through his seeing too far into things ...thinking of perfection in things, and then sickened that there's no such thing as perfection in things ... (Hardy, 1976: 152).

Hardy's comments on Springrove's character contrasts the superficiality of the sensational novel with a more profound character who questions life and his place in it. Hardy soon realised that the egotistic complexities and sensational scenarios involved in writing *Desperate Remedies* were foreign to his innate gifts as a pastoral and philosophical novelist. His creative genius was opposed to writing in the formulaic fashion of an imitator. Drawing upon his personal experience of church choirs and the rural surroundings of his home place in Upper Bockhampton, he then wrote *Under the Greenwood Tree*.

Hardy exploited his family's grounding in the musical choir at Stinsford church on Sundays, along with his deep knowledge of country ways in the writing of the novel. There are aspects of the central Dewy family's story that are interchangeable with Hardy's experience. Hardy's 1912 Preface to the novel says his intention was to present 'a fairly true picture, at first hand, of the personages, ways, and customs which were common among such orchestral bodies in the villages of fifty or sixty years ago' (Hardy, 2009). His innate love of music and eye for the extraordinary in mundane events meant he was successful in this regard. This particular Preface concluded with a reflection that in all the circumstances, pertaining to his life and novelistic abilities, combined with a lack of literary reputation and commercial success, it was about as good as he could have made it. Millgate states that *Under the Greenwood Tree* originated in the abandoned manuscript of *The Poor Man and The Lady* (Millgate, 1971: 43). The novel grew out of the critic John Morley's remark, upon reading the unpublished novel, that the country scenes were the best in the book (Hardy, 2007: 88). The novel concerns a country choir acting out their desires involving love plots, music, wit and

humour, in a series of idyllic settings. With the exception of pastoral descriptions, it is not a typical Hardy novel, as it lacks the edge of bitterness and iconoclasm associated with his best novels. Its sub-title, *A Rural Painting of the Dutch School*, is a cogent description as it involves a simple love-story set against the background of village life alluding to the work of the seventeenth-century Dutch master Vermeer who also dealt in a subversive way with what was ostensibly ordinary and commonplace.

Irwin writes of a misunderstanding on Hardy's part that Macmillan the publishers had rejected the book out of hand, though their intention was to publish it later on (Hardy, 2007:88). The publisher's note to Hardy contained much praise for this delicate work. While not anticipating a huge commercial market, it nevertheless contrasted its greater merit with Hardy's earlier excursion into the sensational thriller genre in *Desperate Remedies*: 'but it is a good work, and would please people whose taste was not ruined by novels of exaggerated action or forced ingenuity' (Hardy, 2007: 88). The 'accomplished critic's' note to the publisher showed an understanding of Hardy's sensibility: 'the writer would do well to shut his ears to the fooleries of critics, which his letter to you proves that he does not do' (Hardy, 2007: 88). Hardy wrote to Macmillan asking for the manuscript to be returned. Alexander Macmillan returned the manuscript to Hardy, commenting on the slightness of the story, and making a vague offer to publish it the following year.

At roughly the same time, Hardy intimated to his future wife, Emma Gifford, that he was finished as a novelist and meant to concentrate on his architectural work instead (Hardy, 2007:88-89). Emma replied cautioning Hardy to be true to his vocation as a writer. Emma was being unselfish here, as they could have married sooner on an architect's steady salary. Hardy was also at an emotional crossroads, as his ambitions to become a successful novelist were in opposition to his parents' wish for him to have a career in architecture. *Under the Greenwood Tree* owed much to the doggedness of a different publisher William Tinsley, whose cajoling

of Hardy triumphed over the writer's indifference. Hardy's lack of confidence as to the novel's title and direction can be gauged from the different names he gave to the book, which was largely based on his family's participation in the choir and country life around Stinsford. It was originally entitled *The Mellstock Quire*, and Hardy felt later that it was a better title, but as the book was published and known as *Under The Greenwood Tree*, it would confuse his readership and future publishers. It was published in May 1872 and despite good reviews, the novel did not sell very well, and it was later remaindered.

The gravitational pull between London and Dorset is important in reading Hardy's early fiction. It brings out the oppositions of heart and head, and those of literary ambition and architectural career, versus love of his home place. The first four parts of the novel entitled 'Winter', 'Spring', 'Summer' and 'Autumn', suggest the importance of the rhythm of the seasons in a rural community. Fancy Day's love affairs are interwoven with the choir's intentions to delay, if not totally frustrate, the introduction of a new church-organist. This innovation is at the behest of the new parson, Arthur Maybold, who is very aware of the schoolmistress Fancy Day's beautiful presence. The organ-player would replace the choir and band in the gallery of the church, a process that, as a church musician himself, Hardy had observed at first hand. The resentments of the musicians about to be made redundant form part of the plot, the violinist Michael Mail regrets, 'People don't care much about us now! I've been thinking we must be almost the last left in the country of the old string players? Barrel organs and the things next door to them that you blow wi' your foot have come in terribly of late years' (Hardy, 2009: 30).

Hardy's paternal grandfather superintended the church choir at Stinsford, and they would assemble at their home on Christmas Eve, have supper, accompanied by plenty of liquor, and play music outside houses in the parish, returning home at six a.m. In the novel, similarly, there is a party at the Dewy home on Christmas night. Hardy found details of a

court case in the back files of the *Dorset County Chronicle* dated January 24, 1828, which gave details of the case of a fracas on Christmas Eve resulting in serious injury involving the Fordington Mummers and the impressively named Bockhampton Band (Millgate, 1971: 59). Hardy designated two castes within villages who did not mingle, so it would be surprising if his family of musicians played outside the houses of the upper classes. In the novel, only the wealthy farmer Frederick Shinar complains about the noise of choir's music. The recurring theme of the social oppositions between rich and poor is expressed in Fancy Day's father's ambition. Fancy's father Geoffrey Day would like her to marry Shinar, stating: 'I said Fred Shiner is a nice solid feller' (Hardy, 2009: 98). As Fancy has had a fine education, he wants her to marry a gentleman with polish. Geoffrey alludes to the connection between education and wealth, implying that one begets the other. He regards women as provocative stating that 'wives are a provoking class of society', because, 'though never be right, they never be more than half wrong' (Hardy, 2009: 97). In a classic example of obedience to patriarchy, Fancy accedes to her father wishes, stating she will not marry Dick Dewy against his will. There is a great amount of Hardy's personal biography in this novel, with Geoffrey Day's opposition to Dick Dewy paralleling Jemima Hardy's unease at her son's courtship of, and eventual marriage to, Emma. What it also demonstrates is how the lower caste's inverted snobbery was just as real as that of the well to do class.

The writer's parents Thomas Hardy the second, and his wife Jemima, had relatives in the lower castes, but as a stonemason, his father enjoyed a superior rank. Hardy's sonnet 'A Church Romance', describes his parents first meeting in 1836. *The Life* records what seemed love at first sight: 'A Church Romance' (Mellstock, circa 1836)

She turned in the high pew, until her sight  
Swept the west gallery, and caught its row  
of music-men with viol, book, and bow ...  
she turned again; and in her pride's despite

One strenuous viol's inspirer seemed to throw  
A message from his string to her below,  
Which said: I claim thee as my own forthright!(Hardy, 1984: 18).

This pastoral novel showed the advantages of living in the same place, assured of one's position within the community. *Under The Greenwood Tree* (1872) was the first Hardy novel set in Wessex, Hardy seldom referred to Dorset preferring the term 'Wessex' to describe his home place. In comparison to his previous novel, Hardy's prose in this text gives the impression that in the pastoral description, he has come to home to himself and his art. His true inspiration lay in Dorset, as previously outlined in *The Life's* statement that the young Hardy wanted to remain in the same spot and to know no more people than he already knew (Hardy, 1984: 20). This speaks of his desire for familiarity of place and relationships, which were quite an understandable sentiment from someone who was naturally shy. Hardy's father did not move to another area, even when relocation would have served him better economically. Hardy, his father, and grandfather, contributed to church music, and played at weddings and country house *soirees* near Dorchester for a combined total of one hundred years. Their financial reward was a small stipend at Christmas, so overall, it was a labour of love as members of their local community. The novel showed how change brought about by simple new inventions like the modern church-organ radically affected people's lives. The dispute between the conservative ways of the choir, clashing with the musical innovation and female allure of Fancy Day demonstrates how traditions are challenged and overcome by a society on the move.

The female romantic interest Fancy Day is an organist, and a flirt, who seduces men and then makes her demands. When Fancy plays her crowded chords and interludes, she elicits the disapproval of the choir, whose members are now scattered in the congregation of the church. Dick Dewy, the male romantic lead, is the treble-player in the Mellstock choir, and like Oak in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, out-waits the male competition, and Fancy's

father's desire that she should marry Fred Shinar or Parson Maybold. Hardy was writing unpublished poems like 'Hap' before *Under the Greenwood Tree*, and so it was interesting that he could put aside his gloomy negativity, depicting country-folk bound together in good and bad times, and closely attuned to nature.

Overall, Hardy's London experience was less appealing than his youthful attachment to his friends and environment. His return to Dorset was a counterpoint to London's impersonal ways and its effects: 'an effect among others of his return to the country was to take him out of the fitful yet monotonous existence that befalls many a young man in London lodgings' (Hardy, 1984: 57). The coming of the railroad to Dorset was changing the patterns that had evolved over centuries, as an alien metropolitan culture invaded a rural backwater, and its effects parallel those of the church organ in the novel. *The Life* records a visit to a harvest home which the young Hardy observed: 'was among the last at which traditional ballads were sung, the railway having been extended to Dorchester just then, and the orally transmitted ditties of centuries being slain at a stroke by the London comic songs that were introduced' (Hardy, 1984: 25).

Hardy's move to London in 1862 produced a further gravity of oppositions; his ambitious ego was rewarded by the move, but his temperament and emotional commitment were more in tempo with rural Dorset. London literally sickened him, and in 1867 he found that 'a few weeks in the country completely restored him' (Hardy, 1984: 57). Living close to nature again resuscitated Hardy's love of the pastoral scenes seen in Virgilian and Shakespearean poetry, and the effects were enlivening and expansive. The title of *Under the Greenwood Tree* comes from a song in Shakespeare's pastoral comedy *As You Like It*. Conversely, the depopulating of the countryside due to farm mechanisation, and the psychological influence of a Darwinian view of nature, engendered further internal oppositions; he loved progressive modern ideas, but detected that implementing them was

impacting negatively on country communities. His former strongly-held Christian faith had declined in line with what a contemporary religious census proclaimed; that religious observance had fallen-off dramatically. In *Under the Greenwood Tree*, the summer scenes at the seafront in Budmouth (Weymouth), and the verdant Mellstock (3 fictional hamlets in Stinsford, and the 2 Bockhamptons) landscapes rejuvenated Hardy. He had moved to Weymouth when his employer John Hicks of Dorchester died, and its fictional name, Budmouth, was no more than ten miles from Casterbridge (Dorchester). The fusion of life and art is indicated by the fact that Hardy's heart and both his wives are buried in Mellstock (Stinsford) graveyard. On his return to Dorset via Dorchester, Hardy resided in Budmouth (Weymouth) another setting in *Under the Greenwood Tree*.

The Dewys in the novel, Dick, Reuben and William are son, father and grandfather, and play different musical instruments in the choir, with some corresponding to those played by the Hardy family from Upper Bockhampton. 'Old William Dewy, with the violoncello, played the bass; his grandson Dick the treble violin, and Reuben and Michael Mail the tenor and second violins respectively' (Hardy, 2009: 28). Hardy's grandfather was a Cellist, and Tom himself like his father and uncle played the violin. Pite writes 'In the study there were...his childhood books too and music books owned by his father and grandfather. Their musical instruments were kept in this room' (Pite, 2006: 472). Young Tom excelled playing the violin and wrote a particular poem *Music in a Snowy Street* (1925) illustrating the power of music in changing moods. All three Dewy men are mentioned in Hardy's poem 'The Dead Quire'. Hardy was meticulous in his use of dialect words: a 'Tranter', Reuben Dewy's occupation, is a carrier of goods. The absences that Hardy endured from Emma heightened his romantic disposition, and there is a wonderful variety of emotions in the encounters described in *Under the Greenwood Tree*. There are also descriptions of the unbridgeable differences between the sexes, and of how individuals move at different tempos stemming from their

own particular insights. The novel has the slightest undertone of bitterness in the portrayal of Fancy Day's indecision and deceptiveness, proleptic of Sue Bridehead's manipulation of her men-folk in *Jude the Obscure*. The rural society in *Under the Greenwood Tree* is remote and homogenous, though the inhabitants still have to live in a world where social status and economics dictate their place within church and community. The machinations of the musicians, and the ways in which their intentions were thwarted and realised, was the kind of material that caused great mirth for urban readers.

The inhabitants have to negotiate the deep emotions and private agendas of those like Fancy's father, and the love rivals of Dick Dewy, all who have interests in terms of Fancy's future marriage. The attraction of Fancy Day for Hardy is caught in the remark of Fancy's father Geoffrey Day: 'a young woman's face will turn the north wind, Master Richard: my heart if it won't' (Hardy, 2009: 98). The pastoral scenes involving cider-making and honey-taking, and the summer festivities in Budmouth before the green and opal ocean, are elegiac of a time and place that will surely not come again. The novel does not contain anything like the references Hardy made to the evictions of country folk from their humble cottages as described in *The Dorsetshire Labourer* essay, eleven years later. To be evicted from their home for spurious reasons, or through the death of the breadwinner, was Unchristian in a nominally Christian country, and this is also true of the fate of the Durbeyfield family in *Tess*. Hardy's formal expression outrage at the lack of security of habitat for farm labourers had to wait for expression for some time. The rural world that Hardy knew as a boy was changing, and the writer concludes the novel on a high-note with the wedding of Fancy Day and Dick Dewy in Yalbury Wood, a veritable Eden, where the excellence of Hardy's prose as a pastoral novelist contains a wonderful description of a kaleidoscope of creatures:

Many hundred of birds had been born amidst the boughs of this single tree, tribes of rabbits and hares had nibbled at its bark from year to year, quaint tufts of fungi had sprung from the cavities of its forks, and countless families of moles and earthworms had crept around its

roots. Beneath and beyond its shade a carefully tended grass plot, its purpose being to supply a healthy exercise-ground for young chickens and pheasants (Hardy, 2009: 193).

Up to this point, Hardy's early adult life contained the simplicity of country life and the complexity of metropolitan existence; oppositions throwing a mutual light upon each other. Recalling *Under the Greenwood Tree* in later life, he questioned the descriptive balances concerning the choir in the novel, feeling that it lacked the necessary piety:

He was accustomed to say that on this account he had rather burlesqued them, the story not adequately reflecting as he could have wished in later years the poetry and romance that coloured their time-honoured observances (Hardy, 1984: 17).

The 1912 Preface states 'that the realities out of which it was spun were material for another kind of study of this little group of church musicians than is found in the chapters here penned so lightly, even so farcically and flippantly at times' (Hardy, 2009). The older more reflective Hardy, mindful that some of his neighbours resented being described as country bumpkins, alludes to the realities of their lives; how they were presented in the novel did not alter the fact that their tensions, hopes and disappointments were very real to them and to him. This of course brings into opposition the contrasting times and experiences of the older and younger writer. Hardy's consciousness accommodated polarities of experiences throughout his life, which meant he could honour and describe the advantages and disadvantages of different eras. Possessing the image of a simpler past enabled him to be explicit in his criticism of contemporary society, which had cast aside the values and ways of older cultures. The Victorian concept of family and community, where the collective unit was now under threat by the contemporary elevation of individualism as the modern paradigm, worried Hardy, who nonetheless was attracted by some aspects of encroaching modernity.

He had a different purpose in writing *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, and a specific gravity of oppositions existed in connection to this novel. *The Life* records Hardy's comments in a letter to George Smith: 'there are circumstances in connection with *A Pair of Blue Eyes* which make

me anxious to favour it even at the expense of profit' (Hardy, 1984: 116). It was a romantic novel much to the taste of its French readers, and it surpassed commercial expectations. Hardy wrote the novel with the assistance of Emma Gifford during the period of their engagement, and the novel hints at Emma's strong sense of class superiority. It is plausible that the story's romance was part of Hardy's courtship of Emma; that it was literally a gift of himself to her. It is probable that Elfride is partly based on Emma's character, and Parson Swancourt has elements of the Revd Shirley the vicar of Stinsford, who dismissed the aspirations of people from Hardy's social class. Elfride is a writer of romance, and Emma, also possessed literary ambitions. Hardy, in *The Life*, locates the novel among his Romances and Fantasies, alluding to its visionary nature. It well to remember that Hardy had written, but not published, the poem 'Hap' six or seven years previously, outlining how an atheist could not blame God for life's vicissitudes. Therefore, the malign element becomes Fate as the will of the 'purblind doomsters' referred to in 'Hap'. These transfer to the novel, and conspire to thwart human intentions. *A Pair of Blue Eyes* contains an excess of how malign fate causes disappointments and chaos, to the extent of stretching the reader's credulity and the story's credibility. In the novel, Hardy opposes will and destiny, as he sees Fate as beyond human control. The attraction that the supernatural held for Hardy is governed by the emerging rationalistic paradigm of the era.

In the novel, the instances of external circumstances impinging on the lives of the characters, borders on the farcical. In the denouement, the love rivals Smith and Knight give one another the slip on a train journey, without realising that the woman to whom they wish to propose was already married to Baron Luxellian. She has died from a miscarriage and her corpse is carried on the train on which they both travel. There exists a tragic-comedic aspect to the novel as everything that can go wrong does go wrong. Hardy alludes to the free will-determinism debate, as human action is restricted by Cause and Effect. A central protagonist

Henry Knight, a journalist, to whom Hardy claimed some affinity, is an initial example of several thoughtful men in later novels, who think they are free and independent in thought and action, but who are proven, by events in the novels, to be more affected by convention and tradition than they imagine. A clear connection between Hardy and Knight was that they were progressive intellectuals, in tune with the sophisticated refinement and intellectual thinking governing their era. Knight demanded that his wife should be virginal, and when Elfride's indiscretions are revealed to him, he abandons her, much as Angel leaves Tess due to a similar disclosure.

The novel is an early manifestation of how Christianity remained a persistent influence in Hardy's fiction. It is arguable that Hardy's subconscious saw the religious representatives aligned with the privileged and in similar manner looked down upon his own class. In this novel, Hardy characterizes Parson Swancourt in a pejorative manner; he is shown from early on to be suffering from gout, a rich man's disease, caused by over-indulgence in food and drink. Within the short time gap between writing *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, Hardy shows the churchman Maybold, who is seen as mildly parsimonious and class conscious, gradually transforming into the social snob that is Swancourt, whose prejudices do far more serious damage. Later, as a more assured novelist, Hardy shows in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* how the inimical relationship between religious edicts and human lives can have such tragic consequences. The class divisions caused social compartmentalisation, and the poor, like Hardy's women generally are relegated to largely subordinate roles. Hardy's inner vision saw that human nature compounded the deleterious effects of malign fate. The growing influence of scientific discoveries in geology and organic life begin to appear as a dialectic to humans in a *Pair of Blue Eyes*

In this book, Hardy also incorporated the geological findings of Charles Lyell (1797-1875) published in *The Principles of Geology* (1830-33) which also influenced Darwin. Geological and entomological references to the Jurassic coast and the heaths of Dorset feature prominently in this novel: 'Haggard cliffs, of every ugly attitude, are as common as sea fowl along the line of coast between Exmoor and Land's End.... Their summits are not safe places for scientific experiment on the principles of air-currents, as Knight now found, to his dismay' (Hardy, 1994b: 240). Hardy juxtaposes the endangered Knight and the trilobite fossil, 'opposite Knight's eyes was an imbedded fossil.... It was one of the early crustaceans called Trilobites.... Separated by millions of years in their lives, Knight and this underling seemed to have met in their place of death' (Hardy, 1994b: 241). The Darwinian themed later novel, *The Woodlanders*, is also a bleak study of survival against great odds. Hardy deals with social Darwinism in a corresponding human battle of morality versus baser instincts wherein the sensitive Jude is crushed by the coarsely sexual Arabella, who in turn is exploited by the promiscuous and unscrupulous quack Vilbert in *Jude the Obscure*. In psychoanalytical terms, it represents a triumph for the instinctual (the id) over social mores (the super-ego). Hardy was determined to illustrate the implication of evolution for a readership whose early conditioning was simplicity itself; that God made the world and was provident. Darwin himself remained mute on this fundamental issue.

The cliff-hanging scene in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* is more than suspenseful as Knight's encounter with the fossilised trilobite signposts Darwinian scientific reality, and suggests that humans are strange newcomers to the planet. The scene is perhaps the first indication of Hardy's power in expressing quick suspenseful narrative. ~~\*[Deletion]~~. Mixing suspenseful narrative and evolution's long history predating mankind, Knight's doggedness is synonymous with the human will to survive:

He still clutched the face of the escarpment-not with the frenzied hold of despair; but with a dogged determination to make the most of his every jot of endurance ... He reclined hand in hand with the world in its infancy. Not ablaze, not an insect, which spoke of the present, was between him and past (Hardy, 1994b: 240).

Darwin had transformed the way in which humanity perceived itself in relation to the external world, an issue that will be dealt with in greater depth in the chapter on *Tess of The D'Urbervilles*. There is an obvious reference to genetics in the statement: 'that trick of running away seems to be handed down in families, like craziness or gout. And they two women be alike as peas' (Hardy, 1994b: 286). Understanding Darwinism is very important in reading Hardy, as from this novel forward to *Jude the Obscure*, the undertones of a deadly war for survival and hegemony in nature are constant:

It was one of early crustaceans called Trilobites. Separated by millions of years in their lives.... The creature represented but a low type of animal existence, for never in their vernal years had the plains indicated by an intelligence worthy of the name. Zoophytes, molluscs, shell-fish, were the highest developments of those ancient dates. The immense lapses of time each formation represented had known nothing of the dignity of man (Hardy, 1994b: 241).

The survival of the fittest in society mirrors evolution in nature, and to illustrate this will to power, Hardy demonstrates female guile as contending with masculine idealism. Nor is the will to power confined to gender, as the machinations of the love rivals and erstwhile friends Smith and Knight, see them make life-altering decisions from their instincts and incomplete information on their beloved. Hardy felt that whoever or whatever creative force lay behind evolution had seriously erred in respect of human emotions; the emotions were a law of human nature defying the logic of the best minds. Above all else, these emotions registered the pains of life.

*A Pair of Blue Eyes* deals with the shadow of oppositions to Victorian conventional expectations that formed the basis for many of Hardy's tragedies. A sizable portion of ordinary people found conforming to religious observance, marital fidelity, and the rigidity of class distinction, quite difficult. Victorian society, through peer pressure, required obedience

to traditional structures of class separation; it required outward religious observances, and it also required sexual monogamy. In the construction of the novel, Hardy would have been influenced by Jeremy Bentham's guiding principles on 'the greatest good for the greatest number' (Magee, 1998: 198) and by John Stuart Mill's essays *On Liberty* and *The Subjection of Women*. The evolving, progressive mind-set out of which he wrote, was in short, what has since become a familiar left-liberal agenda for social change. While this mind-set was nobly inspired, Hardy in his personal life, seldom if ever declared against the privileged lifestyles of the rich; instead he joined the elite whilst sniping at their privileges, thereby giving rise to yet another opposition and internal conflict.

He quickly began writing the opening chapters of the novel in London, but as usual, he found London physically enervating. *The Life* records Hardy's changed mentality 'when he returned home, 'with between five and six year's superadded of experience as a young man at large in London, it was with very different ideas of things' (Hardy, 1984: 57). He returned to the seclusion of Dorset to set about it more thoroughly, and he eventually posted a manuscript of 163 pages off to the publisher Tinsley Brothers (Hardy, 2007: 93). The opposition of career paths between architecture and novel composition was reaching a crisis point, and a career-decision was required. *The Life* refers to Hardy's desire in his early novels, up until *Far from the Madding Crowd*, to mystify the reader as to their locality, origin, and authorship by various interchanges and inventions, due to his extreme doubt that he would pursue the craft at all (Hardy, 1984: 77). He was characteristically wary of becoming a failed novelist, fearing that this identity would follow him in his alternative career as an architect. *The Life* illustrates the aloneness involved in important decision-making in the period 1867-67: 'the young man of whom it may be said more truly than perhaps of any, that "save his own soul he hath no star"' (Hardy, 1984: 58). This remark was borrowed from Swinburne and recycled in *Jude the Obscure* (Hardy, 2008c: 70).

While *A Pair of Blue Eyes* again features an architect in a central role, Hardy, in *The Life*, denies that it was based on him personally, but rather that it was based on another architect whom Hardy met in Hicks architects' practice, where he was working on his return to Dorchester. The characters of Stephen Smith and John Smith are constructed from Hardy's wide knowledge of architecture and stone masonry respectively. Elfride's statement that her beloved Stephen's real position is what his profession makes him is rebutted by her snobbish father, who tells her to go to her room and get over her tomfoolery, a reaction which is indicative of the oppositions among the social classes. Elfride's treatment is very similar to Jude's being told to remain in his place and trade by the Christminster academic twenty-two years later. Hardy's denials of the connections between Stephen Smith, Swancourt, and his own with Emma Gifford's family, are strong, but need to be treated with a certain degree of circumspection, and in this context, it is well to remember Pite's caveat that every utterance in *The Life* should be challenged. Millgate agrees, noting that *The Life's* fidelity was to essentials, not details, in recounting events from Hardy's personal history:

Hardy allowed himself to minimize in *The Life* the struggles and deprivations of his youth and early manhood and to pass over other important episodes—personal and professional, early and late—without a single word (Hardy, 1984: XVI).

What some would call Hardy's prudence, others would call indecision, and it was symbolic of the constitutive gravitational oppositions between Hardy's private thoughts, fiction, and public utterances that he deliberately remained enigmatic, disingenuously so at times. The fiction overall creates the impression of an iconoclastic liberal, though his real life was somewhat of a contradiction; he lived in the exclusive part of society that he constantly undermined and criticised in his fiction, and he saw to it that his private thoughts remained occluded. When serving as a magistrate in Dorchester, he was in a unique position to judge different sides of country disputes, as he had experienced the lot of the privileged and the deprived.

The Cornish setting of St Juliot is where Hardy and Emma Gifford first met, and Smith's courtship of Elfride Swancourt in the novel parallels that of Hardy and Emma. Hardy stated that Emma and Elfride in character and appearance had 'points in common' (Wright, 2002: 240), though it would seem Emma possessed far more depth of character than did Elfride. Emma's strength of character and breeding probably caused her descent into a mild pathology when Hardy neglected and violated their marriage vows. Both women were excellent equestrians. Elfride's superficiality and deviousness opposes any desire for psychic wholeness, and her indecision opposes Emma's forthright nature. Elfride is a further development of Fancy Day from *Under the Greenwood Tree*; and the title of *A Pair of Blue Eyes* is mildly ironic, in that it conjures up a superficial image. Elfride is attractive, intellectually smart, but shallow. Her first impression endures throughout 'as to her presence, it was not powerful; it was weak. Some women can make their personality pervade the atmosphere of a whole banqueting hall; Elfride was no more pervasive than that of a kitten' (Hardy, 1994b: 2). She suffers frustrations badly, but lacks the intestinal fortitude to face a situation with determination, much like Sue later in *Jude the Obscure*. When well into the novel Knight rejects her she reverts to character type: 'Elfride docile as ever, had hardly moved a step, for he had said, Remain' (Hardy, 1994b: 384).

Elfride is impressionable and lives by her wits, alternating between coquettishness and a serious manner. Her father's protects her from life, and he knows she is without a fixed perspective: 'You get all kinds of stuff into your head from reading so many of those novels' (Hardy, 1994b: 3). At a picnic, Elfride loses an earring, mirroring an actual incident during Hardy's courtship of Emma. The earring episode is important, as it displays female ingenuity overcoming masculine straightforwardness. Indeed if Hardy's male characters behaved with such wanton deception, they would be dismissed from polite society and branded as rogues. However, the sexes had opposing views on what constituted fair play in terms of

courtship. The novel exposes the contemporary reader's expectations of female 'weakness' confronting male 'strengths'. The male's need for female admiration and personal self-respect are the motivations of Smith and Knight. They find refuge in physical absence from the scene of their emotional dis-ease, which is a metaphor for their emigration from their former safe-harbours of isolation and emotional non-involvement. The protagonists mirror the endless cycle of experiments in love that captivated Hardy throughout his life and art.

Smith's character, which many believe is based on Hardy himself, may have been also partly based on a mason whom Hardy's father had employed. Hardy was the long-awaited architect sent from Weymouth to St. Juliot in Cornwall to restore the church. Hardy juxtaposes the mores of rich and poor in the characterisation of Mr. Swancourt, Elfride and Smith. Their oppositions lead to an exposure of different mind-sets. Smith is desirous of the positions and prestige held by Swancourt and Elfride, but does not realise that in aping their ways, and becoming like them, he will lose much of the strength residing in his own background and experience. Smith is unaware that changing identity is not like simply trying on a new suit, but is in effect a lengthy evolutionary, ideological and even unconscious process. Mr. Swancourt's attitude was typical of Victorian upper class outlooks towards the lesser orders; Smith, without a good social pedigree or education, was simply labelled an inferior. Emma's father later rejected Hardy on the grounds of social class, though at the time of writing *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, Hardy had not yet married his daughter. The Gifford family lived in a manor house in Cornwall, and Emma described her upbringing as: 'a most intellectual one and not only so but one of exquisite home-training and refinement' (Wright, 2002: 128). This was in contrast to Hardy's pleasant but humble country cottage, and the early influence of his mother's unsupervised reading of classical English writers. However, Jemima passed on her perceptions and experience as a servant in the homes of the well off in London, and Hardy's assimilation of those eclectic details would have been voracious as they

illustrated another existence of which he would have been in awe, and which he would have been eager to experience. There was some degree of synchronicity between Parson Swancourt's rejection of Stephen for his lack of social pedigree, and the manner in which Emma's father dismissed Hardy's ambitions towards upward mobility. Millgate writes of Emma's father's 'class-based contempt for the social pretensions of the Hardy's' (Millgate, cited in Wright, 2002: 129). Hardy confided to Florence that Emma had trapped him into marriage by claiming to be pregnant (Millgate cited in Wright, 2002: 129), and Arabella perpetrated this same ruse on Jude. An excerpt from Millgate's biography quoted in Wright states; 'His mother never really accepted Emma. She probably knew or suspected, that the Giffords looked down on the Hardys because they were not of a professional class and were "countrified"' (Wright, 2002: 128). Millgate stated Jemima felt 'threatened by Emma's social pretensions' and regarded her as an interloper who lacked youth, wealth, 'domestic virtues' and a 'Dorset background' (Wright, 2002: 128).

Millgate also states that in 1913, Hardy told a correspondent: 'It is very strange that you should have been attracted by *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. The character of the heroine is somewhat-indeed, rather largely-that of my late wife, and the background of the tale the place where she lived' (Millgate, 1971: 63). As the novel is primarily a romance, Hardy demonstrates how the will to power in relationships is usually a matter of concealment. For example, beneath the veneer of sweet innocence Elfride Swancourt is demanding and devious. As part of their romance, Stephen Smith's background becomes an issue, and to be romantically successful with Elfride, he has to win her father's favour or else consider an elopement. The conventional expectations of the religious if morally flawed Parson Swancourt require Smith to be what he can never be, namely a child of privilege. The autobiographical element is marked when Stephen Smith's flawed pronunciation of Latin is noticed by Swancourt, and his awkward handling of the chess pieces with Elfride betrays his newly

acquired and unsure sophistication. The chessboard becomes the arena for the love-war game of romance, and Elfride for her own reasons, lets Stephen win. Stephen's *gauche* behaviour in proper society arose from his lack of proper social etiquette, from a sketchy knowledge of the classical languages, and from the lack of a classical education. The same factors were possible reasons why the largely self-taught Hardy regretted not attending Cambridge, and I would contend that the connections between his life and art here are tangible ones.

Hardy's friend, Horace Moule, also looms large in the construction of Henry Knight, the Oxford man from whom Smith learns Latin by correspondence. There are elements of the role of high priest and sycophant in the relationship of Knight and Smith, which Hardy probably remembered from his own relationship with Moule. In an unusual statement from Hardy, which was recorded in Emma's diary, he said that Henry Knight, Elfride's second lover, was more like himself (Wright, 2002: 240). It was more likely however that the genesis of Knight's character lay in Horace Moule. Similarly, in terms of intellectual influence, Elfride Swancourt is one of the more intellectual heroines in Hardy's fiction; she writes her father's sermons. Like Cytherea Graye in *Desperate Remedies*, she has been 'carefully educated' (Hardy, 1976: 49). Both women are early harbingers of Paula Power in *A Laodicean*, and of Sue Bridehead in *Jude the Obscure*, possessing advanced intellectual beliefs that challenge the male characters in those novels. The challenge for those intellectual women was to recognise how their education transformed them, and how their personalities would fit into a male-dominated Victorian society. Because of the co-dependency between Parson Swancourt and his daughter Elfride, she will not begin to mature until she meets life outside the comfort zone of a close father-daughter relationship; she needs to test the boundaries of her power interacting with the characters of her lovers Smith or Knight. Her character and personality, as her father suspected, was formed in part from the reading the latest popular novel.

In this novel, reader-credibility is stretched to breaking point in accommodating the many bizarre and freakish episodes. Knight's rescue from the cliff-face through Elfride's construction of a rope from her underwear is melodramatic in the extreme, and it is an incident rife with psychosexual undertones. Within the plot also lies Hardy's magnetic attraction to the supernatural and the gothic. The incidences of chance or malign fate in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* reach incredible proportions. It is as if Hardy is still under the spell of the thriller-writer Wilkie Collins. Examples of synchronicity occur when Mr Swancourt chooses the same day for his secret marriage that his daughter had selected. The only person whom Elfride and Smith encounter upon returning from London was the old woman, whose hatred of Elfride made the meeting doubly unfortunate. Elfride's much sought-after lost earring is also found at a most unfortunate moment. It was similarly bizarre that the rivals in love, Stephen and Knight, acting independently, returned to Devonshire by the same train that carried the body of their loved one a case of Eros and Thanatos fused together.

The philosophical implications in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* are harbingers of Hardy's mature ideas. He considered his ideas to be in advance of contemporary thought, and his anticipation of how the novel would read many years into the future was typical, as he liked to write about the present from an imaginative perspective somewhere well into the future. There is evidence of his proto-Modernist mind-set in this particular novel, and his portraits of the peasantry and the landscape show how comfortable he was in a rural medium. Artistically it lacks the quality that Hardy went on to develop; specifically that ability to demonstrate how the lives of unimportant ordinary folk in a backward region like rural Dorset, had a universal symbolic application by creating a commonality which encapsulates all of human life. *The Life* records how its success exceeded expectations, and the influential *Saturday Review* declared it the most artistically constructed of the novels of its time (Hardy, 1984: 98). The *Review's* statement was a rebuff to the contemporary

classicists of style who deplored Hardy's careless writing habits. Millgate, as editor of *The Life* (1984), contrasts Hardy's literary construction with what followed later, he wrote, 'a quality which by the bye, would carry little recommendation in these days' (Hardy, 1984: 98). The relative success of the novel allowed him to leave the trade of architecture, and to embrace fully a novelistic career starting with *Far from the Madding Crowd*:

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,  
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;  
Along the cool sequestered vale of life  
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way (Stanza 19, Thomas Gray's  
'Elegy, Written in a Country Church Yard', cited in Hardy, 2008d: xx).

The title of *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874) is taken from stanza 19 of Thomas Gray's 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard' (1751). For Hardy's muse, it celebrates the peace of death, an end to conflicts. Hardy had stated to Lady Ritchie that he would like to visit human situations as a ghost, which explains his sense of apartness from complete participation in life:

I have attempted many modes [of finding it]. For my part, if there is any way of getting melancholy satisfaction out of life it lies in dying, so to speak, before one is out of the flesh; by which I mean putting on the manners of ghosts, wandering in their haunts, and taking their views on surrounding things. To think of life as passing away is a sadness; to think of it as past is at least tolerable. Hence even when I enter into a room to pay a simple morning call I have unconsciously the habit of regarding the scene as if I was a spectre not solid enough to influence my environment, only fit to behold and say, as another spectre said: 'Peace be unto you' (Hardy, 1984: 218).

The story concerns the different loves of three men for one woman, and the attractive title initially conceals the protagonists' passionate natures and the tragedies that flow from them. Taking Gray's verse as his starting point, Hardy contrasts the peace of death with the struggles of living. In peeling back layers of human rationalisation, Hardy's fiction anticipates Freud's analysis of the eternal conflict between creation and entropy in *Civilisation and its Discontents*:

And now, I think, the meaning of the evolution of civilisation is no longer obscure to us. It must present the struggle between Eros and Death, between the instinct of life and the instinct of destruction, as it works itself out in the human species...and it is the battle of the giants that our nursemaids try to appease with their lullaby about Heaven (Freud, cited in Meisel, 1972: 130).

In 1872 while working as an architect on the restoration of Gothic churches Hardy, a virtually unknown author, received an extraordinary request in a letter sent to his humble cottage for a new novel. The request came from the Victorian man of letters and London editor of the prestigious *Cornhill Magazine* Leslie Stephen who, though he had only a slight acquaintance with Hardy's work, felt that *Under the Greenwood Tree* showed promise. The critic R.L. Purdy explained that Stephen would supervise Hardy's work, offering his suggestions as to plot, censorship laws, and pruning (Purdy, cited in Millgate, 1971: 81). The relative success of the previous two novels, where Hardy moulded autobiographical detail into a fictional unity, had served the writer well up to this point in his career. His experience as a writer of serials for magazines, which required constant re-writes due to exacting censorship constraints, necessitated creative agility in plot and pattern. Through this considerable experience, Hardy combined much of the contents of the previous novels into a fresh story possessing its own dynamic.

The novel's sensational elements are displayed in the Gothic scene of Bathsheba's prising open of Fanny Robin's coffin, as well as through natural and domestic catastrophes like the fire scene and the dramatic dis-appearance and re-appearance of Troy. Hardy wrote to Frederick Harrison in 1901 that *Far from the Madding Crowd* could not have been written at any other time in his life: 'a growing tendency to appear as a work of a youngish hand, though perhaps there is something in it which I could not have put there if I had been older' (Millgate, 1971: 80). The passionate feelings expressed in the novel originated in a struggling younger man's thinking on sexuality, honour and ambition, a mode of thought untainted by the wisdom of a sixty one year old successful man. This novel revealed Hardy's genius as a

storyteller, defining how the plans of an ambitious woman, Bathsheba Everdene, affect, and are affected by, the males she encounters. Hardy draws a minutely detailed and sympathetic description of the interdependency of humans and the natural world, which reveal the significance that Hardy placed on this connection. In his most successful novel to date, Hardy's muse seemed to be longing for the peace of death and an end to the human conflict and pain with which the novel abounds.

The novel, however, is much more complex than such a simplistic reading would suggest. It represents the contrasts of urban milling workers in Casterbridge coping with rapid social changes, with the quietude of Weatherbury, which replicate Hardy's own experiences during his London years, where emotionally he needed the pastoral nature of his former home in Upper Bockhampton. At times, Hardy's fiction sentimentally eulogises a pastoral past, but that past also contained famines, backbreaking work practices, and a sense of emotional pain that was general. The domestic insecurity of the Durbeyfield family and the struggles of Jude and Sue show how the ostensible idyllic rural scene was peopled with individuals attempting to survive with little chance of prosperity or happiness this side of the grave. Reading Hardy's *The Dorsetshire Labourer* disabuses any fanciful notion that the lower orders enjoyed life. The rebellious nature of Hardy's neighbours at Puddletown caused them to be transported for resisting the oppression of the landed gentry.

The inference from the title suggests that if one leaves the urban scene and takes domicile in the country all will be well. This is an erroneous assumption, however, as the traveller will always carry his character and personality with him for better or worse. The novel contains no panacea for the human condition, as neither the urban or the rural scenes are without cruelty, self-interest, and an absence of genuine Christian charity, remarkable after a millennium of religious worship. On a human level, the characters display strong traits of narcissism such as Bathsheba's immaturity, the pathetic devotion of Boldwood, and the

rampant ego of Troy, all in opposition to the nobility of the steadfast Gabriel Oak. The geographical and character oppositions apart, the novel is reliant on antithetical discourses questioning the traditional attitudes of religion, love, social change and nature-human oppositions. Boldwood's innate caution before his metamorphoses involved a detachment from life, and when he re-joins the 'madding crowd', he pays a huge price. In Jungian terms, Boldwood and Bathsheba achieve individuation through their descent from the ivory towers of their imaginations and their engagement with the pains associated with being fully part of the human family.

Hardy's cautionary tale had a provocative effect on his readers, as all the main protagonists, with the exception of Oak, seem to follow destructive and constructive impulses emanating from their unconscious mind's processes. Hardy illustrates how convention forms social values, and is therefore unnatural due to its social construction, something that is also a central theme of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Post-Darwin, Hardy would have seen that social ordinances were contingent on inherited traditions from religion and politics; thus, the novel demonstrates how people's social positions were seldom in accord with either their inner vision or conduct. The 'ignoble strife' is always present in the 'vale of life', which involves murder, illegitimate children, mental pathology, and abject poverty. Hardy's use of the term 'madding' is apposite on different levels, as throughout the novel, the levels of people's denial of reality are many, wandering sometimes into insane behaviours.

For example, Bathsheba's involvement with Troy is an irrational move for both, as he really loves Fanny Robin. Bathsheba's love is blind bordering on the insane; wrong thinking at the wrong time. If she was realistic and kept her mind focused on the huge challenge for a woman running her newly acquired farm, she would have quickly extinguished her mind's fascination with Troy's erotic swordplay. Bathsheba's haste to keep an appointment with her destiny originated in her unreflected desire to experience the pleasures residing within

danger; a victory of emotion over intellect, instant gratification trumping prudent caution: 'She was now literally trembling and panting at this her temerity in such an errant undertaking: her breath came and went quickly and her eyes shone with an infrequent light' (Hardy, 2008d: 181). Hardy's use of metaphor was prescient in the swordplay image, as it alludes to the biblical reference of living and dying by the sword; thus Troy dies by a violent act. Hardy also makes reference to God inspiring Moses in Horeb to strike the rock from which flows water for his followers (Hardy, 2008d: 185). This parallels Bathsheba's experiencing her thoughts being swamped by the wetness of her emotions: 'it had brought upon her a stroke resulting, as did that of Moses in Horeb, in a liquid stream—here a stream of tears' (Hardy, 2008d: 185). The exciting sword-play episode completely altered the trajectory of Bathsheba's life; prior to it she had the choice of lovers after the experience her only desire was for Frank Troy. The use of the word stroke has multiple meanings: psychological, physical and spiritual. Her realisation of imminent capitulation to Troy's desires made her guilty: 'She felt like one who has sinned a great sin' (Hardy, 2008d: 185). 'The circumstance had been the gentle dip of Troy's mouth downwards upon her own. He has kissed her' (Hardy, 2008d: 185).

The male sex-drive, and initial female resistance to it, which leads up to Troy's conquest is captured in their interchange. In line with a prudent need to offer allegory instead of factual representation of sexuality between Troy and Bathsheba, his deftness with the sword conveys the danger and excitement of fresh sexual encounter. The following dialogue between Troy and Bathsheba shows how well the metaphor works:

'Now', said Troy producing the sword which as he raised it into the sunlight, gleamed a sort of greeting, like a living thing. 'First we have four rights and four left cuts: four right and four left thrusts'. 'Infantry cuts and guards are more interesting than ours, to my mind, but they are not swashing ... The infantry have two most diabolical upward cuts, which we are too humane to use.'

'How murderous and bloodthirsty!' (Hardy, 2008d: 182).

As Bathsheba is caught up in the whole process 'her adventurous spirit was beginning to find some grains of relish in these highly novel proceedings. 'She took up her position as directed, facing Troy' (Hardy, 2008d: 182). Later in the novel after Troy's rejection, Bathsheba feels bereft and overwrought experiencing the opposite desire: 'a vehement wish to flee from him, to run from this place, hide, and escape his words at any price, not stopping short of death itself, mastered Bathsheba now' (Hardy, 2008d: 294). Hardy's engages with metaphorical representation again to describe how entangled her emotional intelligence has become: 'she could think of nothing better to do with her palpitating self than to go in here and hide; and entering she lighted on a spot sheltered from the damp fog by a reclining trunk, where she sat down upon a tangled couch of fronds and stems' (Hardy, 2008d: 295). The image connects to the feeling, as she finds no external stimuli to lift her spirits; the ugly terrain confirms her low spirits: 'she mechanically pulled some armfuls round her to keep off the breezes, and closed her eyes' (Hardy, 2008d: 295).

This novel became seminal to Hardy's life and art, as it empowered him to overcome what up to then had been formidable oppositions. The income it generated enabled him to marry Emma, and it probably gave her the confidence to overcome any lingering familial oppositions to Hardy on class grounds. He had entered the almost classless milieu of a famous novelist. Leslie Stephen was central to the development of the book, though his enthusiasm for Hardy after *Under the Greenwood Tree* had to be tempered, as Hardy had already promised *A Pair of Blue Eyes* to the rival publishers Tinsley Brothers. Hardy sent part of the manuscript to Stephen, and despite confusions and a minor clash of interests involving Hardy, Emma and Stephen, it was published in two volumes in November 1874. While writing the novel, his closest friend Horace Moule, from whom he had recently parted, took his own life.

There were several reasons why Hardy might have felt guilty over Moule's tragic death. By May 1873, he had three books published including *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873), and was sketching his first best seller *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874), and his career was looking promising. In contrast, Moule's job at that time, as an inspector of people's means, assessing the financial wherewithal of those in financial difficulty, was a social decline for one who had inspired such great expectations. Moule committed suicide in September of that year and whether he despaired at how his pupil Hardy had surpassed Moule the tutor was a factor or not is open to debate. Moule was profligate by nature and prior to this he was driven to alcoholism, and had fathered an illegitimate child in Fordington, and in ways, he could be seen as the basis for some of Henchard's character excessive traits in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* or even more likely, for some of Jude's arrogance in his drunken activities and actions in *Jude the Obscure*.

Hardy wrote the novel partly at Bockhampton stating in *The Life* how it was 'a great advantage to be actually among the people described at the time of describing them' (Hardy, 1984: 102). The novel drew comparisons with George Eliot from the *Spectator's* reviewer. Hardy later commented on this in *The Life*, 'as a possible reason for the flattering guess, that he had latterly been reading Comte's *Positive Philosophy*, and writings of that school, some of whose expressions had thus passed into his vocabulary, expressions which were also common to George Eliot' (Hardy, 1984: 100). The novel's great success brought its own problems, as there was what Stephen described as an unexpected 'Grundian cloud' (Hardy, 1984: 101), in the form of three respectable female subscribers to the *Cornhill* magazine, who upbraided Stephen for an improper page in the story. When reading the proofs sent to him by Hardy, Stephen advised Hardy to treat the seduction of Fanny Robin in 'gingerly fashion', while apologising to Hardy for the 'excessive prudery of which I am ashamed' (Hardy, 1984: 101). Hardy felt that writing serial stories for magazines opposed his

artistic sensibilities though it was a necessity of life in financial terms. He was now dependent on writing for a livelihood, as he said poetically, 'to keep base life afoot' (Hardy, 1984: 105). The constant tensions between his career as a novelist, and what he considered his true *metier* as a poet, were brought into relief by the general acclaim the novel received. Some passages from a letter to Stephen, taken from Millgate's *The Life*, illustrate how Hardy disliked writing within the narrow parameters ordained by censorious publishers:

The truth is that I am willing, and indeed anxious, to give up any points which may be desirable in a story when read as a whole, for the sake of others which shall please those who read it in numbers. Perhaps I shall have higher aims some day, and be a great stickler for the proper artistic balance of the completed work, but for the present circumstances lead me to wish merely to be considered a good hand at a serial (Hardy, 1984: 102).

This statement of Hardy's concerning *Far from the Madding Crowd* emphasises how the novel, whilst gaining him the justifiable reputation as a great storyteller, obscured his reputation as a significant thinker for many years. Overall, it quickly became listed among the classics of the English novel, and established Hardy's burgeoning reputation as a novelist.

The merits of the story lay in its different aspects of mood and variety of interests. In moving from town to country and back again, and by creating characters shaped by those environments, we observe their oppositions, and also the interconnectedness of everything in humanity and nature. The bucolic life of the shepherd Oak is confronted by the immediacy of the impatient Troy, who always seems to be going somewhere else, as well as the brooding and withdrawn Boldwood. Hardy demonstrates how the smallness of a casual remark and its misinterpretation concerning the church venue for their wedding by Sergeant Troy to Fanny Robin, sets up their split destinies. Hardy's drawing of Bathsheba as an independent and ambitious woman with fixed objectives, anticipates future heroines like Sue. Bathsheba has to cope with disparate psychic elements competing for ascendancy; the sometimes oppositions of her needs and wants play out through her character's dilemmas. Her will to power conflicts with her greater need to be cherished, loved, and married. The fact that Bathsheba is the

controller of men and their family's fortunes, endows her with power and responsibility rarely seen in the Victorian period: "Now, before I begin, men", said Bathsheba, "I have two matters to speak of. The first is the bailiff is dismissed for thieving, and that I have formed a resolution to have no bailiff at all, but to manage everything with my own head and hands" (Hardy, 2008d: 79). At this declaration, 'the men breathed in an audible breath of amazement' (Hardy, 2008d: 79). Her position means she is constantly in danger of being undermined, and whilst her employees afford her proper respect, if she fails, she will become the target for their resentment, as such failure will confirm their suspicions concerning the inadequacy of women in the agri-business scheme of things. The novel deals progressively with the tensions that arise from Bathsheba's desires for a mate clashing with her business and property interests.

Hardy's fiction may well have been representative of his internal conflicts between optimism and pessimism; his gloominess arose from the knowledge that human joys raised spirits, but the realist within knew they were ephemeral and that everything ends in some disaster or eventually in human disappointment. Hardy's optimism early in the novel sees Oak playing a flute at a party where the workers imbibe and carouse, which suggests that man has imposed his order on nature, and that life in personal and general terms is going according to plan. At this stage nature is neutral even benign, but humanity causes disharmony because the farm workers have become drunk in the midst of a crisis. Bathsheba deplores the general drunkenness: 'they are all asleep in the barn, in a drunken sleep, and my husband among them' (Hardy, 2008d: 247). The revellers are quickly brought to their senses by the storm, which demonstrates nature's hostility to human complacency. Oak, when weighing up the dangers in saving the ricks from the storm, wonders 'was his life so valuable to him after all?' (Hardy, 2008d: 244). The storm is a good example of man's impotence to quell nature's fury despite Oak's herculean efforts when he is nearly electrocuted by the lightning: 'love, life,

everything human, seemed small and trifling in such close juxtaposition with an infuriated universe' (Hardy, 2008d: 246).

Hardy, in a nod to social Darwinism, by inverting the master-servant dialectic, demonstrates how traditional roles have to be unlearned as new paradigms taken their place. He held a core belief that empathised with the female struggle for proper and fair recognition, which can be traced back to his early observation of women, including his mother and grandmother engaged and toiling in farm work. Later in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, he credits women as being more naturally suited to fieldwork compared to their male counterparts. Mill's influential polemics on the subjection of women affirmed Hardy's conviction as to the probity of women's rights. Bathsheba is a study in such proto-modernism, as she opposes the stereotypical role given to women by Victorian patriarchy. Oak thinks she is 'the only venturesome woman in the parish' (Hardy, 2008d: 245). The writer Samuel Chew who knew Hardy well writes that 'Bathsheba Everdene is the best representative of Hardy's belief in a woman's inability to press steadily and independently towards the goal that she has set before her' (Chew, 1921: 37). Despite her determination to manage her estate and her love life, she is ultimately dependant on Oak. Hardy was again prescient in delineating Bathsheba, as the Victorian equivalent of twenty-first century superwoman *avant la lettre* from whom too much is also expected. Women's feelings of inferiority were nurtured by the Victorian myth, which labelled them solely as 'house angels', a label which Bathsheba opposes. Hardy's Bathsheba and Sue were situated somewhere between Bronte's depiction of the ungovernable unconscious as the 'madwoman in the attic' in *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Woolf's Judith Shakespeare in *A Room of One's Own* (1929).

With regard to the illustration of the novel, and possibly with an eye to cartoonists like *Punch* magazine, Hardy opposed the drawing of farm workers as 'Hodges'. He wrote to

the publishers in October 1873, with 'a hope that the rustics, although quaint, may be made to appear intelligent and not boorish at all' (Hardy, 2007: 99). Chapter Eight of the novel, entitled 'Warrens Malthouse: The Chat: News', sees the venue as a haven from troubling times after the fire as the imbibers discuss the universal themes of religion, love, family heritage, music and how appearances deceive, with the accent on local events. Joseph Poorgrass beginning to feel like a man in the bible states: 'for evil do thrive so in these quiet times that ye may be much deceived in the clanest shaved and whitest shirted man as in the raggedest tramp upon the turnpike, if I may term it so' (Hardy, 2008d: 68). The protagonist's opposing opinions mirrors the polarity of views on many of humanity's global debates. Drinking from an ancient communal cup and sharing their food, this scene represents the very best of a rural community taking a break from life's pressures. One of the group, Henry Fray, says to Gabriel 'Ay, I can mind yer face now Shepherd... criticising Gabriel with mist eyes as he entered upon his second tune. Yes-now I see 'ee blowing into the flute I know 'ee to be the same man I see play at Casterbridge, for your moth was scrimped up and yer eyes a-staring out like a strangled man's-just as be now' (Hardy, 2008d: 68). Dissenting voices are cutting towards Oak: "'Tis a pity that playing the flute should make a man look such a scarecrow", observed Clark' (Hardy, 2008: 68); and "'I hope you don't mind that young man's bad manners in naming your features?" whispered Joseph to Gabriel. "Not at all, " said Mr Oak' (Hardy, 2008d: 68).

He defended his county folk in far greater depth in his essay the *Dorsetshire Labourer* in July 1883. In demonstrating that the shepherd Oak could tell the time and name the stars, Hardy opposed conventional urban myths attached to country folk's intelligence:

The Dog-star and Aldebaran, pointing to the restless Pleiades, were half way up the southern sky, and between them hung Orion which gorgeous constellation never burnt more vividly than now as it soared forth above the rim of the landscape. Castor and Pollux with their quiet shine were almost on the meridian: the barren and gloomy Square of Pegasus was creeping around to the north-west: far away through the plantation Vega

like a lamp suspended amid the leafless trees; and Cassiopeia's Chair stood daintily poised on the uppermost boughs...'One o'clock' said Gabriel (Hardy, 2008d: 18).

After the novel's success, Stephen wrote to Hardy drawing attention to the comparisons drawn between George Eliot's fiction and his own because Oakknew the name of the stars, a comment that Hardy would had thought both trite and patronising.

The farm workers lived in a community-based enterprise quite different from the experience of rural dwellers. The crisis of the fire transformed their separate, even anarchic mind-sets into a formidable fighting-force. Their cooperative nature is captured by a reference to , 'the assemblage – belonging to that class of society which casts its thoughts into the form of feeling, and its feeling into the form of commotion – set to work with a remarkable confusion of purpose' (Hardy, 2008d: 49). Hardy's demonstrates the different attitudes of Troy and Oak to the farming crisis, as one decides to drink away the problem, whilst the other endeavours to save the harvest from ruination by the storm. In the shearing-supper scene, the shearers recline at ease in the gathering gloom while Oak expertly plays the flute, evoking a bucolic pastoral scene. In the Great Barn and Sheep Shearers scenes, Hardy wrote 'God was palpably present in the country and the devil had gone with the world to town' (Hardy, 2008d: 142). Troy, as the *enfant terrible* of the novel is a rural dweller, which suggests the devil had returned. In this particular scene, the spiritual embodiment of work resides in the Shearing Barn, which Hardy wrote resembled a church with transepts, adding that, 'it not only emulated the form of the neighbouring Church of the parish, but vied with it in antiquity' (Hardy, 2008d: 143). In this description, Hardy opposes formal religion with the spirituality of work natural to the labourers. He implies that all physical work is a spiritual undertaking, contributing to the commonwealth of the world. The Barn has housed their enterprise:

For once Medievalism and Modernism had a common standpoint. The lanceolate windows, the time-eaten arch stones and chamfers, the

orientation of the axis, the misty chestnut of the rafters, referred to no exploded fortifying art or worn out religious creed. The defence and salvation of the body by daily bread is still a study, a religion and a desire (Hardy, 2008d: 143).

Hardy, who was primarily a humanist, paints the barn as a cathedral honouring the labours of man.

Hardy found strong opposition to his claim of creating the fictionalised *milieu* entitled 'Wessex'. He was a subtle self-publicist, and used the Preface of *Far from the Madding Crowd* dated 1895-1902 to claim that the fictional region of Wessex in England was exclusively his own invention:

I was often asked even by educated people where it lay. However the press and the public were kind enough to welcome the fanciful plan, and willingly joined me in the anachronism of imaging a Wessex population living under Queen Victoria; - a modern Wessex of railways, the penny post, mowing and reaping machines, union workhouses, Lucifer matches, labourers who could read and write, and national school children (Hardy, 2008d, Preface).

The excerpt shows the clash of tradition with modernity, and it shows how proud he was of the region and its people. The allusion to labourers who could read and write was a rebuttal of some urbanites use of the pejorative term 'Hodges'. The reference to national school children illustrates the progress being made for one of his favourite causes: the education of the poor. He acknowledged that he had borrowed the name from early English history, and that he loved the name enough to name his dog 'Wessex'. There is no doubt that Hardy had a proprietorial attachment to the concept of Wessex and its name, which caused him to become economical with the truth as to the genesis of its usage. As already pointed out by Jim Gibson, Hardy never felt he was on oath to tell the truth when a reasonable doubt could be used to his advantage (Gibson, 1999: ix). His proprietorial claim to Wessex was in opposition to the established facts

Since Hardy's day, the use of the term 'Wessex' has grown exponentially, appearing as an advertising slogan across a wide cross-section of business, cultural events, ways and

routes, even royal titles. Edmund Gosse, on reviewing *Jude the Obscure*, asked: 'What had Providence done to Mr Hardy that he should rise up in the arable land of Wessex and shake his fist at his creator' (Tomalin, 2006: 222). In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, John Durbeyfield displays his grandiosity: 'I be-as good as-some folk here and there! I've got a great family vault at Kingsbere-sub-Greenhill, and finer skillentons than any man-in Wessex' (Hardy, 2008a: 32). The Preface to *The Mayor of Casterbridge* stated: 'the story is more particularly a study of one man's deeds and character than, perhaps, any other of those included in my Exhibition of Wessex life' (Hardy, 2008b: 3). The 1895-1902 Preface warns against people confusing fact and fiction: 'But I ask all good and idealistic people to forget this, and to refuse steadfastly to believe that there are any inhabitants of a Victorian Wessex outside these volumes in which their lives and conversations are detailed' (Hardy, 2008d).

Whilst Hardy held a proprietorial interest in the Wessex settings of the novel, it was his good friend and mentor William Barnes, perceived locally as Dorset's poet, who was accustomed to speak of 'Wessex' many years before the name appeared in the final instalment of *Far from the Madding Crowd* in 1874. Patricia Ingham writes that 'though he later claimed to have thought of the name Wessex himself, it is pre-dated by an earlier use by his admired friend, the Dorset poet William Barnes' (Ingham, 2003: 98). Barnes, thirty years earlier in the Prefatory Dissertations of 1844 and 1848 to the volume *Poems of Rural life, in the Dorset Dialect*, used the term 'Wessex' in a specifically historical sense to denote the ancient kingdom of the west Saxons (Barnes, cited in Millgate, 1971: 127). Horace Moule may have also written about 'Wessex' in the unsigned report in *The Marlburian* (Moule, 1862) in the *Quarterly Review* article of 1862. Hardy, however, felt that the term 'Wessex' was his exclusively, stating in the 1895 Preface to *Far from the Madding Crowd*:

But I believe I am correct in stating that, until the existence of this contemporaneous Wessex in place of the usual counties was announced in the present story, in 1874, it had never been heard of in fiction and current speech, if at all, and that the expression, a 'Wessex peasant', or a 'Wessex

custom', would therefore have been taken to refer to nothing later in date than the Norman Conquest (Hardy, 1895, cited in Millgate, 1971: 128).

*Far from the Madding Crowd* is the first novel revealing Hardy's essential characteristics, specifically an affinity with the highs and lows of farm workers, and his perceptions of nature in benign and malign moods. It showed how malign Fate appeared in mundane form in human affairs with deadly consequences, as Fanny Robin misconstrues the name of the church appointed for her abandoned wedding. The oppositions continued throughout and sometimes took a violent turn as Bathsheba confronts, and is confronted by, the corpses of Fanny and her infant. The coffin-scene is an example of psychic divisions. Bathsheba's mind is conflicted; she is immobilised between fear and courage, self-honesty and denial, wrestling with the moral, psychological and emotional issues inherent in prising open Fanny's coffin. Bathsheba's fear resides in uncertainty; will she cope with the revelation? External evidence of inward attitudes sees Troy kiss the corpses of Fanny and her child revealing his love for both of them. Bathsheba is aghast, realising that Fanny is Troy's true love: "Don't-don't kiss them! O Frank, I can't bear it-I love you better than she did-kiss me too, Frank-kiss me!-You will Frank kiss me too!" (Hardy, 2008d: 292). Through suffering the shock of mental overload, Bathsheba knew it was the end of old ways, and a time for new paradigms. With its strong gothic overtones, the coffin-scene is a wonderful illustration of the Eros-Thanatos dynamic, as for Hardy human development is derived from the life-death-birth cycles.

Reconciling the natural oppositions, and creating a loving synthesis was where the old paradigm of self-interest gave way to a new one of selflessness that challenged Bathsheba's three lovers. Falling in love with Bathsheba changed Boldwood from a recluse to an anxious lover. Oak, who rises above self-interest, is uncomfortable with his changed mood: 'he was uneasy on Boldwood's account, for he saw anew that this constant passion of the farmer made him not the man he once had been' (Hardy, 2008d: 355). Boldwood is largely forcing

himself on Bathsheba, misinterpreting her kindness as affection for him. He is conducting a one-sided love relationship, as he does not understand the give and take nature of heterosexual encounter. He is a desperate lover: 'I hope to God she'll come, or this night will be nothing but misery to me. O my darling, my darling, why do you keep \*me in suspense like this!' (Hardy, 2008d: 359). Boldwood possesses a generosity of spirit that is opposed by his possessiveness towards Bathsheba; in the *denouement*, he eventually recognises his nemesis in the disguised Troy who has returned to claim to his wife:

Troy advanced into the middle of the room, took off his cap, turned down his coat-collar, and looked Boldwood in the face. Even then Boldwood did not recognise that the impersonator of Heaven's persistent irony towards him, who had once broken in upon his bliss, scourged him, and snatched his delight away, had come to do these things a second time (Hardy, 2008d: 366).

Boldwood unlooses the frustration of his misdirected love for Bathsheba, and the dammed up emotions of his life, by shooting Troy before attempting to kill himself: 'a strange voice came from the fireplace—a voice sounding far off and confined, as if from a dungeon. Hardly a soul in the assembly recognised the thin tones to be those of Boldwood, sudden despair had transformed him' (Hardy, 2008d: 366). An earlier exchange between Boldwood and Oak demonstrates how, as rivals for Bathsheba's affections, they both have to accommodate conflicting inner desires; their desires to act as gentleman in the conventional sense is in direct opposition to a deeper primordial desire to win the beloved:

... Oak, I have learnt about your secret; your interest in her is more than that of a bailiff for an employer. But you have behaved like a man, and I as a sort of successful rival—success partly through your goodness of heart—should like definitely to show my sense of your friendship under what must have been great pain to you (Hardy, 2008d: 355).

The drama surrounding the courtship of Bathsheba by her ardent admirers highlights the unconventionality of love encounters, as three different pursuers bring every personal device to bear on the situation. The tragic outcomes are educational for the survivors, as failure in love instructs, and the unnatural death of young people Fanny and Troy, in pursuit of loving

fulfilment represents a deep shock to the emotional life of all concerned. Hardy demonstrates by contrasting the hopes of the lovers with their disappointment how even deep tragedy can foster human growth and maturity arises from life's challenges. Gray's 'along the cool, sequestered vale of life', is shown to be a vale of soul making, as suggested by John Keats, when human passions surge, causing high tragedies akin to the Greek tragedies of Hardy's favourite classical authors. At the age of twenty three, Keats wrote to his brother stating that being intelligent is not enough, that one's intelligence has to be converted into a soul? ... 'Do you not see', he wrote, 'how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a soul.... Call the world if you please 'The Vale of Soul-Making. Then you will find out the use of the world' (Keats cited in Moore, 2004: 29). Victory in love ultimately is Oak's reward for his selflessness. His nobility in relegating his wishes below his sense of fair play sees him advise Boldwood never to be certain of outcomes: 'We don't know what may happen. So many upsets may befall 'ee. There's many a slip, as they say- and I would advise you- I know you'll pardon me this once- not to be *too sure*' (Hardy, 2008d: 354).

The barn in the novel is a symbol of Comte's Positivist influence on Hardy, as it replaces the church as a spiritual Mecca, and is an early example of his secular thinking. In The Great Barn and the Sheep Shearers section, there is a palpable sense of purposeful work, delineating a local community in action, wherein everyone has their designated role in cooperation for the common good. Hardy illustrates how the souls of the Barn and the workers become one:

One could say this about this barn, what could hardly be said of either the church or the castle, akin to it in age and style, that the purpose which had dictated its original erection was the same with that to which it still applied. Unlike and superior to either of those two typical remnants of medievalism, the old barn embodied practices which had suffered no mutilation at the hands of time. Here at least the spirit of the ancient builders was at one with the spirit of the modern beholder (Hardy, 2008d: 143).

In this excerpt, Hardy extols the spiritual nature of work elevating its concept of equality and fraternity above the patriarchy of organised religion or the divisive nature of feudalism. *Far From the Madding Crowd* sees the incorporation of core Hardy religious and social principles into the thoughts and actions of the players and narration. It represents his maturing thoughts and philosophy as his reference to the Barn as a multi-purpose venue for the workers demonstrates his humanist aspirations.

After his most successful novel to date, it took Hardy four years and another novel *Hand of Ethelbert* in-between to produce the quieter but deeper psychological work that is *The Return of the Native*. *The Hand of Ethelbert* was a social satire, which many critics have labelled as frivolous. Hardy is never as completely at home in the London scenes as he is in the rural world. The novel was a disappointment to Stephen's *Cornhill Magazine* and the critic F.B. Pinion argued that Hardy's knowledge of the upper classes was too limited at this time to 'undertake the genre of "artificial comedy" with any success, although Oscar Wilde or George Bernard Shaw might have handled the theme well' (Pinion, cited in Wright 2002: 120). Irwin's *The Life* confirms where Hardy's emotional capital resided: 'he constitutionally shrank from the business of social advancement, caring for life as an emotion than for life as a science of climbing, in which respect he was quizzed by his acquaintance for his lack of ambition' (Hardy, 2007: 55). It was in the earthiness of Wessex's life and not the artificial sophistry of London where Hardy found his inspiration. The characters in *The Hand of Ethelbert* and their family's servants are members of a higher society, which in 1875, aged thirty-five, Hardy was not yet familiar.

Hardy's admiration for the Keatsian verse *Endymion* is depicted in the poem 'To Sorrow', in the preface to *The Return of the Native*:

To sorrow  
I bade good morrow,  
And thought to leave her far behind;

But cheerly, cheerly,  
She loves me dearly;  
She is so constant to me, and so kind.  
I would deceive her  
And so leave her,  
But ah! she is so constant and so kind (Hardy, 2008e).

The poem contains a strong inference that Hardy found sorrow inseparable from his character and from life itself. Perhaps it points to the travails of Clym Yeobright who nearly loses his sight in pursuit of knowledge, and of Eustacia, who in her despair of not fitting into life as a full participant, decides to end it all. The first chapter of the novel is devoted to a sombre description of nature, as it existed on Egdon Heath. It is a sad and dark place where 'The face of the heath by its mere complexion added half an hour to eve: it could in like manner retard the dawn, sadden noon, anticipate the frowning storms scarcely generated, and intensify the opacity of a moonless midnight to a cause of shaking and dread' (Hardy, 2008e: 9). It is a place of watchfulness: 'the place became full of watchful intentness now, when other things sank brooding to sleep the heath appeared slowly to awake and listen' (Hardy, 2008e: 9-10). The second chapter entitled, 'Humanity appears upon the scene, hand in hand with trouble', signposts a dialectic between human ingenuity in surviving the vicissitudes of nature particularly in trying wintry conditions:

Moreover to light a fire is the resistant act of men when, at the winter ingress, the curfew is sounded throughout Nature. It indicates a spontaneous, Promethean rebelliousness against the fiat that this recurrent season shall bring foul times, cold darkness, misery, and death. Black chaos comes, and the fettered gods of the earth say, 'Let there be light' (Hardy, 2008e: 21).

*The Return of the Native* is set in the 1840-50 period, and represents Hardy's first real attempt at grand tragedy, and it fails. As an exposition of character as fate, Clym Yeobright's gentility and cerebral nature never approaches the impressive stature of Henchard, Tess, or Jude, all of whom break free from the conventions of life. Clym as an ex-shopkeeper, schoolteacher and furze cutter, is determined to engage fully with life, improving it as he sees

fit. The thrust of *The Return of the Native* brings into focus the oppositions outlined in Arnold's essay *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), where Arnold distinguishes between Hellenism derived from Greek culture, which desires to see things as they really are, and Hebraism, which promoted good conduct and obedience.

The novel, on one level, shows how society controls and punishes those who defy its conventions. Prior to publishing novels in volume form, writing for serials had left the stories lacking the proper artistic balance of a completed work. Hardy was willing to make artistic sacrifices as a novelist because he was not well set-up financially enough to concentrate on his first love as a poet (Hardy, 1984: 102). Magazine editors required that Hardy furnish cliff-hanging episodes for each instalment, thereby disturbing the natural flow of the story. Millgate quotes from John Paterson's argument that whilst *The Return of the Native* was originally conceived as a pastoral novel, Hardy's revision employed classical allusion, and the technical aspects of the classical drama, in his attempt to achieve 'a formal and structural parallel with Greek tragedy' (Millgate, 1971: 130). On its publication, an anonymous reviewer in the *Athenaeum* magazine compared Eustacia to Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, a type that 'English opinion will not allow a novelist to depict in its completeness' (Wright, 2002: 268).

The novel sees Hardy self-consciously attempting to replicate the fortunes of Oedipus, Odysseus, and Hecate in his protagonists Clym Yeobright and Eustacia Vye. However, as protagonists, they display human rather than divine qualities. Millgate argues that Hardy's intentions were not wholly realised, and suggests that Shakespeare's presence, rather than that of Aeschylus or Sophocles, is stronger throughout the novel. Hardy's 1895 Preface raises the slightest possibility that the novel's setting on Egdon Heath, a composite of a dozen or more heaths, could have been influenced by the Shakespearean setting for *King Lear*, a point mentioned in his preface. The heath alternates between being both background and foreground, and almost becoming a character in itself. After the sinister description of Nature

in the opening chapter, Hardy goes on to state: 'it was a spot which returned upon the memory of those who loved it with an aspect of peculiar and kindly congruity' (Hardy, 2008e: 10). Despite the credibility gap between the synchronicity of Greek mythology, and characters drawn from the Dorsetshire countryside, the novel remains a work of art because its merits exceed its defects. In Jungian terms, Clym realises his individuation, eventually finding a worthwhile role, while Eustacia finds her consummation within the waters and dark soil of Egdon Heath.

There are autobiographical elements in the Hardy-Yeobright symbiosis as Hardy's early poetry signposted the way to a career in literature. Hardy as an Englishman separated by a short sea crossing was both fascinated and fearful of the legend of Napoleon Bonaparte as his long epic poem *The Dynasts* illustrates. *The Return of the Native* was his most ambitious work to date, and aspects of Clym's character description as a young precocious boy parallel Hardy's own precocity:

The fact was that Yeobright's fame had spread to an awkward extent before he left home ... At six he had asked a Scripture riddle; Who was the first man to wear breeches? and applause had resounded from the very verge of the heath. At seven he painted the Battle of Waterloo with tiger-lily pollen and black-currant juice, in the absence of watercolours. By the time he reached twelve he had in this manner been heard of as artist and scholar for at least two miles round (Hardy, 2008e: 166).

From the beginning, Hardy places greater emphasis than before on the power of the environment over the fates of humanity. Eustacia's soul is synonymous with the heath adapting to the twists of fate whilst Clym is an idealist dealing in absolutes, a social reformer in the mould of the Spanish military man El Cid. Throughout the novel, both protagonists are inspired and deflated by the immensity of the heath, which will ultimately receive them back as corpses. The novel primarily concerns the human will believing in its own omnipotence, while at the same time being constantly frustrated by external oppositions. Hardy's study of Darwin gave him fresh perspectives on what was going on under his very eyes, and he probably felt inclined to reveal this knowledge to the uninitiated in his readership. It was

shocking for its time, as it depicted the sexual interactions of people not married to each other, which was a literary manifestation of the contemporary culture versus nature debate on ethics and sexual morality. Humanity was, in religious terms, positioned between the angel and the beast, and Hardy's fiction constantly reminds the reader of their opposite objectives. The novel's setting of Egdon Heath is not inimical to humanity, but rather is quite indifferent to it, and Hardy subtly identifies the differences between Nature, and the Immanent Will, which in Schopenhauerian philosophy, governs man and nature alike. Schopenhauer stated that a constantly dissatisfied force or will in search of satisfaction was the driving force of both humanity and nature alike (Magee, 1998: 141). Hardy's deep involvement in this argument can be seen in his 1906 epic poem *The Dynasts* (1904-1908), indicting the carelessness of the Immanent Will: 'the Will has woven with an absent heed, since life first was; and will so weave' (Hardy, 2010: 17).

Hillis-Miller (1970) suggests that:

In Hardy's world there is no supernatural hierarchy of ideals or commandments, nor is there any law inherent in the physical world which says it right to do one thing, wrong to do another, or which establishes any relative worth among things or people. Events happen as they do happen. They have neither value in themselves nor value in relation to any end beyond them. Worse yet, suffering is certain for man. In place of God there is the Immanent Will, and this unthinking force is sure to inflict pain on a man until he is lucky enough to die. Birth itself is "an ordeal of degrading personal compulsion, whose gratuitousness nothing in the result seemed to justify" (Miller, 1970: 13).

Miller's use of the reference to the painful and degrading nature of birth taken from *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is apt, as those very lines follow the Hardy's use of Wordsworth's lines from *Intimations of Immortality*: 'not in utter darkness, But trailing clouds of glory do we come' (Hardy, 2008a: 378).

Hardy saw the Immanent Will, not as an external power, but rather as a force within nature. In the light of the scientific knowledge of the time, Hardy saw it as an example of the inherent energy of the physical world, without any consciousness of its deleterious effects on

all life forms. In a series of letters to Edward Clodd about *The Dynasts*, Hardy in 1904, states: 'The idea of the Unconscious Will becoming conscious with flux of time, is also new, I think, whatever it may be worth. At any rate I have never met it anywhere' (Miller, 1970: 15). A further correspondence on the subject in June 1907 posits: 'that the Unconscious Will of the Universe is growing aware of itself I believe I may claim as my idea solely-at which I arrived by reflecting that what has already taken place in a fraction of Itself is likely to take place in the mass' (Miller, 2008: 15). Hardy hoped that the whole Will when conscious would be sympathetic to all needs, which was the objective of his own personal objective of evolutionary meliorism. The poem *The Sleep Worker* anticipates the shock of coming to awareness for the sleep-walking entity he termed the Immanent Will:

Wilt thou destroy, in one wild shock of shame,  
The whole high heaving firmamental frame,  
Or patiently adjust, amend, and heal? (Hardy, 1995: 111).

Hillis-Miller captures the spirit of Hardy's resistance to the omnipresent and unconsciousable Immanent Will:

Hardy takes great pleasure in a number of his poems, for example, in 'The Blow' or in *\*Fragment\** in describing the anguish of the immanent will if it should become conscious and understand what exquisite tortures of suffering it has unwittingly imposed on man and on animals over the centuries (Hillis-Miller, 1970: 15).

Schopenhauer influenced many of the nineteenth century writers; Brennecke's *Thomas Hardy's Universe: A Study of a Poet's Mind* (1924) written in Hardy's lifetime states: 'It seems to be universally recognised at the present time by everybody interested in the subject that there is the closest intellectual affinity between Schopenhauer and Hardy' (Jacquette, 2007: 237). Millgate and Hillis Miller respected the same link. Helen Garwood, an American Ph.D. student, sent Hardy her dissertation *Thomas Hardy: An Illustration of the Philosophy of Schopenhauer* (1911), which argued: 'how much of a philosopher Hardy the writer is, how nearly his philosophy resembles that of Schopenhauer, how it has affected his work, and to

what conclusions it has brought him' (Garwood, 1911: 6). Hardy, who did not appreciate comparisons of his work, replied: 'my pages show harmony of view with Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Hume, Mill, and others, all of whom I read more than Schopenhauer' (Jacquette, 2007: 239). Garwood's thesis continued: 'when philosophy grows as interesting as a novel how can the novel, which is true to life, help reflecting the philosophy?...Literature must reflect the interests of its time or lose its vitality' (Garwood, 1911: 6).

Hardy implicitly criticises Schopenhauer's negative philosophy, drawing comparison to its concordance with Angel's determinism in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*:

His creed of determinism was such that it almost amounted to a vice, and quite amounted on its negative side, to a renunciative philosophy which had cousinship with that of Schopenhauer and Leopardi (Hardy, 2008a: 175).

The *Return of The Native* anthropomorphically described nature as having intentions inimical to humanity, with feelings of brooding anxiety and malevolence sculpted upon its face. Hardy described it as 'The untameable, Ishmaelitic thing that Egdon now was it had always been. Civilisation was its enemy' (Hardy, 2008e: 11). The issue of nature as having some form of animating force, be that benign or malign, was a popular topic of debate at this time. The Duke of Argyll recorded Darwin's perception of the future in the great scientist's final year:

...in which Argyll remarked that when he contemplated the remarkable contrivances recorded in Darwin's books on earthworms and orchids, he found it impossible to do so 'without seeing that they were the effect and expression of mind. I shall never forget Mr Darwin's answer. He looked at me very hard and said, 'Well, that often comes over me with overwhelming force; but at other times', and he shook his head vaguely, adding, 'it seems to go away' (Davis, 2004: 78).

The conflict between humanity and nature, with implications of creative intelligence, was grasped by Hardy whose perception of the natural world was biased towards humanity. He revealed a battle for ascendancy between humans and the Immanent Will, which had wrung all the emotion from Darwin. Darwin seems to be a classic example of how the external world

affects an individual's interiority, which Hardy would have felt made not the slightest difference to Nature. Hardy wrote:

Nature's indifference to the advance of her species along what we are accustomed to call civilized lines makes the late war of no importance to her except as a geological fault in her continuity (Hardy, 1984: 435).

Darwin felt that research had atrophied the emotional part of his brain; it had 'become a kind of machine for grinding out general laws out of a large collection of facts' (Davis, 2004: 78). Davis, in his book *The Victorians*, illustrated what had happened to Darwin's emotional existence: 'So much for Darwin seemed to go away. In his brief Autobiography (1887) he noted how over the years he had somehow, and to his regret, simply given up reading poetry, stopped listening to music or looking at landscapes, losing all feeling for and pleasure in aesthetic tastes' (Davis, 2004: 78). Hardy refers to the world's (God's) will clashing with human destiny on the sinking of the Titanic in his poem *The Convergence of the Twain* (1915):

Well: while was fashioning  
this creature of cleaving wing,  
The Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything

Prepared a sinister mate  
For her—so gaily great—  
A Shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate (Hardy, 1995: 288-9).

The internal and external battles in *The Return of the Native* are allegories of Darwinian natural and social evolutionary forces, stemming from a Will of Force that is, in Hardy's terms, both despotic and unconscionable. The 'Native' is Clym Yeobright, whose education and experience in Paris has imbued him with the vocation to educate the residents of his home place on the heath. The locals view his scheme with a scepticism that was well founded:

'He'll never carry it out in the world', said Fairway. 'In a few weeks he'll learn to see things otherwise.' 'Tis good-hearted of the young man', said another. 'But, for my part, I think he had better mind his business' (Hardy, 2008e: 169).

Clym wishes to inculcate new paradigms to cope with the stagnation associated with adherence to recycling traditional values and superstitious ways, where nothing changes:

He was a John the Baptist who took ennoblement rather than repentance for his text. Mentally he was in a provincial future, that is, he was in many points abreast with the central town thinkers of his date ... In consequence of this relatively advanced position, Yeobright might have been called unfortunate. The rural world was not ripe for him (Hardy, 2008e: 170).

The almost innumerable references to the soul in Hardy's fiction are a reminder of his belief and familiarity with Christian religious dogma; Hardy may have left the church but it never totally left him. His allusion to Eustacia's soul, 'assuming that the souls of men and women were visible essences, you could fancy the colour of Eustacia's soul to be flame like', was consistent with her meteor-like quality burning brightly for a short duration before extinction. The novel initially contrasts Clym's ascending spirituality with the earth-bound pagan soul of Eustacia: 'she had Pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries' (Hardy, 2008e: 66). Eustacia is in love with love not with Clym: 'Love was to her the one cordial which could drive away the eating loneliness of her days. And she seemed to long for the abstraction called passionate love more than for any particular lover' (Hardy, 2008e: 69). Then in line with the demands of their respective souls, the traveller in Clym desires re-connection with his nativeplace and Eustacia's greatest desire is to travel. When it becomes apparent that their objectives are opposed to each other their marriage bonds begin to unravel. Clym has in the past been at one with Egdon Heath, though he had to lose it in his exile in order to understand the fateful attraction it held: 'Clym had been so interwoven with the heath in his boyhood that hardly anybody could look upon it without thinking of him' (Hardy, 2008e: 166).

The novel has a great soul versus spirit quality, because Hardy juxtaposes the Immanent Will on Egdon Heath with that of the oppressed souls of the locals, offering the possibility that Clym's new vision can arouse them from their stupor. In an allegory of inner and outer life ambitions, Clym attempts to raise their eyes from their constant focus on

survival in everyday life by allowing them see his nobler vision. Unconsciously Clym marries Eustacia because of her rootedness on the heath, whereas she marries Clym for the opposing desire to travel to exotic places. It was their mistake to marry in the hope that one could change the spiritual destiny of another. Their passion for one another declines in the light of different desires, and also has a strong resonance with such conflicts in Hardy's own life.

Eustacia is strange but very attractive in a Gothic manner, her humanity dictates that she is mercenary by nature and ironically, her death is due in part to a shortage of funds. Hardy shows Eustacia's reproachful look: 'but it was directed less against human beings than against certain creatures of her mind, the chief of these being destiny.... She thought of it with an ever-growing consciousness and cruelty, which tended to breed actions of reckless unconventionality, framed to snatch a year's, a week's, even an hour's passion from anywhere it could be won' (Hardy, 2008e: 69). The sparsely populated heath, a rural backwater because of the paucity of progressive ideas, needed a Clym figure to transform its overall stupor into a form of thriving modernity. His wake-up call to Eustacia went unheeded because she imaginatively inhabited the metaphorical castles of Spain. In contrast to the practical nature of Clym, she had lived in her head far too long making her mean and desperate: 'on Egdon, coldest and meanest kisses were at famine prices; and where was a mouth matching hers to be found' (Hardy, 2008e: 69). As she never possessed Clym's generosity of spirit, she could not give away that which she did not possess spiritually. Clym embodies an Arnoldian brand of rational Christianity in the form of Victorian humanism, which sustains him to the end. The different demands of Clym and Eustacia are illustrated in their widely different ambitions and behaviours. Overall, Clym is a contributor to the lives of the natives whilst Eustacia manipulates others like Clym and Wildeveto reach her uncertain goals.

Eustacia, in the first part of the novel, and Clym in the second, are alluded to as being soulfully Greek and anti-Greek. She is described as of Greek descent, pagan, and she rises to an apotheosis in the paganism of the dance at East Egdon where she has gone for relief in her battle against depression (Hardy, 2008e: 248). Hillman avers 'Depression and the awakening of one's genius are inseparable, say the texts' (Hillman, 1991: 212). Earlier in the story, she is described thus: 'a diadem of accidental dewdrops round her brow, would have been adjuncts sufficient to strike the note of Artemis, Athena or Hera respectively' (Hardy, 2008e: 67). In other words, Eustacia is three Greek goddesses in one. In Book Fourth, Clym Yeobright searches for the truth of his relationship with his mother borders on the neurotic as he persistently interrogates Johnnie Nunsuch as to her last words. Clym's mother's last words to the boy were to tell his mother: 'tell her you have seen a broke hearted mother cast off by her son' (Hardy, 2008e: 277); a patently untrue remark. The son and mother are too close, which precludes any objective analysis of their relationship, Clym tells Eustacia: 'I cannot help feeling still that I did my best to kill her' (Hardy, 2008e: 298).

Clym also is a mirror of Homer's Odysseus on the sea of life, becoming father to himself, and eventually offering guidance to the locals. Clym progressively becomes associated with Christianity, for example he is described as a man whose years still number 'less than thirty three' (Hardy, 2008e: 389), and as someone who intends to give moral lectures or sermons on the mount every Sunday afternoon, varying his speech to suit different audiences (Hardy, 2008e: 389). Clym is Hardy-like in that he will not pass on any creeds or systems but his own convictions. In opposition to Clym's progressive and conscience provoking preaching, the locals are generally sceptical:

Some believed him, and some believed not; some said that his words were commonplace, others complained of his want of theological doctrine; while others again remarked that it was well enough for a man to take to preaching who could not see to do anything else (Hardy, 2008e: 390).

The novel represents an examination of how the individual adjusts to societal changes, and how he copes with society's failure to provide fresh paradigms to cater for changed circumstances. Hardy's treatment of his characters reveals that both they themselves, and the communities in which they live, are open to and influenced by invisible internal and external forces. This novel is a psychological study of people like Clym, whose imaginative ideas are ahead of their time, but whose notions have not yet been practically applied in the external world. Clym is a portrait drawn through a close psychological examination of modern man, saddened by thought, and he resembles Hardy himself, who also returned home with modern ideas that were at odds with local conservative mind-sets.

The chapter, 'My Mind to Me a Kingdom Is', refers to Clym's psychological rather than material contentment. A telling instance in that chapter is the fact that in the external appearance of his face could be dimly seen the typical countenance of the future: 'the view of life as a thing to be put up with, replacing that zest for existence which was so intense in early civilizations' (Hardy, 2008e: 165):

He had been a lad of whom something was expected. Beyond this all had been chaos. That he would be successful in an original way, or that he would go to the dogs in an original way, seemed equally probable. The only absolute certainty about him was that he would not stand still in the circumstances amid which he was born (Hardy, 2008e: 166).

Victorian expansionism in farming methods combined with the new cult of individualism meant that people were not remaining stuck in their place of origin nor in their inherited ideas.

That he would be successful in an original way is Clym's destiny. In this statement, Hardy breaks new ground as Clym in losing himself among the denizens of the heath paradoxically finds himself and his role in the *denouement*. Eustacia who progressively travels inward by curtailing her involvement with others on the heath, consequently loses herself declaring: 'I have not much love for my fellow creatures' (Hardy, 2008e: 183) Her

melancholy later hardens into depressive withdrawal, the Schopenhauerian imperative of the 'will not to live' that is also seen later in *Jude, Sue, and 'Little Father Time'* in *Jude the Obscure*. Hardy's narrators possess a saturnine outlook bordering on that of the *senex*, or the Wise Old Man, in terms of their perspectives on life. The younger characters Henchard, Angel, Tess, Jude and Sue possess the opposite polarity of the *senex*, in Jungian terms the *puer*, which is *\*a* disposition that is full of youthful ambition and idealism. Clym's initial hubris is tempered by his losses into a serenity formed from the realisation that life will inevitably have its ways and he can only do his best, accepting all outcomes. Clym differs from Henchard and Jude because he has at last fulfilled his destiny and found his true vocation.

Hardy's allusion to Eustacia Vye as 'the raw material of divinity' (Hardy, 2008e: 66), is grandiose, and very much at odds with how her neighbours on the heath see her. She is of the raw earth, a perfect counterpoint to the *puer* like idealism of Clym. She is an embodiment of Egdon Heath in all its moods, dangerous and benign. Her statement 'the heath is a cruel taskmaster to me' (Hardy, 2008e: 183), suggests that she has never found earning a living there easy or natural. Conversely, Clym declares his affinity with the place 'to my mind it is the most exhilarating, and strengthening, and soothing. I would rather live on these hills than anywhere else in the world' (Hardy, 2008e: 183). When Clym invites Eustacia to join him in a joint effort in high-class teaching of the natives, she replies: 'I don't feel anxious to', and referring to Nature she says: 'I hate her already' (Hardy, 2008e: 183). Conversely, Clym is the '*puer*' hero, with ascendant ideas, who unconsciously wants to join the divinities on Mount Olympus in order to influence the lives of lesser mortals, and there are echoes of Hardy's own aims here, as much of what he writes is an attempt to open contemporary debates to readers through narrative. Eustacia's problem is that she does not possess the spiritual strength to ascend from her inheritance, whereas Clym's *puer* like divinity needs to descend and embrace the heath and its residents. Both characters anticipate the Jungian anima-animus

psychological archetypes, but of the two, only Clym manages to somewhat integrate the female and male sides of his nature. Hardy's sense of the supernatural and gothic surfaces when some of Eustacia's neighbours believe she is a witch: 'she had the passions and instincts which make a model goddess, that is, those which make not quite a model woman' (Hardy, 2008e: 66). In the *denouement*, Eustacia drowns, thereby disproving the spurious accusation that she is a witch. Clym's task was to oppose local superstitious notions arrived at through magical thinking and lazy minds.

Eustacia is a complex character who is at odds with her rural life, and who wishes Clym would take her to the Paris from which he has just returned. This can be seen as Freudian denial, in an attempt to avoid undertaking a journey into her psychic depths to discover who she really was. The separate compartments of her inner and outer lives mirror Hardy's own preoccupation between rationalism and mysticism; Eustacia's journey into her sub-conscious via a dream:

She dreamt a dream; and few human beings, from Nebuchadnezzar to the Swaffham tinker, ever dreamed a more remarkable one. Such an elaborately developed, perplexing, exciting dream was certainly never dreamed by a girl in Eustacia's situation before. It had as many ramifications as the Cretan labyrinth, as many fluctuations as the Northern Lights, as much colour as a parterre in June, was as crowded with figures as a coronation ... To a girl just returned from all the Courts of Europe it might have seemed not more than interesting. But amid the circumstances of Eustacia's life it was as wonderful as a dream could be (Hardy, 2008e: 116).

Hardy's reference to her as Artemis is consistent with her solitary state and also with her deep connection to the land. She is a character conflicted between the stern, limited actualities of her life, and her romantic imaginings. Lacking the *puer* inspiration to move out of the familiar and embrace the unknown, she travels inwardly in her dreams:

She was dancing to wondrous music, and her partner was the man in silver armour, who had accompanied through the previous fantastic changes, the visor of his helmet being closed. The mazes of dance were ecstatic. Soft whispering came into her ear from under the radiant helmet, and she felt like a woman in Paradise (Hardy, 2008e: 116).

Shelongsfor the dark, dangerous, and ecstatic bright lights of Paris, and until she can experience and reject them as superficial vulgarities, she will neverknow or connect internally with the sublime placeon her doorstep or with herself.Clym's mother labels her a hussy and stated: 'you are blinded Clym ...it was a bad for you when you first set eyes on her' (Hardy, 2008e: 189).Eustacia'sdestiny is to confront thechallenge of the universal theme of narcissism from ancient times, to step out of the rigidity imposed by time, place and circumstance, and become her own heroine.Deficient in spiritual ambition, she is unable to break free from the death-birth recycling process, and finally dispirited, she ends her life, sinking beneath the waters of Egdon Heath.Her environment and conditioning were a tragic blight, and Hardy alludes to her shadow life, to what she could become.As someone who, in his own life, transcended the givens of his birth, education and social class, he was very well aware of how difficult it was to rise beyond these givens, and how easily one could be swallowed up by them, and inside the successful author that Hardy became, was always a shadow – the Hardy, who was aware of how close he came to failure as a writer.In this sense, aspects of his own life and art are reflected and refracted through aspects of these two characters.

As an allegory of Greek drama, *The Return of the Native* does not reach the level of perfection thatdistinguishes Joyce's *Ulysses*and its parallels with Homer's *Odyssey*.What it does achieve, however, in its psycho-spiritual exploration of character and place, is a revelation of the deep psychic aspects created by Eustacia's soulfuland Clym's spiritual journeys through life.Eustacia, whose very physical colour resembles the Earth in its sombre moods, longs for her doppelganger's fantasy; she would revel in the gaiety of dress, sceneryand warmth of the city of Paris in the Spring, where she would have blossomed instead of withering without much purpose on her native heath.What Eustacia needed most from Clym was that which he might have been if his attention to business in Paris had not

forced an inner discipline, which killed his natural spontaneity and exuberance. In the cases of both characters, the opposition was between what they were, and what they could have been, an opposition that is at the core of Hardy's own internal debates. Eustacia's grandiosity is made clear at an early stage: 'her Gods were William the Conqueror, Strafford, and Napoleon Bonaparte' (Hardy, 2008e: 69), but she realises that while her husband Clym is a good man, he falls short of her heroes' stature in epic deeds. Her unrealistic state of mind is captured in her statement to a former lover Damon Wildev: 'but do I desire unreasonably much in wanting what is called life-music, poetry, passion, war, and all the beating and pulsing that is going on in the arteries of the world. That was the shape of my youthful dream; but I did not get it. Yet I thought I saw the way to it in my Clym' (Hardy, 2008e: 272):

The novel also deals with the insignificance of human aspirations to the Immanent Will, which remained indifferent to all the dramas involving its flora and fauna on the surface of the heath. Lawrence's 1914 critique refers to the raw instinct for life of the heath as the real tragedy; 'the sombre, latent power that will go on producing, no matter what happens to the product' (Lawrence, 1914, cited in Draper, 1991: 68). What his statement infers is the need for human ethics to oppose nature's indifference. Eustacia's character is at one with Lawrence's description of the heath as 'the primitive and primal from which instinctive life heaves up' (Lawrence cited in Draper, 1991: 69). She is a flawed character, but she is not evil, and in a Darwinian way, is willing to do whatever it takes to realise her desires. Clym's psycho-spiritual based ethics confirm him as an opponent of the 'raw instinct for life' and though beaten down and rejected he rose and continued to instruct the natives. *The Return of the Native* illustrates Egdon Heath's dominance over the affairs of humanity, and Hardy developed this theme of impossibly unequal powers even more dramatically in *Two on Tower*, a romance set against the immensities of inter-stellar space.

As already seen in part, *Two on a Tower* is an example of how Hardy extended literary boundaries to include brand new settings. The oppositions of the infinite Cosmos with the petty affairs of men and women established a real if depressing scenario for his Victorian readers whose concentration was generally fixed on personal and national expansionism. Millgate quotes Hardy relating to Edmund Gosse 'that though the plan was carefully thought out, the actual writing was lamentably hurried' (Millgate, 1971: 183). The *Athenaeum's* reviewer wrote 'Mr Hardy may fairly claim for his last novel the credit of having added to the novelist's stock of "properties" and "business". We have known military novels, musical novels, but an astronomical novel never' (Millgate, 1971: 184). In order to gauge how *Two on a Tower* opposed the prevailing *Zeitgeist*, it is important to note that England in 1882 was arguably the most powerful empire on the planet, and Victorian expansionism, which Hardy disliked, was carrying all before it at home and in the colonies. With religious belief faltering, the national vision saw a future where human ingenuity could tame nature, and where young men were trained to propagate the *Pax Britannica* throughout the globe. *Two on a Tower* embodies the vanities of man and his plans in the context of universal decline as Swithin points out the death of a star: 'You see that dying one in the body of the Greater Bear. Two centuries ago, it was as bright as the others. The senses may become terrified by plunging among them as they are, but there is a pitifulness even in their glory. Imagine them all extinguished, ... invisible cinders of those stars.... If you are cheerful, and wished to remain so, leave the study of astronomy alone' (Hardy, 1975: 57). Such description makes Hardy's use of the term 'speck' to illustrate man's place in the cosmos an apt one.

The function of Egdon Heath's predominance over humanity in *The Return of the Native* is now assumed to greater proportions by the infinities of space. The suggestion in earlier novels, that a malign fatalism was present in human affairs, is replaced by a strict

determinism as gravitational influences could be seen to affect both the tides and human emotions. Within the immutable laws of the cosmos, events like sun-spots and solar cyclones affected human lives. The dialectic between the domestic and the celestial scene is referred to by Lady Constantine:

‘Yes. What a small matter it seems now, after our astronomical stupendousness! and yet on my way to you it so far transcended the ordinary matters of my life as the subject you have led me up to transcends this. But’, with a little laugh, ‘I will endeavour to sink down to such ephemeral trivialities as human tragedy, and explain, since I have come’ (Hardy, 1975: 58).

In this novel Hardy's prose continuously instructs the reader on how human lives are lived out within the cosmological scheme as Lady Constantine stated is too frightening to contemplate for too long. Hardy's comprehension of the larger picture underscored his fatalism; that in the greater dimension humans were mere specks. Hardy's depiction of a humanity immersed in its own pettiness whilst adrift in space at the mercy of cataclysmic events beyond human control was for many a dose of unpleasant reality, which chipped away at the notions of comfort promoted by religion and government assurances. The contemporary idea that living in England in the Victorian era was to inhabit the best possible world was anathema to many of the major protagonists in Hardy's fiction who wished like Jude and Henchard they had never been born. Ordinary readers' perceptions that a form of entropy manifesting itself in disorder and randomness ruled the cosmos, was a shock, a neo-Copernican type revelation, and proved to be ego-deflationary to the Victorian vision of itself. The frightening scenes shown to Viviette by Swinburn of exploding stars governed by physics, reinforced their notion that it was not providence, but chance, that dictated terrestrial affairs. The novel, whilst not perceived generally as being of among the best of his novels, is nevertheless of great importance because it mirrors realistically man's true dimensions within the universe. Where Egdon Heath illustrated the inferiority of human as specks on the landscape in the micro context of planet Earth, the infinity of the stellar universe was the

macro setting that filled the romantic leads Swithin St.Cleeve and Lady Viviette with wonder and trepidation respectively. The novel may well have had its genesis in Hardy's knowledge of the scientific research of Einstein and Sir William Herschel's in physics and astronomy of the time.

In the story, the two lovers' attentions are on different things: the micro scale in the case of Lady Viviette's concentration on love and domesticity, and the macro scale in the case of Swithin's intellectual exercise, which links the macro events of inter-stellar space with his own perceptions of reality. His subject is the heavens; hers is in coping with being almost a deserted wife running the family estate. Hardy wrote to acknowledge a generous article in the *Daily Chronicle* on *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*: 'Ever since I wrote *Two On a Tower* in 1881 -I have felt that the doll of English fiction must be demolished, if England is to have a school of fiction at all' (Hardy, cited in Millgate, 1975: 193), and in showing that Lady Viviette was a woman before being an aristocrat, he brought ideas about the superior morality of the higher echelons of society crashing down to earth. His 1895 Preface describes the holistic nature of female affection underpinning Lady Viviette's passion: 'in a manner not unprofitable to the growth of social sympathies, of the pathos, misery, long-suffering, and divine tenderness which in real life frequently accompany the passion of such a woman as Viviette for a lover several years her junior' (Hardy, 1975; 1895 Preface).

It is clear that this statement of innocence is disingenuous, and that Hardy, in defending Lady Viviette's conduct after the event, is to an extent also defending her moral and legal transgressions. The same Preface shows Hardy's disinclination to ignore literary criticism, alleging that it was a covert attack 'on the established Church of this country' (Hardy, 1975; 1895 Preface). He further states that 'I was made to suffer in consequence from several eminent pens' (Hardy, 1975; 1895 Preface). Much of the novel is contained within a small claustrophobic conservatory, where the close proximity of the protagonists, and their

fevered interaction, contrasts with the slower tempos of the planets and stars. The protagonists are similar to humanity as whole; trapped within a box of space and time. The topicality of the novel arose from two transits of Venus in the eight years before its publication. What also claimed public attention were the appearance of Tebbut's Comet, and the publication of an American treatise on variable stars. When lying critically ill, the astronomer-hero Swithin reflects on missing the Great Comet event of 1811: 'O, if I could but live to see that comet through my equatorial' (Hardy, 1975: 93). Swithin then muses, 'compared with comets, variable stars, which he had hitherto made his study, were from remoteness, uninteresting' (Hardy; 1975: 93).

Given the contemporary interest in space, Hardy's marketing eye could detect an opportunity, and by 1882, he had included recent discoveries in astronomy and physics in *Two on a Tower*, where concepts of infinite time and space act as a visual dialectic to the Earth's time-bound parochial scene. Hardy's frequent use of the word 'speck', as a signifier of human insignificance on the apocryphal Egdon Heath, is seminal as he demonstrated in the agrarian novel *The Mayor of Casterbridge*: 'within or upon whose enclosures a human being, as seen from the road, was but an insignificant speck' (Hardy, 2008b: 288). Hardy's pessimistic outlook for humanity's fate ultimately sees Swithin an amateur astronomer outline inevitable human extinction through entropy:

And to add a new weirdness to what the sky possesses in its size and formlessness, there is involved the quality of decay. For all the wonder of these everlasting stars, eternal spheres, and what not, they are not everlasting. They are not eternal; they burn out like candles (Hardy, 1975: 57).

Pinion writes in the introduction to this novel, that Hardy's knowledge of astronomy began when he was fifteen or sixteen, helped by his reading of *The Popular Educator*. Pinion's *A Hardy Companion* states that Hardy viewed the stars through a telescope with Handley Moule of nearby Fordington (Pinion, cited in Wright, 2002: 324). The era's scientific discoveries that

had overthrown his belief in Providence meant that Hardy explored the celestial heavens in search of answers to the mystery of existence.

He did not confine his statements on the wonder and awe which the universe to just his fiction. His poems 'At a Lunar Eclipse', written in the eighteen sixties, and 'In Vision I Roamed' (1866), also illustrate his philosophical interest in space and time. The narrator's observation of young Swithin's demeanour possibly reflects Hardy's awareness of the ancient Druid's worship of the sun:

The expression that settled on him was one of awe. Not unaptly might it have been said that he was worshipping the sun. Among the various intensities of that worship which have prevailed since the first intelligent being saw the luminary decline westward ... He was engaged in what may be called a very chastened or schooled form of that first and most natural of adorations (Hardy, 1975: 36).

The romantic interest set against the immensities of space suggests that which is all-encompassing at times to the lovers, is unremarkable in the more general passing of time and space, themes which Hardy addressed in the poetic drama '*The Dynasts*' (1904), where, tragically, hundreds of thousands of men die in the Russian snows for nothing. Their first encounter in a claustrophobic tower pushes them closely together, in opposition to the stars, which are moving away from each other. Viewing the immensities of space from a cramped space is a metaphor for the Earth and the Cosmos. When Swithin observes the firmament, he reports the catastrophe of a cyclone on the surface of the sun to Lady Viviette: 'the lady paused, as if to consider the weight of that event in the scale of terrene life. "Will it make any difference to us here?" she asked' (Hardy, 1975: 35). What does make a difference is that the older woman's passion is like a dormant volcano, and is being stimulated by their encounter, as Swithin observes the cosmos, and Lady Viviette who has 'Romance blood in her veins' (Hardy, 1975: 35) observes him approvingly. Her initial perception of Swithin reveals him to be disinterested in heterosexual romance: 'She seemed to be greatly struck by the odd

mixture in him of scientific earnestness and melancholy distrust of all things human' (Hardy, 1975: 37).

Hardy's deep early affection for his schoolteacher, the aristocratic Julia Martin, may well have influenced his account of the romantic entanglements of Lady Viviette with the much younger Swithin. He is seen in terms of physical attractiveness, having 'such a complexion as that which Raffaele enriches the countenance of the youthful son of Zacharias – a complexion which, though clear, is far removed from virgin delicacy, and suggests plenty of sun and wind as its accompaniment' (Hardy, 1975: 35). Hardy contrasts the young man's external brightness with Viviette's darker tones: 'her hair was black as midnight, her eyes had no less deep a shade.... As she continued to look at the pretty fellow before her, apparently so far abstracted into some speculative world as scarcely to know a real one' (Hardy, 1975: 35). Hardy's description of Swithin and Viviette is a double allegory of the Jungian psychological archetypes of *puer* (Swithin) which desires ascent to the ultimate reaches of the universe. This contrasts with the downward trajectory of the soul of his psychic opposite Lady Viviette, who seeks to ground herself in the earthiness of romantic encounter with one from the lesser orders. It is tempting to assume that as Hardy lived much of his life around his fiction it left him 'scarcely to know a real one' (Hardy, 1975: 35). The *puer-senex* psychic oppositions are crucial to understanding Hardy, as their fundamental divisions are represented in how his idealism is always tempered by a rational overview. The fatalistic conclusions reveal that whilst still only a relatively young man when he wrote *Two on a Tower* his *senex* conclusions were part of him from the outset.

The maternal Lady Viviette is overwhelmed by the immensities of space: "O, pray don't; it overpowers me!" she replied, not without seriousness. "It makes me feel that it is not worthwhile to live; it quite annihilates me" (Hardy, 1975: 55). St. Cleeve, similarly, is held in awe by Victorian class-consciousness, and by her maturity and title. Where he is initially torn

between his love of science and the awakening of his sexuality by Lady Viviette, she in turn has to confront and avoid the crossing of age and class boundaries: 'as for St. Cleeve the tardiness of his awakening was the natural result of inexperience combined with a devotion to a hobby .... But, like a spring bud hard in bursting, the delay was compensated by after speed' (Hardy, 1975: 112). Swithin changes because 'Lady Constantine, in being nearly ten years his senior, was an object even better calculated to nourish a youth's first passion than a girl of his own age' (Hardy, 1975: 112). She has stimulated the romantic side of his nature with all its sexuality which hitherto remained unexplored and which was in a sensate way as interesting as the cosmos, it was: 'the alchemy which thus transmuted an abstracted astronomer into an eager lover' (Hardy, 1975: 112). However, their rarefied passion was soon tempered by social realities; Viviette is held hostage by ambiguity as to her husband's mortality and material uncertainty forces them to marry in secret and lead double lives.

For a short time, the chemistry of their mutual passion overcame all other considerations, but they still have to locate their relationship in the public context, surrounded by a small, class-riven rural community. Viviette's greater experience and maturity anticipates their future difficulties:

I am injuring you; who knows that I am not ruining your future, - and I am only wasting your time. Why have I drawn you off from a grand celestial study to study poor lonely me? Say you will never despise me, when you get older, for this episode in our lives (Hardy, 1975: 115).

A serious challenge to their having a happy life together was the social pressures from Viviette's brother, who wants her to marry a 'genial squire, with more weight than wit' (Hardy, 1975: 130), and who promotes the suitability of Bishop Helmsdale for his now widowed sister's hand, thereby perpetuating social class divisions. Another opposition on age grounds came from Swithin's uncle, who has granted him an annuity of £600 per year to travel the world and continue his ambition to become an astronomer. The condition of the bequest is that Swithin does not marry until he is twenty-five, which is awkward, since he is

already secretly married to Viviette. The uncle outlines his objections in a letter: 'she is much older than yourself....She is old enough to know that a liaison with her may, and almost certainly would, be your ruin; and, on the other hand, that a marriage would be preposterous, unless she is a complete goose and in that case there is even more reason for avoiding her than if she were in her few senses' (Hardy, 1975: 139). The interests and depths of power and prestige collide with the more innocent demands of love. Swithin's uncle warns him not to make a fool of himself as his father did warning him, 'women's brains are not formed for assisting any profound science: they lack the power to see things except in the concrete' (Hardy, 1975: 139). One can only imagine the power of those sentiments to aggrieve any independently minded female such as Virginia Woolf reading this excerpt.

Further complications involve the unsought attentions of the Bishop of Melchester towards Viviette. She still loves Swithin, but is willing to sacrifice all for his long-term happiness. Viviette's consciousness of the nine year age gap sees her seek an interlude, which Swithin realises is the prelude to their full separation, and he unsuccessfully resists it. The emotional dynamic carried them only so far, and the social realities of their day opposed and overcame their passionate intensity. In the complex *denouement*, Swithin emigrates and the Bishop marries Lady Viviette who is pregnant with Swithin's child, something that the Bishop suspected. Subsequently, the Bishop dies, and Swithin returns to hold his now three-year-old son. When Swithin and Viviette meet again, she still loves him, but he has fallen out of love. Stimulated by the memory of their past times, Swithin magnanimously says he loves her and wants to marry her, but the shock of this causes Viviette to expire: 'Sudden joy after despair had touched an over-strained heart too smartly. Viviette was dead. The Bishop was avenged' (Hardy, 1975: 275). In a real life parallel of this belated meeting, Hardy met with his beloved Julia Martin years after his mother intervened to end the

unequal relationship. Like Swithin, it was a different incarnation of Hardy who called at the home of his former love, and he too, found that their grand moment of love had passed.

As a boy, as has been noted, Hardy had been clearly smitten with the Julia Martin, composing songs and painting animals in water colours for her (Hardy, 1984: 24). *The Life* describes the indelible mark that she left on Hardy's psyche: 'in spite of his lover-like promise of fidelity to her ladyship the two never met again till he was a young man of twenty-two, and she quite an elderly woman; though it was not his fault, her husband selling the estate shortly after and occupying a house in London' (Hardy, 1984: 25). Their meeting in London, where the butler who opened the door was the same one who had been with the family at Kingston-Maurward, was difficult for Tom and Julia, who were both obviously changed people, but nevertheless she invited him to visit her again.

After the great success of *Far From the Madding Crowd*, she wrote to Tom addressing him as 'dear Tommy'. *The Life* records 'but it should be stated in justice to her that her writing was not merely a rekindled interest on account of his book's popularity, for she had written to him in his obscurity, before he had published a line, asking him to come and see her, and addressing him as dear Tommy, as when he was a small boy, apologising for doing so on the ground that she could not help it' (Hardy, 1984: 104). *The Life* demonstrates in almost passionate terms the effect Lady Julia had on the adult Hardy: 'she was now quite an elderly lady, but by signing her letter Julia Augusta she revived throbs of tender feeling in him, and brought back to his memory the thrilling froufrou of her grey silk flounces when she used to bend over him, and when they brushed against the font as she entered church on Sundays' (Hardy, 1984: 105). *The Life* leaves the door open as to their potential to develop their relationship further under different circumstances, it states that whilst their eyes or lips never met again, as she was now a widow 'there was nothing to hinder her mind from rolling back upon her past' (Hardy, 1984: 105)

In the setting of the solar system and beyond, *Two on a Tower* greatly resembles *The Return of the Native*. Its stellar scale, like Egdon Heath, places the human interactions in an increasingly broad contextual framework. The convoluted love plots involving Swithin, Lady Viviette, and the extended cast of family, friends and the local chorus may have tested some readers, and some critics found discrepancies and anomalies in the plot. The novel's overall message was that within the context of cosmic exploration human affairs counted for little. This critique of Hardy's six early to mid-point novels confirms him as a very good novelist, though it is arguable that his three greatest novels were still unwritten. It also has demonstrated that the oppositions in these novels have strong associations with oppositions within Hardy's own mind and that in many ways, the novels allowed him to displace some of these emotional conflicts onto his fictive characters.

## Chapter Four: Alcoholism and other Pathologies in Hardy's Great Novels

The Victorian reformers correctly blamed alcohol for much of the nation's poverty and for the dysfunction that it caused in families. Even the Chartist movement, which was involved in agitating for voting rights for working men in England in the 1830-40's, saw the campaign against alcohol as a way of proving that workers were responsible enough to be sober and hence to be granted political enfranchisement. In Hardy's three major novels after *Far From the Madding Crowd*, the initial malaise from which the actions develop, or that serves as the catalyst for character revelation, is addiction to alcohol. Hardy demonstrated in the drawing of Henchard, John Durbeyfield and Jude that he understood what lay beneath the rind of outward inebriated appearances. The revelation of their character's will to power confirms the Latin dictum, '*in vino veritas*', (in wine, truth). Henchard's sale of his wife and child was no spontaneous event. Hardy soon revealed what lay beneath their marital silences. Henchard is also an example of the contrasting adage, '*in aqua sanitas*' as his successes occur when he has sworn off alcohol for twenty-one years.

The inner thoughts and feelings of the protagonists consisting of resentments and unexpressed anger are only revealed later under the influence of alcohol. The seemingly innocuous opening scene, depicting the measured gait of the man, the resigned look on the woman's face, and the long silences between the itinerant hay-trusser and his wife as they trudge in search of work is a harbinger of great personal and matrimonial disquiet. It is apparent that the author understood that Henchard's excessiveness in thought and deed were

exacerbated by his drinking. Hardy's text signposts the dysfunction in the Henchard family relationship: 'that the man and the woman were husband and wife, and the parents of the girl in arms, there could be little doubt. No other than such relationship would have accounted for the atmosphere of stale familiarity which the trio carried along with them like a nimbus as they moved down the road' (Hardy, 2008b: 6). The nimbus refers to a halo effect, which suggests that as family they were both blessed and cursed. The protagonists deal with the difficulties involved in practically transforming love's ideals into a synthesis between the participants, or at least into a workable accommodation. In this undertaking, they are unsuccessful. There is perhaps no greater fundamental contrast in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* than that between Henchard and Farfrae. Farfrae is always of sober disposition even when he drinks alcohol, whereas Henchard when he is abstemious is never balanced; Henchard's extremes of character oppose the even-keel moderation of the Scotsman. The effects of alcohol on Henchard reveal aspects of his character that otherwise lie dormant, and it is in his struggle to deal with these personality traits that comprises so much of the tragedy of the novel.

The National Temperance Movement in England spread to Dorset from the beginning of the early nineteenth century onwards, as a reaction to the widespread abuse of alcohol by the poorer working class. Several temperance movements were established in England, which coincided with the setting of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* in the 1840's. Susan Henchard and her daughter Elizabeth-Jane were particular instances of a more widespread social problem, specifically the familial fragmentation caused by alcohol abuse. Henchard and Susan's row in the furmity tent at Weydon-Priors is a classic case of domestic violence caused by over-indulgence in rum. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* deals in an exploratory way with male and female character and personality, illustrated in the first instance by the fateful events surrounding a man and a woman of completely different temperaments. The novel's great

achievement is the revelation that dramatic events, corresponding to epic historical and mythological tragedies, can occur in the lives of ordinary country people, which suggests that there are no ordinary events. What started as an innocuous episode in the furnity-tent culminated in Henchard's alcohol-inspired sale of his oppressed wife Susan, which opened up a new life for both parties. This novel deals with various loving encounters in all their sins and graces, for, as has already been discussed, love was a topic of great importance to Hardy. In what are generally agreed to be his three great tragedies, he concentrated on the gravitational pull of heterosexual love and its oppositions. In Henchard's life, there are periods of sobriety when he is very successful whilst his drinking years equate with times of trouble. His ironic wit is captured in a half-drunken remark laced with sarcasm to the denizens of the furnity tent: 'Well, then, now is your chance; I am open to an offer for this gem o' creation' (Hardy, 2008b: 11).

The novel develops with the theme of marital discord brought out into the open by Henchard's ingestion of the rum-laced furnity. He offers to sell Susan to his fellow drinkers, and when the sale is interrupted, he grows impatient, stating: 'here – I am waiting to know about this offer of mine. The woman is no good to me. Who'll have her?' (Hardy, 2008b: 11). Henchard's lack of respect for his wife and himself is captured in the fact that while still sober, he enquires 'Will any Jack Rag or Tom Straw among ye buy my goods' (Hardy, 2008b: 11). The confrontation between Susan and Michael Henchard was a long time developing. It revealed Susan's embarrassment at her husband's boorishness: 'Michael, you have talked this nonsense in public places before. A joke is a joke, but you make it once too often mind!' (Hardy, 2008b: 11). The spectators to the sale think it some kind of joke, until a newcomer matches Henchard's asking price, which put a different complexion on events, drawing the remark from Henchard revealing Susan's wish to end their union: 'But she is

willing provided she can have the child. She said so only the other day when I talked of o't'  
(Hardy, 2008b: 13).

Hardy's poem 'The Drinking Song' alludes to the redundant ideas of the pre-Socratic philosopher Thales, and then moves on to the astronomer Copernicus, later to the Empiricist and Sceptic philosopher Hume, and finally to Hardy's contemporaries Darwin and Einstein. The chorus between stanzas is a repetition of: 'Fill full your cups: feel no distress; / 'Tis only one great thought the less!' (Hardy, 1995: 865). The final chorus has echoes of Freud's dissertation on how humanity cannot function without palliative remedies: 'Fill full your cups; feel no distress, / At all our great thoughts shrinking less: / We'll do a good deed nevertheless!' (Hardy, 1995: 866). 'The Drinking Song' is in line with Freud's statement that intoxicating substances make humans insensitive to life's pain for a time. However, reality bites once more when sobriety is restored. There is a flippancy in the message to drink up and be merry; the purpose of Hardy's poem was to awaken the many human somnambulists sleepwalking through their once-only experience of life. 'Drinking up' as a panacea for life's pain only purchases temporary relief, however, as the problems that lie under pleasant facades have not been addressed. If they were confronted, they would reveal how helpless humanity was in the greater scheme of things.

In the wake of selling his wife, Henchard's erroneously rationalises that her meek disposition was a contributory factor to the transaction. It was more likely that her resigned acceptance of the vicissitudes of fate and her husband's aberrant behaviour formed her guiding principle: 'when she plodded on in the shade of the hedge, silently thinking, she had the hard half-apathetic expression of one who deems anything possible at the hands of Time and Chance except perhaps fair play' (Hardy, 2008b: 6). Henchard's behaviour in getting rid of his wife and child through alcoholic indulgence is an example of Hardy's ability to show how fantasy translates into tragedy when it is given free reign. It is illustrated again in the

succeeding novels through the parallel catastrophes of Jude's erratic behaviour addressing the mob and John Durbeyfield's pathological behaviour in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. The three protagonists are fantasists clearly at odds with the more rational behaviour of Susan Henchard, Tess Durbeyfield and Sue Bridehead who are not drink-dependant.

It can be argued that alcoholism and its underlying pathologies of anger, aggression, grandiosity, denial and alienation from the self, are inextricably linked to the tragedy that is Michael Henchard in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. The novel is also a tragedy of negative group behaviour, stemming from unexamined attitudes to life, which is embodied in the planning of the skimmington-ride, instigated by Joshua Jopp, in a back street public house, Peter's Finger in Mixen Lane, one of the most vile moral places in Casterbridge, a refuge for fugitives of every sort. In a reference to the Old Testament, Hardy's describes its sinister qualities: 'Mixen Lane was the Adullam of all the surrounding villages. It was the hiding place of those who were in distress, and in debt, and trouble of every kind' (Hardy, 2008b: 236). Just as the Three Mariners was the hostelry of the well to do, so Peter's Fingers was the venue frequented by the socially challenged. The drinkers of the two pubs were not completely segregated as: 'the company at the Three Mariners were persons of quality in comparison with the company which gathered here; though it must be admitted that the lowest fringe of the Mariner's party touched the crest of Peter's at points' (Hardy, 2008b: 238). In a class-conscious novel, it is easy to imagine Farfrae serenading a gathering of the well to do at the Mariners, and Henchard eating sumptuous meals at the Kings Arms. The obverse of those salubrious surroundings was Peter's Finger, entry to which was via a slit in the wall where nefarious characters like Joop held court:

To this house Joop and his acquaintances had arrived. The settles in which they sat down were thin and tall, their tops being guyed by pieces of twine to hooks in the ceiling; for when the guests grew boisterous the settles would rock and overturn without some such security ... and ex-poachers and ex-gamekeepers whom squires had persecuted without a cause sat elbowing each other-men who in past times had met in fights under the

moon, till lapse of sentences on the one part, and loss of favour and expulsion from service on the other, brought them together to a common level, where they sat calmly discussing old times (Hardy, 2008b: 238).

The furmity woman makes another fateful reappearance; for it was she who years previously laced Henchard's furmity with rumleading to the rash sale of his wife and daughter. She enquires of the devious Joop what was the parcel he kept so snugly under his arm. Joop replies: 'Ah-therein lies a grand secret .... It is the passion of love. To think that a woman should love one man so well, and hate another so unmercifully' (Hardy, 2008b: 239). Joop's boast that he has Lucetta's old love letters to Henchard draws this remark from Mother Cuxsom: 'Love-letters-then let's hear 'em good soul, adding what fools we used to be when we were younger?-getting a schoolboy to write ours for us' (Hardy, 2008b: 239). In all of this, there are connections to Hardy's own life and interactions with others, connections which I suggest achieve fictive elaboration in this book. As a gifted writer, the young Hardy translated the thoughts and feelings of young women eager to express their affections. In real life, Hardy loved Mrs Henniker and grew apathetic and deeply resentful towards Emma.

As a schoolboy Hardy wrote the love letters of his friends and neighbours near Dorchester, so he would be aware of how an older person may well look askance at comments made by their younger self. Hardy learned with regret of Mrs Henniker *penchant* for reading his private letters to her friends. In his personal life, at this time, Hardy was observing Moule lose his healthy ambitions, and saw his character fragmenting, swinging from dissolution in active alcoholism to Evangelical temperance, which sometimes saw him preaching abstinence with his father, the vicar of Fordington. Moule may have damaged himself in confusing his early ideals with the reality of how his life experience took him in several other directions: a case of trying to live up to others' expectations without a clear compass of his own.

The ubiquitous nature of the sale of alcohol and its attraction for Henchard is caught when Susan, clearly wary of the combination of her husband and alcohol, guides Henchard

away from a tent with the sign 'Good Home-brewed Beer, Ale and Cyder' (Hardy, 2008b: 8), into the more innocent sounding tent with a placard advertising 'Good Furmity Sold Hear' (Hardy, 2008b: 9). The plot develops as 'there was more in that tent than met the cursory glance; and the man with the instincts of a perverse character, scented it quickly' (Hardy, 2008b: 9). Susan knows from experience that once her husband takes a drink, he loses control of his behaviour. The furmity woman in the tent surreptitiously spikes the furmity or gruel with rum, and by way of a coded communication, she adds several extra measures of rum to Henchard's furmity. His wife and child are hostages to Henchard's impetuosity, moodiness, entangled emotions and drunkenness. Finding courage in alcohol, Henchard acts out his unconscious desire, which he has expressed before in drink to Susan: to be rid finally of his familial responsibilities.

The auction of his family is bizarre, as a part of Henchard does not want to sell, and the initial asking price is greatly exceeded. Afterwards, his complexity is caught in remorse rather than regret, as he feels his sin deeply, and wrestles briefly with healthy shame: 'did I tell my name to anybody last night, or didn't I tell my name?' (Hardy, 2008b: 17). Taking a solemn oath in church, he vows not to take alcohol for twenty-one years, a period mirroring his current age. His better self seeks to atone for the unacceptable conduct of his shadow-self. Diligently seeking out an appropriate place to purge his guilt, he reverts to his religious conditioning, suppresses his guilt, naively thinking that he can start again afresh. In stepping back to move forward, Henchard reverts to the consolation of Christian forgiveness and penance of religion as his religious fetish or holy superstition dictates: 'for there was something fetishistic in this man's belief' (Hardy, 2008b: 19). The swerve here between Henchard's alcoholic act and his religious oath can be seen to parallel the behaviour of Moule, and similarly, one could relate the affection that one is made to feel for Henchard's

atonement and basic good humanity with Hardy's own affection for Moule. Both are decent men who have a singular flaw, which eventually defines their lives and subsequent deaths.

Early the following morning, having slept off his previous evening's drunkenness, Henchard undergoes conflicting emotions. In desperation, he decides to search for his family using up the sale money in the process. He is quite conflicted at this stage, realising that he must not transfer the responsibility to anyone but himself: 'it was his own making, and he ought to bear it' (Hardy, 2008b: 18), but also feeling that the sober Susan was somehow to blame for herself and her daughter's sale into an uncertain future. He recalls the underlying character traits of Susan that contributed to the scene of their marital discord, culminating in the furnity tent. He attributes his pathology to Susan's meekness: 'She wasn't queer if I was. 'Tis like Susan to show such idiotic simplicity. Meek—that meekness has done me more harm than the bitterest temper!' (Hardy, 2008b: 18). Alcohol excess has revealed the bully and braggart residing in Henchard's nature, just as it also prompted Susan to throw her wedding ring back at the man she had loved and tolerated. Henchard, when his money will not support any further searching for his wife and child, displays a mixture of penitence, blame and anger, emotions that contribute to the complexity of his character. Hardy depicts the concept of Christian forgiveness residing within the penitent Henchard. The taking of the vow of abstinence reveals Henchard as a man of character: a bad or indifferent man would not have felt such deep remorse:

The hay-trusser deposited his basket by the font, went up to the nave till he reached the altar-rails, and opening the gate entered the sacarium, where he seemed to feel a sense of strangeness for a moment; then he knelt upon the foot-pace. Dropping his head upon the clamped book, which lay on the Communion table, he said aloud: ... I, Michael Henchard, on this morning of the sixteenth of September, do take an oath in this solemn place that I will avoid all strong liquors for the space of twenty-one years to come, being a year for every year that I have lived. And this I swear upon the book before me; and may I be strook dumb, blind, and helpless if I break this my oath (Hardy, 2008b: 18).

In this part of the novel, religion is seen not as an oppressive force, but rather as a sanctuary for Henchard's troubled conscience, paralleling the experience of Moule. The deadly oppositions of drunkenness and holiness are juxtaposed in Henchard's conduct, illustrating his internal warring characteristics. Solomon Longways illustrates the abstemious Henchard's intolerance to drink: 'if any of his men be so little overtaken by a drop, he's down upon 'em as stern as the Lord on the jovial Jews' (Hardy, 2008b: 34). Whilst his warmth endeared him to others, he never fully addressed the pathology that inspired the ruinous act, which shaped his life thereafter, and therefore he did not undergo any form of psychic catharsis. Henchard is aware that guilt affects his peace of mind, and he confesses to his new friend and trusted employee Donald Farfrae: 'I feel it a great relief, Farfrae, to tell some friend o' this! You see now that the mayor of Casterbridge is not so thriving in his mind as it seems he might be from the state of his pocket' (Hardy, 2008b: 76). D.H. Lawrence, who wrote extensively and with great insight on Hardy's work, felt that Hardy himself had been mis-shaped by his enslavement to societal values. Lawrence believed that Hardy's fiction suffered as a result of his conformity to the mores of Victorian conventionality in his personal life, and through his deference to the censor's prohibition on his basic views on religion, sex and social discrimination. He believed that in drawing female characters a certain prudishness in line with the ethos of the era made him elevate the intellectual over the primordial earthiness of women's sexuality. Lawrence addresses the issues surrounding human neuroses in his poem 'Healing':

I am not a mechanism, an assembly of various sections.  
And it is not because the mechanism is working wrongly,  
that I am ill  
I am ill because of wounds to the soul, to the deep emotional self  
and the wounds to the soul take a long, long time, only time can help  
and patience, and a certain difficult repentance, realisation of life's  
mistake, and to free oneself  
From the endless repetition of the mistake

which mankind at large has chosen to sanctify (Lawrence, cited in Hillman, 2011: 96).

The pathology underlying Henchard's alcoholism is never addressed in the novel either, and in a manner that is typical of Freud's repetition complex, what Henchard does not understand forces him to repeat this destructive pattern of behaviour. This is significant as his initial self-destructive action is paralleled by a later one, which is similarly drink-influenced. Returning to drink after twenty-one years of disciplined abstinence, he pursues the idea that he would like to be part of the official council greeting party, to welcome the Royal Personage to Casterbridge. At the council meeting headed by the new Mayor, his now deadly rival Farfrae, and the other council members politely but very firmly decline, stating that Henchard can watch the event like any other spectator. Frustrated and humiliated, Henchard, angrily retorts: 'I'll welcome his Royal Highness, or nobody shall!'...I am not going to be sat upon by Farfrae, or any of the rest of the paltry crew. You shall see' (Hardy, 2008b: 244). The Council's opposition was a blow to his pride, and predictably, he gathered his considerable energies to confront another of life's challenges. The oppositions of grandiosity and poor self-esteem are palpably present in Henchard's defiant statement, illustrating that little had changed from his acting out of his sudden impulse in the earlier wife-selling episode. What Hardy later wrote about Jude who was also drink-dependent, also applied to Henchard; the combination of a wishful disposition and wilful determination meant that he was fated to ache a great deal before the fall of the final curtain on his extraordinary life.

Hardy is consistent in portraying alcohol's effect in altering the personalities of Henchard, and later that of Jude, in their respective hostilities. Henchard's knowledge of the Psalms and Jude's recitation of the Nicene Creed illustrates Hardy's deep knowledge of the Judeo-Christian tradition in the nature of religious worship in the Victorian era. Patricia Ingham, writing on the significance of the Bible in Hardy's work, reveals a comment written into Hardy's notebook: 'in the eyes of science man is not "higher" than the other

animals'(Ingham, 2003: 196).The statement undermined Christian doctrine and elevated scientific discoveries like Darwin's theory of human evolution.Henchard's native intelligence has memorised an obscure but destructive Psalm heaping curses on his enemies in similar fashion to Jude's arrogant outburst of pride in his religious knowledge in the later novel.Both scenes are conspicuous through the absence of humility, and ironically, both end in the humiliation of the central character.Henchard in destructive mode wants revenge as much as Jude's ego needs bolstering through elevating himself above the students and lecturers at Christminster to which he has been denied access.Alcohol aids and abets their imaginative fantasies and their oppositions; if both characters cannot be the best then they can obtain satisfaction by doing their worst. Henchard and Jude's impressive knowledge of church liturgy originated in Hardy's deep knowledge of church affairs.

Jude's difficulties in becoming a minister in the church led to his mental-spiritual divisions, which are depicted in the pub-scene when, half-drunk and full of grandiosity, he recites the Nicene Creed, the fundamental Articles of Belief in the Anglican faith:

'Credo in Unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, Factorem coeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium'...[concluding] 'Et unam Catholicam et Apostolicam Ecclesiam.Confiteor unum Bastisma in remissionem peccatorum et expecto Ressurrectionem mortourum et vitam venture saeculi.Amen (Hardy, 1994c: 145).

Like Henchard, in *The Three Mariners Inn*, Jude later insulted everyone, caused a riot, and the barmaid reflects that drinkers are less than human.Jude steals away down the sordid lane (Hardy, 2008c: 116).Jude's self-rejection and remorse is clear in his conversation with a young curate who warns him to avoid strong drink: 'though I had the best intentions in the world at one time.Now I am melancholy bad, what with drinking and one thing and another ...I bitterly regret the church, and the loss of my chance of being her ordained minister ...I could avoid that easily enough, if I had any kind of hope to support me!'(Hardy, 2008c: 118).

In his determination to welcome the Royal Visitor at any costs, Henchard primes himself with a glass of rum, much as he did before selling Susan and their child at the fair at Weydon-Priors some twenty-one years earlier. Meeting Elizabeth-Jane on the day of the Royal visit, he tells her; 'it was lucky my twenty one years had expired before this came on, or I should never have had the nerve to carry it out' (Hardy, 2008b: 245). What this statement illustrates is that it was not the drink itself, which caused Henchard's many falls from grace, but rather the wilfulness of his nature. Drink gives him the false courage, or rather, it sufficiently inhibits his judgement, in order to allow him to carry out these impulsive, and ultimately self-destructive, actions, what Freud would associate with the death instinct, Thanatos. He can readily admit the harm he has occasioned to those with whom he has had close relationships, but stops short of internalising the damage he has done himself, which would have been the first step to ameliorating those wilful defects of character. One example of his remorse is the gift of the caged bird to Elizabeth-Jane, a metaphor for his own caged feelings. His inverted pride meant he refused to dress up to greet the Royal visitor: 'everybody else, from the mayor to the washer-woman, shone in new vesture according to means; but Henchard had doggedly retained the fretted and weather-beaten garments of bygone years' (Hardy, 2008b: 246). Henchard's egocentricity and wilful nature motivated his decision to let people including the Royal visitor accept or reject him as he was, a character-feature that stayed with him up to his final will and testament. His defiance of conformity was heightened when alcohol dampened his natural inhibitions. The sober Henchard observed the era's conventions outwardly, though internally he possessed and was motivated by a sense of inverted pride that combined with his warm and generous heart, made him a highly complex character, with certain connections with Moule.

In imaginative terms, Hardy anticipates Freud's theory that: 'Life is hard, we cannot do without palliative remedies - powerful diversions of interest, which lead us to care little

about miseries' (Sumner, 1981: 151). Henchard continually looks to outside sources as a panacea for inner turbulent emotions. As a man of extreme behaviours, he lacks balance in almost everything. Finding himself without family dependencies in his early twenties, he is now free to make his upward way in the world, concentrating solely on business interests. He represses sexual and guilt energies by sublimating them into commercial enterprises. These business ventures have rewarded him handsomely: 'He was dressed in an old-fashioned evening suit, an expanse of frilled shirt showing on his broad breast; jewelled studs, and a heavy gold chain' (Hardy, 2008b: 32.) In short, a complete metamorphosis has taken place in all his outward accoutrements. What has not altered is his core character, as revealed in his guilt at living a lie.

He is an extreme example of everyman in his failure to match feelings with corresponding words. The dictum attributed to Alcoholics Anonymous that 'we are only as sick as our secrets', is apposite to recovery from alcoholism and it also has a wider relevance to the sober individual and his neuroses. His complexity is further compounded by an admission to Farfrae that he is a woman-hater, and the allusion to Job, regretting that he was ever born demonstrates his basic melancholia (Hardy, 2008b: 74). A character defect of loving and hating to excess provokes his downfall; he is unrealistic in his show of affection and hatred for his newfound friend Farfrae, and the placing of all emotional capital in Elizabeth-Jane was childish, warping his judgement. Indeed his final defeat is not material but emotional in nature, His emotional intelligence has not developed in a manner commensurate with his material elevation. His decision to confide the most secret shameful aspects of life with his future business rival Farfrae demonstrates a lack of common sense, as well as a plea for understanding. It is plausible that when Henchard stopped destroying himself and others through excessive drinking, he found another obsession in his work, which meant he concentrated on career success rather than reflecting on why he was so obsessive. Enjoying an

immediate rapport with Farfrae he states: 'It is odd, that two men should meet as we have done on a purely business ground, and that at the end of the first day I should wish to speak to 'ee on a family matter. But damn it all, I am a lonely man, Farfrae; I have nobody else to speak to; and why shouldn't I tell it to 'ee' (Hardy, 2008b: 73).

Henchard is emotionally naive and his isolation leaves him with a vulnerable need for friendship and community interaction. Several of Hardy's central characters, including Boldwood, could be described as being psychologically disturbed arising from this dichotomy: their inner and outer lives are not harmonious to each other. Henchard possesses an unusually deep honesty, revealing his transgressions in detail to Farfrae who has adopted the confessor's role of good listener, and he suggests that Henchard make amends as best he can. Subsequently, Henchard and his newfound nemesis Farfrae are paragons of alcoholism and sobriety respectively, and their lives reflect their internal make-up. Henchard's underlying self-hate has found a focus in Farfrae, who continues to treat Henchard with dignity and compassion. The dialogue between Henchard and Farfrae makes allusion to depression which may have caused Henchard to drink against his will and best interests: 'I sank into one of those gloomy fits I sometimes suffer from, on account o' the loneliness of my domestic life, when the world seems to have the blackness of hell, and, like Job, I could curse the day that gave me birth' (Hardy, 2008b: 74). Farfrae replies: 'Ah, now, I never feel like it' (Hardy, 2008b: 74). Farfrae's temperate nature cannot identify with the volcanic content of Henchard's imagination and with the resultant alternating mood swings. Henchard's silence towards Susan in the opening of the novel suggests that even when his domestic life was not empty, he was also a troubled soul and was unable to communicate. The love-hate aspects of Henchard's nature find expression in his attitudes towards Farfrae whom he almost kills. The biblical theme where Cain damages Abel is replayed, as having initially thought that he had found a soul brother, he later inflicts injury on that brother towards whose goodness he has

become envious. The novel depicts how agreement fosters love as its shadow begets resentment.

Hardy uses alcoholic over-indulgence to reveal the vindictive, aggressive and depressive side of Henchard. The scene at the Three Mariners Inn shows the sizeable choir assembled to discuss the earlier sermon at their church. The pub in question was the hostelry where Henchard ended his years of abstinence: 'the flush upon his face proclaimed at once that the vow of twenty-one years had lapsed, and the era of recklessness begun anew' (Hardy, 2008b: 213-4). The dialogue between Henchard and members of the choir reveals the sadness, anger and pain beneath the gruff exterior of the fallen mayor. A few members of the choir enquire how Henchard has been as they have not seen him in quite a while: "'Yes", he said at length; "That's true. I've been down in spirit for weeks; some of ye know the cause. I am better now; but not quite serene. I want you fellows of the choir to strike up a tune; and what with that and this brew of Stannidges I am in hopes of getting out altogether out of my minor key"' (Hardy, 2008b: 214). Henchard's attempted solution for his afflictions is a curious mix of religious fervour and alcoholic aggression. Henchard, who was a church warden, and knew the Psalms well, uses the alcohol as a mood changer, failing to realise that it offers only temporary relief from his depressive malaise. In the face of the choir's congeniality and eagerness to placate the former mayor, whose latent aggression has been given some degree of licence, Henchard perceives an opportunity to let his anger explode in all its fullness. Looking through the pub's window he recognises his rival Farfrae and his betrayer Lucetta emerging together from the Upper church, and the sight of the happy couple adds fuel to the fire of his anger.

The semi-drunken Henchard, as in previous times of crisis, obliquely calls upon God to come to his aid and strike down Farfrae. Fortified by alcohol, he coerces and physically threatens the reluctant choir to sing King David's One Hundred and Ninth Psalm. The divide

between Henchard the caring individual, and the hateful figure seeking revenge, is captured in the mix of platitudes and threats to the choir that precede the Psalm's malevolence towards Farfrae and Lucetta:

His seed shall orphans be, his wife  
A widow plunged in grief;  
His vagrant children beg their bread  
Where none shall give relief.

His ill-got riches shall be made to users a prey;  
The fruit of all his toil shall be  
By strangers borne away (Hardy, 2008b: 215).

The irony was that the ill-fate which Henchard wished on Farfrae became his own destiny. The leader of the choir states excitedly that he finds the particular psalm highly objectionable, stating 'I know the Psalm-I know the Psalm!; but I would lief not sing it. 'Twasn't made for singing....Whatever Servant David were thinking about when he made the Psalm that nobody can sing without disgracing himself, I can't fathom' (Hardy, 2008b: 215). The leader offers to play the Fourth Psalm of Samuel Wakely's tune to his own arrangement instead. Henchard becomes apoplectic and threatening at this suggestion: "O'd seize your sauce – I tell ye to sing the hundred-and-ninth to Wiltshire, and sing it you shall!" roared Henchard, adding, "Not a single one of all the droning crew of ye goes out of this room till that Psalm is sung!" (Hardy, 2008b: 215). Henchard's anger has turned to aggression and 'he slipped off the table, seized the poker, and going to the door placed his back against it' (Hardy, 2008b: 215). He threatened them physically 'now then go ahead, if you don't wish to have your cust pates broken' (Hardy, 2008b: 215). Henchard was in deep emotional pain coming to the Three Mariners, and as a man of action he wished to respond in some positive way to his depressive anger, acting it out on the choir in the pub. His anger had again overwhelmed his rationality.

Placated when the choir conforms to his request, Henchard reveals his softer side, admitting that he finds relief in the church music that suits his occasionally savage temperament. His complexity as a character led to his difficulties, as illustrated when he addressed the choir with a philosophical reflection concerning the contradictory attitudes which have affected him in sobriety and drunkenness: 'but the bitter thing is that when I was rich I didn't need what I could have, and now I be poor I can't have what I need' (Hardy, 2008b: 216). Henchard's conundrum lies in his difficulties to identify and promote his needs above his desires. The non-conformist in Henchard under the influence of drink had a complicated vision of the relationship between church and state. When angry and frustrated, he imitated both institutions' practice of cowering oppositions with his powerful personality. His misuse of the Psalm 109 was similar to Jude's recitation of the Nicene Creed: a mis-use of intellectual power. The message inherent in Church dogmas and prayers was an invisible but powerful creed adopted by the temporal powers to keep people in their place, with religion being part of the ruling axis. Henchard's recourse to religion after the wife-sale, contrasts with his nihilistic desire for total extinction, and the obliteration of any details that he has lived at the end of his life. Both Hardy and Henchard found themselves in a cleft stick situation; expecting justice from life they found the opposite, Patricia Ingham writes that 'it is in the bitter irony of Henchard's intermittent belief that he is in "Somebody's" hands when what waits him is rejection, loneliness, and death' (Ingham, 2003: 209). She continues that in 'Unkept Good Fridays', for instance, 'the speaker compares the annual remembrance of the suffering of Christ at the Crucifixion with the sufferings of countless virtuous human beings which go uncommemorated' (Ingham, 2003: 208). It was Ingham's view that 'despite his agnosticism Hardy cannot leave Christianity alone' (Ingham, 2003: 209). It is arguable that when Hardy found himself without a faith strong enough to forego his rational reasoning

tendencies, he took up arms against religion. Henchard always wanted God to accede to his will, and when the fates continued to frustrate him, he abandoned all faith.

His ambivalence on the notions of an after-life mirrored Hardy's own views. In his last will Henchard's desires is for oblivion and the erasure that he has ever existed. Hardy felt that the inconvertible certainties of the church were at best pious hopes. Ingham's *Authors in Context* quotes from a passage in *Jude The Obscure*, which remained unprinted in Hardy's lifetime, which goes some way to explaining the bizarre juxtaposing of Henchard and Jude's fatal attractions to alcohol clashing with their religious conditioning:

When men of a later age look back upon the barbarism, cruelty, and superstition of the times in which we have the unhappiness to live, it will appear more clearly to them than it does to us that the irksomeness of life is less owing to its natural conditions, though they are bad enough, than to those artificial compulsions arranged for our well-being, which have no root in the nature of things (Ingham, 2003: 187).

Hardy infers that the controls exerted by organised religion made people fearful of what would happen without its influence. Henchard has a superstitious and magical approach to harnessing the power of the Psalm in order to strike down Farfrae and Lucetta. It is an apostasy of Christianity, and it demonstrates a vindictive aspect of his personality. Some members of the choir in *The Three Mariners* are also fully conversant with the contents and context of the Psalms. The choir have a more reverential religious disposition than has Henchard, who would have been considered a blasphemer. Hardy held a sceptical view on religion as a panacea for the human condition, and Henchard used his religious knowledge in the hope it would heap revenge on Farfrae. It was a childish act, which drew the opprobrium of leading members of the choir. Pointing out Farfrae through the window as the object of his hatred, the players and singers turned their heads and saw their meaning: "Heaven forbid" said the bass player', while the clarinet performer went further: "Then if I'd known ...that t'was meant for a living man, nothing should have drawn out o' my wynd pipe the breath for that Psalm, so help me!" (Hardy, 2008b: 216).

The lead singer states that he likes the tune, but dislikes the sentiments of the lyric. The implication being that the Psalm's malevolence belongs to ancient Old Testament times of a wrathful God, and a justice system demanding retribution for wrongs committed; eye for an eye. It is possible that Hardy is using this comment to gesture towards the idea that Henchard, like other of his characters, is slightly out of time in this book. It is as if his ways are the older, pre-modern ways, and he has been overtaken by modernity and is unaware of the correct ways of dealing with this new paradigm. Henchard says triumphantly 'Ah, my boys, you've sung it' (Hardy, 2008b: 216), making the choir complicit in his blasphemy. What the alcohol revealed was Henchard's latent anger and aggression towards all who confronted his will to power. In a final act of angry madness, Henchard acts out his desire to finish Farfrae off: 'He laid the poker across his knee, bent it as if it were a twig, flung it down, and came away from the door' (Hardy, 2008b: 216), and this is a potent image of his dogmatic character. He wants to bend people to his will in a similar manner, but society has moved on, and personal strength is no longer a valued aspect of symbolic capital. Henchard's personality revealed a character of multiple oppositions and varying moods, one in which many of the forces of nature contend for supremacy. When he has the opportunity to kill Farfrae during their lethal wrestling fight in the corn loft, he refuses to act out the violent aspect of his character. Instead, the more empathic and loving aspect of his nature rises to the ascendancy. He states to his vanquished opponent "'O, Farfrae-that's not true!" he said bitterly. "God is my witness that no man loved another as I did thee at one time ... "' (Hardy, 2008b: 254). This mercurial mixture of oppositions, of love and hate, of affection and rejection, is a repetition on his treatment of his family in the novel's primal scene at Weyden Priors, and again suggests that Henchard is governed by the repetition compulsion to repeat actions that he can never understand. His anger is spent when Elizabeth-Jane, who has heard that he has recommenced drinking after the duration of his vow of

abstinence from alcohol has elapsed, takes his arm to guide him home: 'by this hour the volcanic fires of his nature had burnt down' (Hardy, 2008b: 216). This fact suggests that Henchard depressive anger has been appeased through his drinking again; his addiction has been fed *\*and his anger sated.*

Hardy perhaps felt it was for others to ameliorate the human neuroses and psychic pathologies like alcoholism, anger, aggression and alienation from society and self, conditions of which Henchard is an extreme example, and which produced the splitting of inner and outer lives. Hardy's contemporary, the eminent Psychiatrist-Philosopher William James, who was neutral in a religious sense, commented on the ethics of personality and character in his classic work on religion-science divisions in *The Varieties of Religious Experiences* (1902):

Recent works on the psychology of character have much to say upon this point (duality). Some persons are born with an inner constitution which is harmonious and well balanced from the outset. Their impulses are consistent with one another, their will follows without trouble the guidance of their intellect, their passions are not excessive, and their lives are little haunted by regrets. Others are oppositely constituted; and are so in degrees which may vary from something so slight as to result in a merely odd or whimsical inconsistency, to a discordancy of which the consequences may be inconvenient in the extreme (James, 1985: 168).

While Henchard's personal history only commences when he is a married man and scarcely out of adolescence, he continuously makes reference to invisible forces, or unconscious processes, as determining the outcome of his life. His earlier conditioning obviously included religious instruction and some form of basic education. The oppositions involved between genuine religious belief and superstition coincide with his maturity and its opposition. In the delineation of Henchard, it is clear that Hardy understood the psychological basis of a split personality leading to alcohol dependence as a palliative and displacing form of addiction. A basic honesty also resides in Henchard, and is demonstrated when the furrity woman, arraigned on an anti-social charge in his court, accuses him of the sale of his wife many years ago. Responding to her charge, he tells the court that he is not the person to judge

her actions. Another example of Henchard's sense of fair play can be seen when he offers his gold watch as payment to a creditor.

"Gentlemen," he said, "over and above the assets that we've talking about, and that appear on the balance sheet, there be these. It all belongs to ye, as much as everything else I've got, and I don't wish to keep it from you, not I." Saying this he took his gold watch from his pocket, and laid it on the table; then his purse-the yellow canvas money-bag such as was carried by all farmers and dealers-untying it and shaking the money out upon the table beside the watch. The latter he drew back quickly for an instant, to remove the hair guard made and given him by Lucetta. "There-now you have all I've got in the world," he said. "And I wish for your sakes 'twas more" (Hardy, 2008b: 203).

This was quite an extraordinary example of Henchard's grace under pressure and when placed beside the honourable conduct towards Susan and Lucetta and kindnesses to Whittle's mother he is entitled to the soubriquet of the sub-title; he was in every way a man of character. The scene at Maurward Ring in Casterbridge where Henchard has a secret reunion with Susan, and later meets Lucetta again, hints at the return of the past to haunt the present. As the venue was formerly a Roman sacrificial **\*and burial site** it also is an allegory for how events repeat themselves throughout history as Henchard's gestures of atonement lead to his downfall, case of '*Plus ca change, Plus la meme chose*'. However, such honesty is just one side of his divided character, as it can also be recalled that he also lied to Newson concerning the whereabouts of Elizabeth-Jane.

James's book, in the section entitled 'The Divided Self, and the Process of its Unification', states 'the man's interior is a battle-ground for what he feels to be two deadly hostile selves, one actual, the other ideal' (James, 1985: 171), and I would support this conclusion. Henchard is a compulsive and addictive individual, as is clearly illustrated in his last Will and Testament. In similar manner to Jude, he goes out of control when he starts drinking, but it gradually becomes clear that for him there is a comfort in drunkenness, as it allowed him to sublimate his drives into success in work and politics. However, there were telltale signs of the effort this required, for example in his angry explosion at Abel Whittle's

idleness during his dry years. William James' book derived from his Edinburgh lectures in 1902, and it casts fresh light on Henchard's divisions and on human complexity in general. James wrote:

There are persons whose existence is little more than a series of zig-zags, as now one tendency and now another gets the upper hand. Their spirit wars with their flesh, they wish for incompatibles, wayward impulses interrupt their most deliberate plans, and their lives are one long drama of repentance and of effort to repair misdemeanours and mistakes (James, 1985: 169).

In the light of James's theory, it is arguable that Henchard's battle between the spirit and the flesh dealt in a preliminary way with the issues that also affected Jude. Jude's greater cerebral depth of character was indicative of how Hardy's construction of Henchard's character was deepening his own grasp of psychological factors that affected an individual's outward circumstances. James's theory on inheritance suggests that several characters co-exist in the individual's unconscious processes, suggesting that to apportion blame or credit for acts perpetrated in a lifetime may well be erroneous. Jung, cited in James, had referred to humanity's inherited personal and collective unconscious, which James described as mutually antagonistic:

Heterogeneous personality has been explained as the result of inheritance—the traits of character of incompatible and antagonistic ancestors are supposed to be preserved alongside of each other (James, 1985: 169).

The pull of oppositions complicated Henchard's life; he had not fully come to terms with his own individual existence when entrusted with the responsibilities of being a husband and father. The more aggressive side of his character gets rid of these responsibilities in a moment of drunken decision, while his more caring side is evidenced as he provides for his estranged wife, daughter as well as his erstwhile lover from Jersey, Lucetta. His deeds flow from character complexity, and as such, he is a victim of mood swings and conflicted interiority, torn between responsible intentions and strong desires. His ambivalence is always painful, as an unbridled drive for power clashes with emotional under-development, leaving him

psychically dissonant. Apparently defeated and bereft, his deep-rooted wilfulness still demands some form of control, and he contemplates suicide at Ten Hatches weir. Unnerved to see his dummy in the water *\*after* the skimmington ride, he feels something supernatural is afoot, and it undermines his wilfulness. James's theory described Henchard's descent into psychological chaos:

Now in all of us, however constituted, but to a degree the greater in proportion as we are intense and sensitive and subject to diversified temptations, and to the greatest possible degree if we are decidedly psychopathic, does the normal evolution of character chiefly consist in the straightening out and unifying of the inner self. The higher and lower feeling, the useful and the erring impulses, begin by being comparative chaos within us—they must end by forming a stable system of functions in right subordination. Unhappiness is apt to characterise the period of order making and struggle. If the individual be of tender conscience and religiously quickened, the unhappiness will take the form of moral remorse and compunction, of feeling inwardly vile and wrong, and of standing in false relations to the author of one's being and appointer of one's spiritual fate. This is the religious melancholy and 'conviction of sin' that have played so large a part in the history of Protestant Christianity (James, 1985: 170)

Hardy probably understood that his task in one lifetime was to outline the maladies and leave the solution to psycho-spiritual analysts at a future time, and his depiction of Henchard, in all his confusion and complexity, achieves this very well. The dysfunctional nature of the family settings in the novel were prescient in that Henchard, by selling his wife and child, dismantled the unity of the traditional Victorian family. His concentration on his own above his family's welfare was synonymous with the emerging phenomenon of self-promotion as the new paradigm.

The planning of the skimmington satire by the social discontents in Peter's Finger Inn, and Henchard's humiliation of Abel Whittle, were acts of anger, in accord with Heraclitus's dictum that 'what anger wants it buys at the price of the soul' (Magee, 1998: 14). Henchard's behaviour in anger mirrors his actions in alcoholic excess, as in both cases, his actions were out of control and out of harmony with his compassionate self who supported Whittle's mother in her poverty. A case in point is when in anger Henchard chastises Whittle

for his tardiness, stripping \*him of his clothes and dignity. The denizens of the inn were of the lower orders in Casterbridge society, in contrast to those in the Three Mariners, where Farfrae entertained all with his charming stories and singing. The entrance to Peter Finger's was a slit in the wall of the building on Mixen Lane, where someone observing a pedestrian one moment wondered where they had disappeared to in the next.

The front door was kept shut, and the step was so clean that evidently but few persons entered over its sanded surface. But at the corner of the public-house was an alley, a mere slit, dividing it from the next building.... A pedestrian would be seen abstractedly passing along Mixen Lane; and then in a moment, he would vanish, causing the gazer to blink like Ashton at the disappearance of Ravenswood (Hardy, 2008b: 237).

This was an allegory of how some people's sobriety and attendant behaviour can almost instantly vanish when they ingest alcohol.

Hardy's punning on the name 'Mixen' suggests the area held a mixed and colourful crowd of toppers, some with sordid pasts and nefarious intentions: 'rural mechanics too idle to mechanize, rural servants too rebellious to serve, drifted or were forced into Mixen Lane' (Hardy, 2008b: 236). A minor though important character, Joshua Joop, has been let down by Henchard whom he met in Jersey and who promised to interview him for a role as manager in his business, a position which he later impulsively gives to Farfrae. Out of work, the drifter Joop descends into poverty, which causes his angry resentment of both Henchard and Lucetta, both of whom he had known in Jersey, and who have both let him down in different ways. Reduced to acting as an errand boy for Henchard, he is tasked with returning Lucetta's love letters to her. He sneakily opens the seals and reads the incriminating letters, perceiving an opportunity to humiliate Henchard for his double-dealing, and Lucetta for her reluctance to furnish him with a reference to her husband, the new corn magnate, Farfrae. Joop puts the skimmington-ride in train in Peter's Finger in Mixen Lane:

Much that was sad, much that was low, some things that were baneful, could be seen in Mixen Lane. Vice ran freely in and out certain of the doors of the neighbourhood; recklessness dwelt under the roof with the

crooked chimney; shame in some bow-windows; theft (in times of privation) in the thatched and mudwalled houses by the shallows. Even slaughter had not been altogether unknown here....Such was Mixen Lane in the times when Henchard and Farfrae were mayors. (Hardy, 2008b: 236).

The novel avers that 'the inn called Peter's Finger was the church of Mixen Lane' (Hardy, 2008b: 237), and in the sense that it catered for grievous sinners of different magnitudes, and it was an apt description. Mixen Lane was based on the notorious Mill Street in the nearby Fordington of Hardy's youth, which had been pulled down. The novel states that Mixen Lane itself was now in great part pulled down (Hardy, 2008b: 235). Whilst Fordington's Mill Street had its vices, Fordington itself was also home to the virtuous Moule family, yet another connection between Henchard and Moule. The exposition by Hardy of vice in Dorchester and Fordington would not have been popular with his fellow inhabitants. The deadly sins of jealousy and envy were the basis for the planning of the skimmington-ride, and resentment at the heiress Lucetta was the underlying basis for this demonstration of envy at her success; she had become rich through an inheritance and had married the most eligible man in Casterbridge. Nance Mockridge tells her fellow-conspirators: 'I do like to see the trimming pulled off such Christmas candles. I am quite unequal to the part of villain myself, or I'd gie all my small silver to see that lady topped.... And perhaps I shall soon, she added significantly' (Hardy, 2008b: 247).

What was seen as a piece of street theatre and a joke by some conspirators was seen by the disgruntled Joop as retaliation for Henchard's broken promises, and for Lucetta's indifference to his sorry plight. The coincidence of the satire's taking place on the evening of the royal visit was also a humiliation for Farfrae, who had lost some of his early favour within the poorer sections of Casterbridge:

Coney reflected. Farfrae was still liked in the community; but it must be owned that, as the mayor and man of money, engrossed with affairs and ambitions, he had lost in the eyes of the poorer inhabitants something of that wondrous charm which he had for them as a light-hearted penniless

young man, who sang ditties as readily as the birds in the trees.(Hardy, 2008b: 248)

Hardy, as a reforming author, knew both sides of the Victorian social divide. Rural poverty and oppression in and around Casterbridge (Dorchester) were breeding grounds for increased militancy as organised farm labourers agitated for better wages and secure tenancy. For the casual farm-jobbers, and out of work labourers, Peter's Finger would have offered temporary relief from their plights. There was no state support for those cast on the social scrap-heap by farm mechanisation, poor wages and famine drove many to illegal activities like prostitution and poaching

The social reformer Joseph Arch led the movement for agrarian reform in England, and Hardy's close neighbours the Puddletown Martyrs were severely dealt with by the Authorities in 1834, just before the time in which the novel is set. Hardy captures the poor's resentment in the civil unrest of the Skimmington-ride, which condensed a reaction to economic depression, bad harvests and outbreaks of cholera. The later novels all connect with the populist desire for change in educational opportunities, and with the snobbery of religious practitioners. Henchard, for example, castigates Elizabeth-Jane for her use of local dialect, and the novel clearly illustrates how the *nouveau-riche* Farfrae and Lucetta, in accord with their new rank and privilege, attend the High Church service, whereas the choir attended the earlier Lower Church ceremony. The novel makes the reader aware of the social consequences of Henchard's snobbery when Mayor, and of a similar set of social consequences for Lucetta, when she inherits her fortune. The planning of Skimmington-ride satire was a reaction to how Henchard and Lucetta had risen to such heights that their former acquaintances felt they needed to be brought back down to earth.

Hardy was quite visionary in anticipating Carl Jung's dictum: '*spiritus contra spiritum*' by over sixty years. Jung theorised that *spiritus* (alcohol) was contrary to *Spiritum* (holiness-wholeness), which suggests that people like Henchard, who had addiction issues to

drink, were inherently complex and required complete abstinence and a simpler approach to life. From the 1930's onwards, Jung had treated mental disorders of various kind over the years in his Zurich clinic; several rich individuals from America enlisted his help in overcoming their addictive personalities. Jung's axiom was mentioned in a 1950 letter to the fledgling Alcoholics Anonymous organisation in the United States, forming the basis for that movement's Twelve Steps towards recovery of mental health through progressive psychic wholeness. Jung's letter *\*is* contained in the 'Big Book' of AA, and available on-line at AA's archive, *\*it* refers to the vulnerability of the individual in society who, without the protection of his community, is hopeless to resist the power of *the* addiction stemming from *\*his personality disorder*. This was precisely Henchard's condition in Casterbridge, as alone and unloved, he attempted to share his isolation with Farfrae, who unfortunately, had neither the depth of character nor the life-experience to help him.

Hardy's insight into why drinkers abuse alcohol varies in how the relative simplicity of Henchard contrasts with the more intellectual Jude. His description of Jude's hubris in drink is insightful:

Jude Fawley, with the self-conceit, effrontery, and aplomb of a strong-brained fellow in liquor, threw in his remarks somewhat peremptorily; and his aims having been what they were for so many years, everything the others said turned upon his tongue, by a sort of mechanical craze, to the subject of scholarship and study, the extent of his own learning being dwelt upon with an insistence that would have appeared pitiable to himself in his sane hours (Hardy, 1994c: 144).

Hardy, always sympathetic to Jude's weakness describes his arrogance and frustrations: "I don't care a damn", he was saying, "for any Provost, Warden, Principal, Fellow, or cursed Master of Arts in the University! What I know is that I'd lick 'em on their own ground if they'd give me a chance, and show 'em a few things they are not up to yet!" (Hardy, 1994c: 144). The underlying characteristics of Henchard and Jude resulted from their grandiose desire to mould life to order. It was an unrealistic aspiration, and in alcohol abuse, they merely postponed their acceptance of an unpleasant reality.

When composing *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Hardy lived a life requiring great self-discipline. Pite writes that 'Hardy was compelling himself to resist some of his most powerful impulses....All the *Great Things* he would later celebrate-love, cider and dancing were studiously renounced' (Pite, 2006: 287).The poem *Great Things* from *Moments of Vision* 1917 is partly an ode to alcohol:

Sweet cyder is a great thing,  
A great thing to me ,  
Spinning down to Weymouth town  
By Ridgeway thirstily,  
And maid and mistress summoning  
Who tend the hostelry:  
O cyder is a great thing,  
A great thing to me! (Hardy, 195: 445).

When asked in 1883 whether alcohol helped his writing, he replied in the negative, adding that that with one or two exceptions, he had not imbibed for the last two years (Pite, 2006: 287).He suffered and enjoyed other intoxications in music and dance, and the glittering social life of the London Season was a powerful diversion for him, and a reward for rigorous devotion to work.*The Life* illustrates Hardy's heightened sense of humour in the bizarre scene of a preacher who was also highly susceptible to excessive alcohol-consumption, and Hardy juxtaposed the complexities of alcoholic behaviour:

June 18th M.F., son of Parson F.was well known by sight to my mother in her childhood.He had taken his degree and had been ordained.But he drank.He worked with the labourers and 'yarn-barton-wenches' (as they were called in the village) in the yarn-barton.After a rollick as they worked he would suddenly stop, down his implement, and mounting a log or trestle preach an excellent sermon to them; then go on cursing and swearing as before(Hardy, 1984: 158).

Alcoholism was a major social problem in Victorian Dorset.Horace Moule's father, the Rev.Henry Moule, found the living conditions of his real-life parishioners appalling; he wrote that the cottages were 'of the most wretched description', and their inhabitants were 'utterly destitute of the ordinary conveniences of life' (Pite 2006: 79-80).He added 'vice in its worst

forms, abounds among them' (Pite, 2006: 80). Alcohol was their escape from grinding poverty. There was a religious revival in 1859, inspired by the recent cholera epidemic, during which the Reverend Moule grew to great popularity as a stalwart throughout the outbreak. Handley Moule, a brother of Horace, wrote in *Memories of a Vicarage* (1913): 'a great social uplifting, wholesome and permanent, followed the Revival. In particular, a vigorous movement for temperance and thrift arose spontaneously among the work-people, and was wisely fostered and organised by my father and Friends' (Pite, 2006: 80-1).

The contemporary populist view was that excessive consumption of alcohol brought out the worst in people. The planning of the fateful Skimmington satire in a public house demonstrates how alcohol released their envy of Lucetta and Henchard in a seemingly harmless, if spiteful manner, which ultimately had tragic consequences. Alcohol offered them the stimulus and the false courage to strike back anonymously at their privileged masters, and in this case was a safety valve for suppressed resentments. Thus through alcohol, the envy and resentments of common folk towards the more fortunate or gifted in their community rose to the surface, and it was an implicit attack on the distribution of wealth and power in the England of the 1840's. Hardy's fiction suggests that alcohol brought out the latent dark side of humanity, and the inherent malevolence in 'the skimmy' represents the naked evil residing in the character defects of envy and jealousy.

The Three Mariners, Kings Head, and Peters Finger were drinking venues which allowed the portrayal of desire and emotions liberated by alcohol. Later, in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Hardy's parallels how John Durbeyfield's egotistical fantasy, further developed by his wife Joan at Rolliver's Inn, leads to the tragedy of Tess's deflowering. In an earlier novel, the influential but disruptive Troy, in *Far From The Madding Crowd*, is drunk, with glass in hand, when he acts out his anger against the well-meaning Gabriel Oak's desire for the other tipsy workers to save the ricks for the common good: 'Sergeant Troy had so

strenuously insisted, glass in hand, that drinking should be the bond of their union' (Hardy 2008: 241). Hardy demonstrated, in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, that crime and murder were an accompaniment to idleness and excessive drinking; Henchard is both idle and drunk when he sells his wife. Farfrae's engaging singing voice and pleasant disposition was an exceptional example of the cup that cheers though certain characters even found Farfrae's elegies hollow; if his country was so remarkable why did he ever leave? The disgruntled Christopher Coney asks Farfrae "What did ye come away from yer country for, young maister, if ye be so wounded about it", adding "Be dazed if I loved my country half as well as the young feller do, I'd live by claning my pigsties afore I'd go away! For my part I've no more love for my country than I have for Botany Bay" (Hardy, 2008b: 50). The defeated Henchard demonstrates how love and hate are two sides of the same coin: 'As for him, it was partly by his songs that he got over me, and heaved me out' (Hardy, 2008b: 216). Henchard's inner moods responded in opposing ways to the same music, illustrating the effect of words and tunes on emotions.

Hardy usually depicts the abuse of alcohol as inimical to human interests representing the idea that possibly arose from Hardy's observation of Horace Moule and other unfortunate out of control drinkers. The latent anger, which Sergeant Troy, Henchard, \*John Durbeyfield and Jude expressed through excessive drinking, are psychological manifestations of a spiritual malady causing psychic fragmentation, in short, of a pathology. In drink, different aspects of their psyche contended for supremacy with unbridled ego creating dreams and fantasies, which invariably turn nightmarish as seen in the wife-selling scene at Weydon-Priors. One major character flaw, consisting of unrealistic expectations, contained the seeds of their destruction. Unexamined attitudes are stuck, mirroring an inability to undergo psychic change by confronting the malady at the root of their pain and anger. Hardy's characters seek relief in alcohol from unpleasant inner realities, in Henchard's case from an overwhelming

will to power, which when thwarted, turned destructively inward. When depressed, both Henchard and Jude make unsuccessful suicide attempts, though their failure to kill themselves was obviously due to a paradoxical and concomitant desire to live –but only on their terms and conditions. Their thinking was programmed to accept only positive outcomes.

Both characters have conflicting personalities, where self-serving ambitions conflict with their loving kindness. When Henchard and Jude regain their sober senses, they are in fact different people. In drink, their conduct is the opposite of what their better selves subscribe to as best practice. Both Henchard and Jude undergo personality metamorphoses, swinging from sobriety to drunkenness similar to Hardy's closest friend Moule; like him, they lacked true perspective on their lives. To stop destroying themselves, they need to examine the personality problems that forced them to imbibe against their best interests. Both characters admit that alcohol is their ruination, and they lack true perspectives on their lives, but stop short of accepting that their thinking and attitudes have to develop into a self-analysis that can integrate all their conflicts. When Henchard sobers up, after selling Susan and Elizabeth-Jane, he knows deep remorse, and there is an instinctive fear that if he drinks again he will destroy himself. That he does so eventually was due to his lack of personal responsibility; blaming Susan for his plight:

On a previous occasion when he had declared during a fuddle that he would dispose of her as he had done, she had replied that she would not hear him say that many times more before it happened, in the resigned tones of a fatalist ... Yet she knows I am not in my senses when I do that! he exclaimed (Hardy, 2008b: 17).

The assumption is that Susan Henchard is the hard-pressed victim, but Hardy shows that she too has been amassing a bank of resentments towards her husband: 'there may, too, have been enough recklessness and resentment beneath her ordinary placidity to make her stifle any momentary doubts' (Hardy, 2008b: 17). Susan decided she could take no more, and as her posthumous letter to Michael revealed the facts about the true parenthood of Elizabeth-Jane,

she was her own woman who let her anger out in her own way. The life-changing letter from Susan to Michael ends with the words: 'and forgive, if you can, a woman you once deeply wronged; as she forgives you' (Hardy, 2008b: 117). The shattered Henchard reflected on 'his wife's reluctance to have the girl's name altered from Newson to Henchard was now accounted for fully. It furnished another illustration of that honesty in dishonesty, which had characterised her in other things' (Hardy, 2008b: 118).

Whilst totally abstemious for the succeeding twenty one years, Henchard still anticipates the pleasures of drinking once again. His successful years of social ascent and material prosperity were marked by his abstinence from alcohol. Susan and Elizabeth-Jane looking to find Henchard enquire what was the cause of merriment in Casterbridge:

"Well-ye must be a stranger here," said the old man without taking his eyes from the window. "Why 'tis a great public dinner of the gentle people and such leading folk-wi' the mayor in the chair. As we plainer fellows baint invited they leave the window-shutters open that we may get jist a sense o't here. If you mount the steps you can see 'em. That's Mr Henchard the mayor at the end of the table, a facing ye; and that's the councilmen right and left.... Ah, lots of them, when they begun life, were no more than I be now!" (Hardy, 2008b: 31).

Paradoxically his maturation as a human being coincides with his renewed drinking, and with the consequent painful experiences in his fall from grace, prestige and power. The emotional loss of Elizabeth-Jane is the final act in Henchard's isolation and he is left with little choice but to wither and die alone.

This question of an opposed personality was one that was of significant interest to the era of the time. Robert Louis Stevenson's novella, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), deals with a split personality, or in psychological parlance, with dissociative identity disorder. Hardy knew Stevenson well, dining with him when Stevenson unexpectedly visited Max Gate in 1885. The Scottish author was a great fan of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, and he wrote to Hardy for permission to dramatize the novel, which was instantly forthcoming. The Dorchester visit by Stevenson represents the high-point of their relationship

as Hardy was hurt by Stevenson's ensuing silence, observing in his essay *Robert Louis Stevenson*: 'to my vision he dropped into utter darkness from that date; I recall no further sight of or communication from him' (Wright, 2002: 293). A correspondence between Stevenson and the novelist Henry James saw Stevenson deploring the amoral tone of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) which may have accounted for Stevenson's withdrawal of his admiration of, and friendship towards, Hardy. There also exists the stronger possibility of professional jealousy and envy on the parts of James and Stevenson towards Hardy, a writer who was now the rising star in the late Victorian firmament. Hardy, from a humble background in rural Dorset, and lacking a University education, was producing works of great tragedy, which surpassed in public impact their own books. Both Hardy and Stevenson understood the competing psychic elements struggling for hegemony within their respective characters of Henchard, and Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, several decades before psychological research came to the same conclusion. They both understood the pharmacological change to human behaviour caused by psychoactive or psychotropic mood changers like alcohol or other potions.

Perhaps what Stevenson found objectionable in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was how the heroine was exposed to the realities of life in all its facets, including alcohol abuse and its consequences. In two of his major novels, Hardy's depicts the fathers of the heroines drinking to excess, clearly setting in train the respective tragic events. The emotional growing pains of Tess's young life and adolescence were exacerbated by her fathers' addiction to alcohol and its consequences: 'Tess however had undergone such painful experiences of this kind in her father's house that the discovery of their condition spoilt the pleasure she was beginning to feel in the moonlight journey. Yet she stuck to the party, for the reasons above given' (Hardy, 2008a: 74). After the party at Chaseborough, Tess is threatened physically by her co-workers, who have become drunken revellers but who were initially at one with the universe and

everything in it: 'they were as sublime as the moon and the stars above them; and the moon and the stars as ardent as they' (Hardy, 2008a: 74). The women revellers have undergone a personality change, and their jealousy and frustrations are revealed in violence. Driven by alcohol, the mob's uninhibited desires and instincts rampage through the scene. In her injured innocence, Tess rejects the invitation to a physical fight from her erstwhile friend, the stripped down Car Darch: [Tess] "Indeed then – I shall not fight!" said the latter majestically, "and if I had known you was of that sort I wouldn't have so let myself down as to come to whorage as this is!" (Hardy, 2008a: 76). The salutary lesson to avoid excesses was not lost on either Elizabeth-Jane or Tess, who retain an abstemious and balanced disposition throughout their lives.

It is arguable that of the four main protagonists in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*: Henchard, Farfrae, Lucetta and Elizabeth-Jane, only the latter succeeds by less than joyful acceptance, in integrating the conflicts encountered between their inner and outer lives. Of the quartet, Henchard alone is addicted to alcohol, though the others also all have a need to integrate the competing aspects of their inner vision with outer actions. Lucetta and Farfrae, who become rich through good fortune, or superior business ability, never venture into any meaningful self-examination or personal reflection. Henchard, even when successful, is vaguely aware of what he is repressing, subconsciously troubled that in time his secret will be found out. His confession to Farfrae of what he has suppressed for years brings momentary relief, but very soon, his pride regrets that he has placed trust in another, as this act makes him even more vulnerable and dependent. This foreshadows Freud's notion of psychoanalysis as the talking cure. His desire to be open and vulnerable collides with the self-preservation instinct of his secretiveness. The entrepreneur's thrust in Henchard greatly opposes any such concession of weakness, which might undermine his drive and confidence. Because he has failed to condition his sub-conscious mind, Henchard's addiction to drinking remains a

dormant issue, ready to act up, because the pleasure of drinking has a better memory than its pain, thereby setting up a future scene of further debauchery and rash behaviour. In addition, drinking in a crisis is what Henchard has habitually done, and this habit brings him some comfort. The dialectic between Farfrae and Henchard was that the former was high on economy and low in spirit whilst the latter inverted these qualities. They are in Eastern philosophical terms Yin and Yang, opposites in outlook, practice and mentality, and seem destined to cooperate or reject each other in close friendship and cooperation, or else to destroy each other in competitiveness. Hardy clearly sets out this love-hate dialectic between the men in the fateful wrestling scene in the hay-loft.

The dialectic between Henchard and Farfrae is captured by Hillman, who argues that: 'a morbid principle like Thanatos, a sickness daimon a devil or shadow, who carries evil so that others may remain supremely ideal' (Hillman, 1991: 151). From a conventional perspective, it is hard to find fault with Donald Farfrae, as he is a positive contributor to Casterbridge's commercial and social communities. His personality reveals him as a pragmatist in business and romance, and being so, he is the polar opposite of Henchard. If Henchard's obsession lies in articulating his life force, then Farfrae's disposition is much more discreet and scheming in nature. Farfrae is not a romantic idealist like Jude or Tess but is more measured, successful in balancing competing oppositions. When the choice lay between the material and the romantic, Farfrae invariably promotes fiscal matters above those of sentiment. He sees life primarily through the lens of turning and retaining a shilling. The novel implies that if Scotland is the idyllic place he suggests in the songs he sings, then it was surely remiss of him not to return there. Farfrae responds: "And I from near Edinboro" he murmured. "it's better to stay at home, and that's true; but a man must live where his money is made" (Hardy, 2008b: 148). Perhaps Hardy was tapping into the English national stereotype of Scottish people in depicting Farfrae as a parsimonious individual at heart. His

monetary prudence is why the reckless and generous Henchard resonates far more with the reader than does his nemesis, the socially correct if passionless Farfrae. Part of Hardy's skill as a writer is to place Henchard in this comparative context, so that while we abhor his drastic actions, we retain an affection for him due to his emotional acts of kindness, honesty and charity. His erratic swings between these opposites make him seem more human than the more calculating Farfrae, whose very name implies that he is emotionally distant ('far from') the reader.

Farfrae is a careful speculator in wheat, and the narrator refers to his penchant for small moves and profits:

"Just when I sold the markets went lower, and I bought up the corn of those who had been holding back, at less price than my first purchases. And then," cried Farfrae, impetuously, his face alight, "I sold it a few weeks later after when it happened to go up again! And so, by contenting myself with small profits frequently repeated I soon made five hundred pounds-yes!-[bringing down his hand upon the table, and quite forgetting where he was]-while the others by keeping theirs in hand made nothing at all!" (Hardy, 2008b: 148-9).

This excerpt reveals Farfrae as a cunning and shrewd operator who is well versed in the darker arts of the business world. His particular addiction is to success in the commodity of corn, and his unintended self-revelation unmask him as the opportunist he is, both in commerce and in love. In this particular practice, he is the polar opposite of the expansive Henchard. He is the reactor to Henchard's actor; the opportunist who builds on Henchard's creativity and naivety of character. Lucetta sees Farfrae for what he really is: "I mean all you Scotchmen" she added in hasty correction. "So free from Southern extremes. We common people are all one way or the other – warm or cold, passionate or frigid. You have both temperatures going on in you at the same time" (Hardy, 2008b: 149). The problem for Farfrae is that he, too, fails to integrate them into a successful psycho-synthesis; when all is said and done, he is a businessman who utilises morality and romance to bolster his reputation and fortune. Even before his marriage to Lucetta, Farfrae has brought a calculating mind to his

choice of life-partner. He is happy that he has brought off a successful business coup at another's expense, and this is what gives him the freedom to entertain thoughts of marriage to Elizabeth-Jane. Although he observes all the romantic protocols in courtship with Lucetta and Elizabeth-Jane, with Farfrae business success always takes precedence over maudlin romantic ideals.

He contemplates marrying Elizabeth-Jane would make good business sense: 'Then who so pleasing, thrifty, and satisfactory in every way as Elizabeth-Jane? Apart from her personal recommendations a reconciliation with his former friend would be in the natural course of things flow from such a union' (Hardy, 2008b: 147). Farfrae's hardheaded approach is based on material considerations, rather than romantic love. In his choice of wives, Farfrae elevates his material prospects in marrying the wealthy Lucetta, though even in the exceptional circumstances of his wedding week, he relegates giving attention to his new-wife below the task of tending to commercial matters with a customer: 'At the last moment of leaving Port-Bredy Farfrae like John Gilpin had been detained by important customers, whom, even in exceptional circumstances, he was not the man to neglect' (Hardy, 2008b: 197). When Lucetta tragically dies as the result of the satirical skimmington-ride, the widower Farfrae later marries the highly desirable and emotionally mature Elizabeth-Jane. Henchard's estimation of Elizabeth-Jane coincides with Hardy's own view of life in general: 'That the quiet Elizabeth, who had long ago appraised life at a moderate value, and who knew, in spite of her maidenhood, that marriage was as a rule no dancing matter' (Hardy, 2008b: 302).

The contrast between Elizabeth-Jane's humanist approach, and Farfrae's mercenary disposition, is well illustrated in their final search for the location and fate of Henchard. Their joint venture revealed the contrasts residing in their motives, as Farfrae advises his wife to abandon the search as to continue would mean camping out for the night 'and that will make a hole in a sovereign' (Hardy, 2008b: 307). The period and intensity of their relationship to

Henchard was of a similar duration, as neither had a blood relationship with the former mayor, though both had experienced intense connections with him. Farfrae has a very balanced temperament, as revealed by the narration: 'although Farfrae had never so passionately liked Henchard as Henchard had liked him, he had on the other hand, never so passionately hated in the same direction as his former friend had done; and he was therefore not the least indisposed to assist Elizabeth-Jane in her laudable plan' (Hardy, 2008b: 305). Elizabeth-Jane wants to make amends to her stepfather for her cool response to his good wishes and gift on her wedding-day. With Farfrae, she has found a promising haven from the grosser troubles of life, and realising the emotional change that has taken place in the former mayor, she wishes to protect him from himself: 'her object was to place Henchard in some similar quietude, before he should sink into that lower existence which was only too possible to him now' (Hardy, 2008b: 306).

Hardy's allusions to Greek tragedians like Aristotle and Sophocles were apposite in terms of their portrayal of the individual and his natural flaws as producing tragedies afflicting humanity in every era. Aristotelian drama requires unity of plot, and evokes sympathy and catharsis in the reader. The Sophoclean tragedy *Oedipus the King* is mimicked in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* as the well-founded doubts of Elizabeth-Jane's parenthood are revealed by Susan Henchard's letter. Greek myth also resonates with the psychological theories of aggression in Henchard's character. Hardy's fiction anticipated the psychological theories of Freud and Jung, which suggested that humans are psychically divided, with ideas out of synchronicity with themselves and their epoch. Henchard, as a Victorian entrepreneur, embodied the Kantian determinism-free will debate, willing things to happen, but eventually in defeat, allowing fate to have its way with him. Henchard's rugged individualism reaps what it sows, namely a form of isolation. Hardy's fiction suggests that certain individuals were star-crossed like Henchard, who eventually gives up his struggle because the odds were fixed

against him, implying that malignant forces were at work: 'that ingenious machinery contrived by the gods for reducing human possibilities of amelioration to a minimum' (Hardy, 2008b: 297). Henchard rejected any second chance: 'he had no wish to make an arena a second time of the world that had become a mere painted scene to him' (Hardy, 2008b: 297). The eponymous mayor's psychic malaise revealed the spirit of madness, and the madness of his spirit, in a perfect blend of fire and darkness. Alcoholism was the key that opened the door a little into his mysterious depths. **\*His dying saved him from further shame and deprivation.**

## Chapter Five: Nature and Human Oppositions in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

The truth seems to be that a long line of disillusioning centuries has permanently displaced the Hellenic idea of life, or whatever it may be called. What the Greeks only suspected we know well; what their Aeschylus imagined our nursery children feel. That old-fashioned revelling in the general situation grows less and less possible as we uncover the defects of natural laws, and see the quandary that man is in their operation (Hardy, 2008a: 165).

The above passage from *The Return of the Native* alludes to Aeschylus's tragic vision of man in an uncaring universe, which Hardy felt was equally attuned to his own era. Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859), with its illustration of natural adaptation and mutation in a continuous creative process, spurred on by a universal energy, and its implication that humanity was part of this process, was a seminal influence on Hardy. He would probably have felt that the Greek culture of Aeschylus's time, which credited the ancient deities with participating in the pain and pleasures of human existence, was more relevant than a Judeo-Christian omnipotent creator, who, instead of creating a perfect world of love and kindness in all creatures, produced a world of struggle and pain. Naming Tess's son 'Sorrow' was suggestive of her fate and was a portent of things to come. It was Hardy's belief that the creator, if it existed at all, had made a critical misjudgement with regard to human emotions. Darwin's scientific research had demonstrated that there was no Holy Plan, only a permanent battle for hegemony in all of Nature. The opposition created by the conscious mindfulness of humans when confronted by unconscious nature is the fundamental dialectic in Hardy's writing; it is what underpins the religious-agnostic divisions and love pathologies in Hardy and his art. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* captures one woman's tragedy, because it is an

illustration of the dialectic between reflective man and mindless nature. Tess interprets the world within a minute period of time. Unprepared and vulnerable, she is at the mercy of events she cannot control: 'this consciousness upon which she had intruded was the single opportunity of existence ever vouchsafed to Tess by an unsympathetic first cause; her all; her every and only chance' (Hardy, 2008a: 172).

As an indication of Hardy's admiration for the Greek tragedian, the conclusion of the novel invokes a literary reference to his Grecian predecessor. Hardy the poet and novelist had also aspirations to be a dramatist, as the epic poem-drama *The Dynasts*, with its multiplicity of characters, reveals. Both Aeschylus and Hardy sought to represent the worst that could happen to human beings as a first step towards ameliorating humanity's dilemma. In 1860 in a public debate at Oxford between Thomas Huxley, the Biologist whom Hardy knew and admired, and Bishop Samuel Wilberforce on Darwinian Theory only months after the publication of Darwin's thesis, the religious and agnostic positions respectively were argued. Whilst there were some witticisms by Wilberforce as to which side of Huxley's family tree contained his ape antecedents, the outcome led to a wider acceptance of the new doctrine of evolution. The seriousness of both arguments can be judged by Huxley's alleged rejoinder that Wilberforce was obscuring the truth. Hardy was aware that universal energy was the causality of ideas, matter and fate, so he was very interested in the outcome. The provocative question in the debate was whether God as the creator was the First Cause, or whether energy itself was spontaneously omnipresent throughout the cosmos. The scientist in Hardy veered towards Huxley's argument.

The strongest weight of opinion in Victorian science believed that accident and chance determined individual fate and the survival of fauna and flora. The contrary view was that God created the world, with no suggestion that he had made any errors in its construction. Hardy challenged this view, stating that if the Creator had created humans, then

equipping them with emotions was a mistake, as emotions occasioned all the painful experiences of life. Hardy's perspective, as quoted earlier in *The Life*, that 'the emotions have no place in a world of defect, and it is a cruel injustice that they should have developed in it' (Hardy, 1984: 153), put him on a collision course with the religious authorities of his day. His defence of Tess's moral probity outraged Victorian defenders of public morality. An exchange of letters between the Reverend Dr Grosart and Hardy illustrates the dialectic between religious belief and the writer's agnosticism. Grosart wrote in 1888 that he found abundant evidence that the facts and mysteries of nature and human nature had come urgently before Mr Hardy's penetrative brain (Hardy, 1984: 214). Grosart enumerated some of the horrors of human and animal life particularly parasitic, and added that the problem would be how to reconcile these with the absolute goodness and non-limitation of God. Hardy replied:

Mr Hardy regrets that he is unable to suggest any hypothesis which could reconcile the existence of such evils as Dr Grosart describes with the idea of omnipotent goodness. Perhaps Dr Grosart might be helped to a provisional view of the universe by the recently published *Life of Darwin*, and the works of Herbert Spencer and other agnostics (Hardy, 1984: 214).

What was curious was that Hardy's friend, Leslie Stephen, received a similar letter, and Stephen, who had already renounced his religion, was more acerbic than Hardy in his reply to the reverend gentleman stating: 'that as the reverend doctor was a professor of theology, and he himself only a layman, he should have thought it was the doctor's business to explain the difficulty to his correspondent, and not his to explain it to the doctor' (Hardy, 1984: 214). The whole Grosart correspondence was symbolic of Hardy's gradual and conflictual abandonment of the certainties of an earlier strong and orthodox Christian faith. His statement that 'I have been looking for God 50 years, and I think that if he had existed I should have discovered him' (Hardy, 1984: 234), resonates as someone who clearly wished for a positive outcome to this search.

The Victorian institutional authorities had to contend with social changes in the increased openness on sexual matters, with new educational opportunities, with geological revelations, and crucially, with Darwin's findings. When the casual remark from the antiquary Parson Tringham to John Durbeyfield is added to all the other accidents of life in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, it makes a strong case that chance, and not Intelligent Design, dictates events and circumstances. If Tess had not fallen asleep on the way to market, then the horse Prince would not have been killed, and the urgent need to find her a position at the D'Urberville estate might not have occurred, and if her father were not sleeping off his hangover, he would have taken the bees to market. In an exchange of philosophical thoughts between Tess and her brother Abraham on their way to market, the consensus emerges that humanity was very unlucky to land on a blighted planet:

Abraham- "How would it have been if we had pitched on a sound one?" Tess- "Well, father wouldn't have coughed and creaped about as he does, and wouldn't have got too tipsy to go this journey; and mother wouldn't have been washing, and never getting finished." Abraham- "And you would have been a rich lady ready-made, and not have had to be made rich by marrying a gentleman." Tess- "Aby, don't talk of that any more" (Hardy, 2008a: 37).

The dialogue between the Durbeyfield siblings crystallises the nature-human tensions which were very much part of the contemporary intellectual mind-set.

Terry Eagleton writes that though Hardy was growing prominent and successful, this boy from darkest Dorset was still out of place in the society of Robert Browning, Alfred Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, and a glittering array of politicians and aristocrats (Eagleton, 2005: 3), and one can see the connections between his unease in this social *milieu*, and that of Tess in the D'Urberville household. Hardy's subversion grew out of the ubiquitous social discrimination in Victorian society, which meant he would never be fully accepted in the ranks of the Establishment; indeed, it is probable that he was equally perceived as an oddity in literary and social circles. Eagleton states that 'Hardy, however was a kind of internal *émigré* within the Establishment, a spiritual fifth-columnist who was flattered to hobnob with

a set of patricians he sometimes secretly despised' (Eagleton, 2005:3). This dichotomy reveals him as being similar to his great characters as someone inhabiting clashing social worlds. *Tess* is an example of how Hardy's fiction unsettled rather than consoled a society experiencing the demise of former certainties. His immediate predecessors, George Eliot and Charles Dickens, were subtly subversive, whereas Hardy refused to offer anodyne comforts in contrived happy endings, or to give the impression that some great master-plan controlled everything:

What seizes Hardy imagination is not some iron determinism but the irony by which things fail to chime, the tragicomedy of missed opportunities and fatal incongruities. His is a Darwinist world of chance and contingency, not one of dire necessity (Eagleton 2005: 4).

Hardy's later work was never comforting, but was always subversive to church or state; it's tragic endings completely at odds with traditional happy outcomes. Ibsen's plays *A Doll's House* and *Hedda Gabler* had an influence on Hardy as Sue Bridehead and Bathsheba Everdene are portrayed as strident independent women, a challenge to contemporary patriarchy. In this, he was successful, as he portrays complex and differentiated female reactions to sexual activity. Thus, at times his heroines, Tess and Sue, were terrified by their sexual experiences. Conversely, Arabella, and later Tess, when she is with Angel, embrace their sexuality, and can be seen to experience pleasure. While alone in a wood at night, Tess discovers that her sensuousness has a resonance with the natural world, a perfect balance of body and mind:

The only exercise that Tess took at this time was after dark; and it was then, when out in the woods, that she seemed least solitary. She knew how to hit to a hair's breadth that moment of evening when the light and the darkness are so evenly balanced that the constraint of day and the suspense of night neutralize each other, leaving absolute mental liberty. It is then the plight of being alive becomes attenuated to its least possible dimensions.... Her flexuous and stealthy figure became an integral part of the scene (Hardy, 2008a: 97).

Gillian Beer, quoting from one of the earlier critics Oliver Elton, defined the difference between George Eliot and Hardy in the following interesting terms: 'while exhaustively

describing life, she is apt to miss the spirit of life itself. Its unashamed passion, its careless gaiety, the intoxication of sunshine – so far as she understands these things, she leaves us with the feeling that she rather distrusts them' (Beer, 1983: 242). Tess is a good example of nature's child contravening societal rules.

Hardy's portrayal of the post-seduction and now pregnant Tess is of a figure who is momentarily integrated with nature. He describes it as a moment of epiphany, a partial, rather than a final merging with the natural world: 'she had no fear of the shadows; her sole idea seemed to be to shun mankind-or rather that cold accretion called the world, which, so terrible in the mass, is so unformidable, even pitiable, in its units' (Hardy, 2008a: 97). Tess's imagination contemplates that a wet day 'was the expression of irremediable grief at her weakness in the mind of some vague ethical being whom she could not class definitely as the God of her childhood, and could not comprehend as any other' (Hardy, 2008a: 97). Her painful isolation, and its attendant melancholy, has brought with it a heightened awareness of the interconnectedness between humanity and nature. This excerpt sees Tess gradually moving away from childish concepts of a Deity and her consciousness of Nature and God changing to a different paradigm. Hardy's prose is highly critical of the harsh judgements of conventionality and so-called civilisation:

But this encompassment of her own characterisation, based on shreds of convention, peopled by phantoms and voices antipathetic to her, was a sorry and mistaken creation of Tess's fancy – a cloud of moral hobgoblins by which she was terrified without reason. It was they that were out of harmony with the actual world, not she .... She looked upon herself as a figure of guilt intruding into the haunts of Innocence (Hardy, 2008a: 97).

It is within the social scene that Tess's honesty is challenged, and this is also a challenging milieu for Hardy himself, a situation made more difficult by his shyness, another form of fear. Hardy's description of fear and its absence is interesting, as in order to describe Tess's sublime experience, it is likely that he must have personally experienced the sensations of alienated fear and integrated wholeness with nature.

Hardy's secrecy in his personal affairs suggests a man who was more comfortable in the shadows. His background and life experience created the paradigm of fear and rebellion from which his life and works flowed. The religious preachers would have inculcated a morbid fear of hell and damnation in him through their sermonising in his younger days. As a regular attendee at church, the young Hardy would also have had his imagination fired by descriptions of the Final Judgement. This defeatist or fatalistic vision is omnipresent in his fiction, consuming the brighter moments, and it is only by oblique allusion could the reader detect what Eagleton argued; that human damage was avoidable. The religious message of eternal damnation for breaking the Commandments was intimidating to say the least, having a profound and lasting effect on Tess and Hardy. Dale Kramer writes:

Yet although Hardy became an agnostic, he remained emotionally involved with the Church: many of his writings dramatize aspects of the pernicious influence of religious doctrines or the ineffectuality of institutional Christianity, but he could also evoke a wistful sense of the loss of an earlier, simpler faith, or affirm the lasting value of Christian Charity (Kramer, 1999: 55).

The baptism and burial of Tess's son Sorrow showed how the Church's rigidity had an anti-human dimension to it. Kramer states: 'by the time he came to write *Tess and Jude*, Hardy was even more explicit in dramatizing the way Christian teachings had widespread malign human consequences' (Kramer, 1999: 56).

The nature of the challenges confronting Tess are so complex and challenging that Hardy probably decided against any amelioration of them in the novel; he could not reveal with more clarity two of the greater malaises afflicting humanity. Lack of personal control by Alec in matters of sex, and alcohol abuse by her parents which made them oblivious to the consequences of their actions, conspire to ruin Tess's life. The addictions were primarily biological, physical and mental, suggesting natural aberrations in human design. The imbalances in the chemical constitutions of humans could have accounted for Alec's

predatory instincts over his ward Tess. Another fork in the tragedy of Tess's life path arises from care-taking her parents after a night's drinking at Rollover's Inn:

they went home together, Tess holding one arm of her father, and Mrs Durbeyfield the other ...on reaching the fresh air he was sufficiently unsteady to incline the row of three at one moment as if they were marching to London, and at another as if they were marching to Bath-which produced a comical effect, frequent enough on nocturnal homecomings; and like most comical effects, not so quite comic after all (Hardy, 2008a: 34).

The parents' lack of insight over the consequences of their irresponsible drinking, and all that flowed from it, constituted another compelling reason for more education on issues of ethics, sex and the dangers of alcohol in schools at that time. At home and at Trantridge, Tess's role models were poor ones, themselves victims of victims. Joan and John Durbeyfield were highly selfish people who wanted Tess to marry Stokes for pure self-advancement. Tess castigates her mother for failing to warn her of the dangers posed by men, stating that well-off young ladies find instruction on sexual matters in novels, which Tess or Arabella can't afford: 'I was a child when I left this house four months ago. Why didn't you tell me there was danger in men-folk?' (Hardy, 2008a: 94). The farcical journey home results in Tess taking the bees to market next day, which in turn results in the death of Prince, which in turn, leads to her seduction by Alec.

This sets up another cycle of crisis management, a motif throughout the novel where misfortune and setback reach their apogee at Stonehenge. The fear of life is a constant theme in Hardy's fiction though it did not overcome him personally. The fear that no one was in charge of human existence sees Tess take up the challenge of caring for her siblings:

...it behoved her to do something, to be their Providence; for to Tess, as to some few millions of others, there was a ghastly satire in the poets lines- not in utter nakedness, but trailing clouds do we come ... To her and her like, birth itself was an ordeal of degrading personal compulsion, whose gratuitousness nothing in the result seemed to justify, and at best could only palliate (Hardy, 2008a: 378).

This excerpt contains a strong affinity with Hardy's personal outlook; in it, he was expressing the agnostic's position on faith, as well as the dilemma of millions afraid to state their unbelief. He saw in Darwin's thesis *The Descent of Man* (1871) a paradox, because for him, its message became the beginning of the ascent of man from his lowly animal origins to an ultimately dominant position, which had been formerly occupied by God.

*The Life*, despite its commissions and omissions to protect Hardy's privacy, is overall a treasure house of information about how he comprehended the rapid changes in Nature and society; it contains much of his philosophy on life and death. For Hardy, his private thoughts and actions were understandably sacrosanct. As the author of the final lines of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, accusing the President of the Immortals of sporting with the life of his heroine, it was not at all out of place with the fiction and poetry which expressed his sceptical views on the supernatural's existence or of its participation in human affairs. Hardy's ironic comment at the conclusion of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* was tantamount to ascribing a personality to the deity, a concept to which he never subscribed personally. Elizabeth-Jane's reflections in the conclusion of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, that 'her experience had been of a kind to teach her, rightly or wrongly, that the doubtful honour of a brief transit through the sorry world hardly called for effusiveness, even when the path was suddenly irradiated at some half-way point by day-beams such as hers (Hardy, 2008b: 310), was a prophesy as to how the life of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* materialised. The abuse, starting within her family's circle, followed by the sudden death of the family horse, her subsequent rape-seduction by Alec Stokes, the emotional pain caused by Angel's lack of fidelity, and the physical hardship and deprivation experienced by Hardy's heroine at Flintcomb-Ash farm, was almost a complete annihilation of a sweet and innocent being. Her travails had altered her from the lover of everything in nature\*, she expresses her greatest loss in a letter to Angel:

"The daylight has nothing to show me, since you are not here, and I don't like to see the rooks and starlings in the field, because I grieve and grieve to miss you who used to see them with me. I long for only one

thing in heaven or earth, to meet you, my own dear. Come to me, come to me, and save me from what threatens me" (Hardy,2008:357).

Tess experienced a spiritualrenewal when Nature temporarily brightened the dark vistas of her past travail in the fresh encounter with Angel in the sylvan scene of Froom Vale:

Amid the oozing fatness and ferments of Froom Vale, at a season when the rush of juices could almost be heard below the hiss of fertilisation, it was impossible that the most fanciful love should not grow passionate.The ready bosoms [early hearts] existing here were impregnated by their surroundings (Hardy, 2008a: 164).

In later editions, Hardy revised 'early hearts' to read 'ready bosoms' in the excerpt's description of Tess's physical response to nature's promptings; 'bosoms' rather than 'hearts' was the more apt description in illustrating the connectivity between Nature and Tess.The heart's reaction was psychophysical, in tune with human emotion, whereas the word 'bosom' denotes an organic reaction to Tess's fecund surroundings.This particular short chapter appropriately termed 'The Rally', sees the rebirth of Tess in spiritual terms as her destiny is to love and she has found a focus for her affections.Her spirit soars as Angel begins to descend from the ivory tower of his imagination:

How very lovable her face was to him.Yet there was nothing ethereal about it; all was real vitality, real warmth, real incarnation ... To a young man with the least fire in him that little upward lift in the middle of her red top lip was distracting, infatuating, maddening....And it was the touch of the imperfect upon the would be perfect that gave the sweetness, because it was that which gave the humanity (Hardy, 2008a: 165).

The complexities that underpin the story depict Tess as an embodiment of soulful humility, while Angel is full of soaring spirit and intellectual pride.The novel is largely concerned with how the reality of random fate places impediments in the path of idealism.Plato's Ideal Forms represented by Heaven and Earth, perfection and flaw, acceptance and rejection of the flow of life, feature as oppositions in the imaginations of the two major protagonists, who may well mirror aspects of the younger and older Hardy.In the novel,Hardy alludes to the disappearance of God in people's imagination, a situation that had created something of an emotional vacuum for him personally. His mind-set was

communicated through the intellectual Angel, who rejected his father's religious beliefs. Tess, with her paradisiacal mind-set restored, queried Angel, 'tell me now, Angel do you think we shall meet again after we are dead? I want to know' (Hardy, 2008a: 394), is answered through an eloquent silence: 'he kissed her to avoid a reply at such a time' (Hardy, 2008a: 417).

Hardy loved music and played the violin with relish and ability. The religious allusion in showing Angel playing the harp has metaphysical connotations, but more importantly suggests that Angel resides in an ivory tower mentality, refusing or being unable, to come down to the flawed worldly level of Tess. Conversely, Tess idealises Angel:

There was hardly a touch of earth in her love for Clare ...though not cold natured he was rather bright than hot; less Byronic than Shelleyan. He could love desperately, but with a love more especially inclined to be imaginative and ethereal; it was a fastidious emotion which could jealously guard the loved one against his very self (Hardy, 2008a: 211).

Tess's spiritual awareness is holistic, an integration of light and shadow, and in realising her imperfect nature, she does not feel guilt in her sinfulness; it is as it should be. At the time, Angel lacked the wet emotional quality of compassion:

Tess stole a glance at her husband. He was pale, even tremulous; but, as before, she was appalled by the determination revealed in the depths of this gentle being she had married - the will to subdue the grosser to the subtler emotion, the substance to the conception, the flesh to the spirit. Propensities, tendencies, habits, were as dead leaves upon the tyrannous wind of his imaginative ascendancy (Hardy, 2008a: 265).

Angel's heart, on hearing Tess's confession on their wedding night, is mercilessly cold, full of the dark angel's pride and anger. It was not sufficient for Angel that Tess loved him unconditionally; he wanted her to be as white as the driven snow in all her conduct before she met him, a standard he did not apply to his own previous philandering. After his separation from Tess and his resultant self-exile, Angel travelling in Brazil, undergoes a catharsis through confiding to a doomed fellow Englishman the details of his brief marriage to Tess: 'he viewed the matter in a different light from Angel; thought that what Tess had been was of no importance beside what she could be, and plainly told Clare that he was wrong in coming

away from her' (Hardy, 2008a: 361). Angel's transformation 'during this time of absence aged a dozen years'. 'What arrested him now as of value in life was less its beauty than its pathos ... viewing her in these lights a regret for his hasty judgement began to oppress him' (Hardy, 2008a: 360):

He thought of Tess as she appeared on the day of the wedding. How her eyes had lingered upon him: how she had hung upon his words as if they were Gods. And during the terrible evening over the hearth, when her simple soul uncovered itself to his, how pitiful her face had looked by the rays of the fire, in her inability to realize that his love and protection could possibly be withdrawn (Hardy, 2008a: 361).

The deadly sin of Pride resides as the deeper implication in Angel's character, seeking wholeness through solely intellectual means. He is competent intellectually, but poorly equipped to meet the psychophysical challenge of free-spirited Tess. Her acceptance of the pleasure-pain binaries in life contrasts with Angel's vision of, Artemis and Demeter, the dead women of mythology, who are not flesh and blood, but rather imaginative and idealised creations. Angel states: 'she might just now have been Apostolic Charity herself returned to a self-seeking modern world' (Hardy, 2008a: 261), which creates a rod for both their backs. It conceals the real motive, the desire to mould Tess into what she cannot ever become: a plaster saint. Angel's unrealistic expectations elevating Tess to his ideal woman was reciprocated by Tess's reciprocal making of him into a God: 'to her he was, as of old, all that was perfection, personally and mentally. He was still her Antonius, her Apollo even' (Hardy, 2008a: 408).

Angel, after his wedding-night rejection of Tess, had travelled physically far away from her, but could not shed her spiritually nor emotionally. His escape to Brazil was a metaphorical retreat from confusion, demonstrating how grandiose intentions can falter when faced with their implementation. Tess's inferiority in intellectual abilities is compensated for by her superior native wisdom, and also by her conception of natural justice. It was through a Keatsian concept, the utility of painful experience, that both parties finally came home to

themselves. Eventually Angel finds his true nature: 'tenderness was absolutely dominant in Clare at last' (Hardy, 2008a: 408), and he said 'I will not desert you! I will protect you by every means in my power, dearest love, whatever you may have done or not have done' (Hardy, 2008a: 408). In the final denouement, all oppositions are overcome through their greater awareness that real love conquers all. On the run from the police search squads Angel enquires, 'can you walk well, Tessy' (Hardy, 2008a: 409), and he receives the very ardent reply: 'O yes! I could walk for ever and ever with your arm round me!' (Hardy, 2008a: 409).

Before her execution by the state on the gallows, her spirit's desire to live has been vanquished, she intimates that she has had enough of abuse from humanity, fate and Nature: "It is as it should be", she murmured. "Angel I am almost glad – yes, glad! This happiness could not have lasted. It was too much. I have had enough; and now I shall not live for you to despise me" (Hardy, 2008a: 418). The last stanza of the poem 'Tess's Lament', from *Poems Past and Present*, in 1901 states:

It wears me out to think of it,  
To think of it;  
I cannot bear my fate as writ;  
I'd have my life unbest;  
Would turn my memory to a blot,  
Would make every relic of me rot,  
My doings be as they were not,  
And leave no trace of me! (Hardy, 1995: 161).

Tess had experienced the twin misfortunes of being born to the wrong people at the wrong time. Genetically, nature had given her parents who were poor peasant farmers in an era where wealth dictated status, educational opportunities and the career roles in life. From her first encounters with Alec and Angel, it is her innate hope that generates optimistic outcomes, only for those hopes to be cruelly crushed by her experience in an uncaring universe. Her narrative is an example of how continuous unfulfilled hopes can harden a heart to stone. As

she grows older, she realises that Nature's gifts to her at birth were irresponsible parents, as her father *\*was* a drunken dreamer, while her immature mother was a child emotionally:

As Tess grew older, and began to see how matters stood, she felt quite Malthusian towards her mother for thoughtlessly giving her so many little sisters and brothers, when it was such a trouble to nurse and provide for them. Her mother's intelligence was that of a happy child: Joan Durbeyfield was an additional one, and that not the eldest, to her own long family of waiters on Providence (Hardy, 2008a: 43).

Nancy Barrineau makes the point, in her notes to the novel, that Hardy's Malthusian reference is to the theory that population always increases faster than the food supply, and that naturally-occurring disasters like famine, disease, and war will eventually control this imbalance when it becomes great enough (Hardy, 2008a: 424).

This is borne out by the setting of the novel in 1880s rural Dorset, where hunger was no stranger to the labourers and their families trying to keep body and soul together. Hardy possibly plagiarised sections from the *Dorsetshire Labourer*, inserting some details in *Tess* as the piece:

It was indeed, quite true that the household had not been shining examples either of temperance, soberness, or chastity. The father, and even the mother, had got drunk at times, the younger children seldom had gone to church, and the eldest daughter had made queer unions (Hardy, 2008a: 373).

This is very similar to the last paragraph of Hardy's famous essay. Tess's family have to leave their home and take their chances on the road, which was probably the reason she took up again with her despoiler Alec. In an example of social Darwinism, corresponding to Spencer's economic theory, the opprobrium of the landowner sees the surviving Durbeyfields lose their home and habitation: 'by some means the village had to be kept pure. So on this the first Lady-Day on which the Durbeyfields were expellable, the house, being roomy, was required for a carter with a large family; and widow Joan, her daughters Tess and Lisa-Lu, the boy Abraham and the younger children, had to go elsewhere' (Hardy, 2008a: 373). Lady-Day was

the traditional day when contracts between landowner and tenant farmer would begin and end.

*The Dorsetshire Labourer* essay brought home to a much wider public the trials and tribulation of a sub-culture that was constantly lampooned in cartoons and in popular story. The lack of role-modelling in the Durbeyfield household was due in no small part to a lack of education, which meant that sooner or later Victorian society was going to have to cope with family members who would have thought that drunkenness, grandiosity, and recourse to the magical thinking associated with reading the predictions of *The Compleat Fortune-Teller* were normal. Tess's mother had great faith in *The Compleat Fortune-Teller* (Hardy 2008: 33), as the predictor of future events. Speaking on Tess's potential move to the D'Urberville estate and residence her mother declares: 'I tried her fate in the Fortune-Teller, and it brought out that very thing' (Hardy, 2008a: 33). Once John Durbeyfield has learned that he has the most tenuous of connection to the D'Urberville Knights, he feels he has the right to declare himself Sir John. This is an example of the farce underpinning the tragedy that is *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. The farm labourers faced oppositions in the freezing natural conditions, and also in the landowners' power to which they had to submit in order to survive. The inhuman treatment of Tess and her workmate feeding the threshing machine had left her badly shaken physically, and at the mercy of nature and inconsiderate farm owners. The rate for labourers' hire was less than subsistence level, and Hardy wrote to fellow writer (Sir) Rider Haggard, obliquely impugning the lack of morality or generosity in the landed gentry:

As to your first question, my opinion on the past of the agricultural labourers in this county: I think, indeed know, that down to 1850 or 1855 their condition was in general one of great hardship. I say in general, for there have been fancy-farms, resembling St. Clairs in Uncle Tom's Cabin, whereon they lived as smiling exceptions to those of their class all around them. I recall one such, the estate-owner being his own farmer, and ultimately ruining himself by his hobby. To go to the other extreme; as a child I knew a sheep-keeping boy who to my horror shortly afterwards died of want—the contents of his stomach at the autopsy being a raw turnip only (Hardy, 1984: 335).

The Hardy family's small successful building enterprise placed them in a class above the sheep-keeping boy and the essays *The Dorsetshire Labourer* 1883, the *Dorset Farm Labourer* 1884, and the many descriptions of farm life in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* approximate to his neighbours in Upper Bockhampton:

The village had formerly contained, side by side with the agricultural labours, an interesting and better informed class ... including the carpenter, the smith, the shoemaker, the huckster, together with nondescript workers other than farm-labourers; a set of people who owed a certain stability of aim and conduct to the fact of their being life-holders like Tess's father, or copy-holders, or, occasionally, small free-holders....These families, who had formed the backbone of the village life in the past ... were the depositories of the village traditions (Hardy, 2008a: 372).

Young Hardy was very well educated for the time, better tutored than his character Tess, though lacking the higher educational instruction of Angel Clare \*or Horace Moule .Both of Hardy's parents were hardworking, and his mother instinctively knew the power residing in a good education, sending her teenage son to a good private school in Dorchester.She read and absorbed some of the English classical writers whose wisdom and insight she imparted to Thomas.In accordance with the standards of the time, Jemima was cautious of Tom giving up architecture to become a full-time novelist; she would have preferred if he had taken smaller, incremental steps rather than such a gigantic leap in his career path.Tess is representative of the painful labour undergone by women field workers, and \*Hardy had observed his mother's strenuous labour, declaring that women blend and adapt to farm labour better than men. It is women who conceive, carry and give birth, and their role in farm husbandry, which Hardy would have observed closely, was a crucial one, as his father and brother were both engaged in their roles as small builders:

But those of the other sex were the most interesting of this company of binders, by reason of the charm which is acquired by woman when she becomes part and parcel of outdoor nature, and is not merely an object set down therein at ordinary times.A field-man is a personality afield; a field-woman is a portion of the field; she has somehow lost her margin, imbibed the essence of her surrounding, and assimilated herself with it (Hardy, 2008a: 100).

Whether in the fecund surroundings of Talbothays dairy farm, or the harsh Winter surroundings of Flintcomb-Ash, Tess's work was always demanding. Trying to earn a living or turn a profit in either place was a hard labour, suggesting that Nature only gave her bounty \*grudgingly in return for sweat from the human brow. It was fair to say that neither providence nor morality took much interest in Tess or her equally affected workmates.

At Talbothays farm at dairy-time, the human mood was like the landscape; the sap was rising in Tess in a time of abundance and fertility. The effect of Nature stimulated dormant desires, especially in the women on the farm, causing a dichotomy; their desire for pro-creation was opposed by their religious conditioning and by a native caution. The physical conveyancing by Angel of Tess and the dairymaids across the flooded path at the dairy farm mirrors the delicacy attached to heterosexual encounter in Hardy's era. This constituted another opposition between social mores and natural desires. His most idyllic scenes set in the fecund Talbothays dairy, combining bountiful nature with expressed and repressed female sexuality:

The air of the sleeping-chamber seemed to palpitate with the hopeless passion of the girls. They writhed feverishly under the oppressiveness of an emotion thrust on them by cruel Nature's law—an emotion which they neither expected or desired.... The differences which distinguished them as individuals was but portion of one organism called sex (Hardy, 2008a: 162).

Love was in the air, and hearts of Tess and her co-workers, are stimulated by Angel's arrival. This is an aspect of Hardy's conflicted nature, as this pessimistic individual seemed forever hopeful in the areas of love and desire.

The amorous side of Hardy's character re-emerged in later years with his fascination for the local young actress Gertrude Bugler, something which caused his second wife Florence great resentment, though Hardy persisted with his obsession. Bugler was a beautiful young woman of sixteen in 1916, playing Marty South in the local amateur production of *The Woodlanders*. Hardy wrote a special part for her in scenes, which he selected, and she became

his protégé. She also played Eustacia Vye in *The Return of The Native*, and in 1924, she was given the part of Tess. Hardy thought her the very incarnation of his heroine, and was delighted to learn that her mother had been a dairymaid like Tess at [Talbothays]-Kingston Maurward, which Hardy had visited while researching the novel. Bugler was beautiful and sensitive in her portrayal of Tess, which would have increased the erotic effect that drama had on Hardy (Pite, 2007: 452). Pite argues that Gertrude, though very good-looking, never led Hardy on, that she had merely an innocent fondness for the old man of eighty-four (Pite, 2007: 454). There are grounds for surmising that his infatuation for Gertrude was due to his view that she was a reincarnation of Tess, Pite states, 'as he wrote to his old friend A.C. Benson that year, he was living "close to the spots of my childish memories" and could revive them very often', and Gertrude Bugler's performance felt like the perfect revival (Pite, 2007: 455). It is sometimes difficult to determine the boundaries of the Hardy who possessed almost total recall; and his infatuation with Gertrude seems more a work of fiction than real life.

Drama had stimulated his erotic fantasies years before when he attended Ibsen's *The Master Builder* (1892) with Mrs Henniker, whose attractiveness also became a source of a lengthy and obsessive fascination for Hardy. It was a case of life imitating art as, just as Alec groomed Tess with nefarious intent, so Hardy had become the older obsessive suitor for young Bugler's charms; he was now an eighty-four year old man and almost six times her age, and was totally fascinated by the young actress. Florence felt greatly offended when the talented Gertrude called to their home asking for Hardy. She responded by sending her a curtly dismissive letter:

In the first place, all invitations to Max Gate, naturally come from me, as is the custom, & again it is not usual in our station of life for any lady to call upon a gentleman. It is simply not done. Since my marriage, all calls at this house have been made on me (Pite, 2007: 453).

A further letter records that Hardy had told Bugler to come and see him whenever she wanted. Florence states in separate correspondence to Louise Yearsley that Hardy lost his heart to her entirely (Pite, 2007: 453) and that he was 'quite crazy about her' (Pite, 2007: 453). The patriarchal nature of Victorian society enabled Hardy to whimsically indulge his fantasy while attacking it fictively in the novel. He knew first-hand the deadly war between the spirit and the flesh (Preface, *Jude the Obscure* 1895). Florence was jealous of their liaison and was quick to apprise Hardy's friends of his shortcomings. When she learned that Gertrude was to marry her cousin she declared that Hardy's infatuation would not cast me down too much' (Pite, 2007: 453). 'But the other members of the company are being a little upset by all the applause being given to her [...] So you see it is possible to have too good a leading lady' (Pite, 2007: 454). The following year, the Hardy Players put on a version of *Desperate Remedies* without Gertrude who was pregnant. In what amounts to *schadenfreude* Florence perhaps injudiciously records 'poor Gertrude Bugler seems to have suffered agonies at being cut out by a rival leading lady, Ethel Fare' (Pite, 2007: 454). The contrasting oppositions experienced by Gertrude Bugler through her stage triumphs, and later through the personal loss of her baby on the day of the performance by her deputy, is seen in Florence's quietly enraged reaction to her love rival: 'the tragic climax is that she had a still-born son on the day of the performance' (Pite, 2007: 454). Given Hardy's ongoing fascination with beautiful young women, and given the lengths to which he went to cultivate them, it should come as no surprise that his own heroine should combine aspects of nobility as well as physical beauty\*.

The remnants of the D'Urberville line in Tess's genealogy endowed her with a touch of the aristocrat, and with a superior attitude, which was out of synchronicity with her place in society. This is clear from her refusal to fight one of the other women, as already noted, and in her refusal of Alec's offer of a lift home after the party at Chaseborough drawing the remark from him: 'Very well, Miss Independence; please yourself' (Hardy, 2008a: 74). D. H.

Lawrence felt that Tess's superiority of manner derived from her aristocratic nature. The nobility did not reside in her parents, yet the haughtiness of Tess's remark implies that several generations between the dynasties of D'Urberville and the Durbeyfield family have been elided in aspects of her character. Her spiritual kinship is with the D'Urberville Knights. The narrator comments, that 'the D'Urberville Knights and Dames slept on in their tombs unknowing' (Hardy, 2008a, 420), but their influences live on, forming part of Tess's character in inherited unconscious attitudes, as well as in her physical beauty.

In a way, her inheritance, both physical and social, is central to her fate, as at the scene of Alec's physical seduction of Tess, the narrator enquires 'but might some might say, 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 in a journey, or he was sleeping and not to be awaked (Hardy, 2008a: 82). Tess's victimisation by Nature and humanity was karmic as the novel states that the D'Urberville Knights raped and pillaged the area in former times: 'doubtless some of Tess D'Urbervilles mailed ancestors rollicking home from a fray had dealt the same wrong even more ruthlessly upon peasant girls of their time' (Hardy, 2008a: 82). In an obvious reference to the sins of the parents being visited on succeeding generations, Hardy takes issue with the injustice of this: 'but though to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children may be a morality good enough for divinities, it is scorned by average human nature; and it therefore does not mend the matter' (Hardy, 2008a: 82). The fatalism of Tess's own people is expressed as 'it was to be' (Hardy, 2008a: 83), though Hardy's narrator felt, 'there lay the pity of it' (Hardy, 2008a: 83), as well as noting that 'one may, indeed, admit the possibility of a retribution lurking in the present catastrophe' (Hardy, 2008a: 82). Hardy the optimist is forever being opposed by Hardy the pessimist or Hardy the fatalist, and it is in this opposition that the complexity of Tess's narrative presentation is to be found.

In Hardy's fiction, Nature is never merely background; its powerful presence is generally though not always inimical to humanity. T.S. Eliot wrote:

In consequence of his self-absorption, he makes a great deal of landscape; for landscape is a passive creature which lends itself to an author's mood. Landscape is fitted too for the purposes of an author who is interested not at all in men's minds, but only in their emotions; and perhaps only in men as vehicles for emotions. It is only, indeed, that in their emotional paroxysms that most of Hardy's character come alive (Eliot, 1933: 55).

Wordsworth, whose poetry Hardy admired, felt that humanity could live in harmony with Nature though Hardy identified more with Tennyson's characterisation of nature as red in tooth and claw as depicted in *In Memoriam A.H.H.* (1849), originally entitled *The Way of the Soul*. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* also echoes Schopenhauer who stated that Man is a wolf to man (Magee, 1998: 139), as it sees Alec rape the physical being of Tess, while Angel destroys her spiritual aspirations towards love. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* shows how the accident of birth determines what happens to Tess, and shows how human ethics and nature's processes are in conflict. Hardy's vision would have seen how pesticides and herbicides as an aid to greater yields from the land achieved their goals at the expense of other life forms, and threatened the exhaustion of agriculture's earthen body.

It was in the years between Wordsworth and Hardy that farm mechanisation and agricultural expansionism increased greatly, threatening old traditional ways and values, bringing about huge changes in both humanity and nature. Hardy's description of Autumn is a beautiful portrait of how the internal and external connects acting positively on Tess's mood: 'The days of declining autumn which followed her assent, beginning with the month of October, formed a season through which she lived in spiritual altitudes more nearly approaching ecstasy than any other period of her life' (Hardy, 2008a: 211). The relationship between nature and humanity is always close for the characters that Hardy presents sympathetically, and this is clear both in terms of nature as a benign and as a malign force. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is rich in its description of the natural world where Tess's

synchronicity with nature is contrasted with Angel's objectification of the same scene. Tess is a seamless part of the pastoral vista whereas Angel is always the detached observer:

The country custom of unreserved comradeship out of doors during betrothal was the only custom she knew, and to her it had no strangeness; though it seemed oddly anticipative to Clare till he saw how normal a thing she, in common with all the other dairyfolk, regarded it (Hardy, 2008a: 211).

Angel is of the town and has an intellectual view of nature, which makes him an outsider in contrast with Tess's quiet integrative personality; her gift is to perceive no divisions between her human and natural worlds. The novel connects the weather with emotions: 'and as Clare was oppressed by the outward heats so was he burdened inwardly by a waxing fervour of passion for the soft and silent Tess' (Hardy, 2008a: 164). The simple act of walking through the landscape with all its many charms was what engendered ecstasy in Tess, occasioning wonder in her as a beholder:

Thus, during this October month of wonderful afternoons they roved along the meads by creeping paths which followed the brinks of trickling tributary brooks, hopping across by little wooden bridges to the other side, and back again. They were never out of sound of some purling weir, whose buzz accompanied their own murmuring, while the beams of the sun, almost as horizontal as the mead itself, formed a pollen of radiance over the landscape (Hardy, 2008: 212).

Tess's vision lay in the connectivity of everything in nature.

Hardy repeatedly deals with flawed characters who have a small vision, notably Tess's mother Joan, whose lack of moral insight shows in her passive acceptance of Tess's spoliation: 'Well, we must make the best of it, I suppose....Tis nater, after all, and what do please God' (Hardy, 2008a: 94). Joan is a fatalist, full of superstitions and folkloric expressions, who has never internalised the incident that changed her daughter's life: 'her mother did not see life as Tess saw it. That haunting episode of bygone days was to her mother but a passing accident' (Hardy, 2008a: 210). Joan's mind-set belongs to pre-industrial England, and in temperament and worldview, she is more Jacobean than Victorian. The superstitious nature of the labouring and naive country folk was due to their possibly

unconscious rationalisations of their powerlessness; both temporal and divine powers were lodged in the control of their masters. Hardy's great contribution to the society from which he came, where individuals like Joan and her husband had few expectations or entitlements from nature or their temporal masters, was to give them a voice.

In this novel, Hardy deconstructs how the religious strictures associated with the Sixth Commandment influences the ordinances which put Tess's behaviour at odds with social mores but which Hardy considered still perfectly in harmony with Nature: 'she had been made to break a necessary social law, but no law known to the environment in which she fancied herself such an anomaly' (Hardy, 2008a: 98). The excerpt also refers to the fact that though she was seriously violated \* a residue of guilt feelings remain with the innocent Tess. Hardy demonstrated how Nature, as a providential presence to one of its organisms, was mindless in its passivity. This opposition concerned Nature's amorality clashing with human ethics and the novel prods the reader's conscience with its implicit plea for the furthering of greater social awareness and compassion for the marginalised in society. Ethically, as has been noted, Hardy was influenced by leading Victorian intellectuals such as Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), who philosophised in *The Principles of Psychology* (1855) that life is the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations, as he advocated a social Darwinism paralleling nature. Whilst Hardy admired Spencer's development of the Darwinian theme as it applied to macro-economics, his fiction always contained the subliminal message that his ultimate loyalty was to the poor, and those tempted to stray from the path of righteousness. In other words, it was Christian message in all but name.

If human ethics were to tolerate a free for all attitude in human interactions as a complementary illustration of market forces regulating the capitalist system, it was easy to understand how Hardy sided more with Huxley rather than with Spencer in interpreting Darwinian evolution. A significant division arose between Spencer and Huxley; Huxley was

Darwin's bulldog as Darwin was frequently sick, and both men, along with Hardy, were former allies in promoting Darwinian Theory. They had however evolved competing ethics on Darwinian Theory, and Huxley would have found Spencer's over-concentration on material progress repugnant. Huxley promoted and engaged in social regeneration, whereas Spencer's dictum of survival of the fittest theoretically militated against The Poor Laws from which the Durbeyfield family, in their downward spiral, could have benefitted. The era saw the beginning of some state social support and Hardy's mother Jemima may have been a beneficiary.

The different approaches of Spencer and Huxley to Darwinism, and by extension to Hardy, were highlighted in Huxley's 'Romanes Lecture on Evolution and Ethics' in 1893, which amounted to a summarising synthesis of John Stuart Mill's Utilitarianism and the implications for humanity of evolutionary theory. Spencer, like Hardy, had advocated Comte's Positivism, a socio-cultural evolution with an ethics based on the realities of evolution, which are seen as providing the base for ethics and politics. Spencer felt that morality grew out of social evolution, and he was in the vanguard of formulating an ethical response to Darwin's theory outlined in *Data of Ethics* (1879). He felt that the English were atop the evolutionary pyramid, and that the unknowable lay within the grasp of man through the triumphs of experimental science. Huxley outlined his position on Nature and Man:

Cosmic nature is no school of virtue, but the headquarters of the enemy of ethical nature. Self-assertion, the unscrupulous seizing upon all that can be grasped, the tenacious holding of all that can be kept ... constitute the essence of the struggle for existence ... For his successful progress as far as the savage state, man has been largely indebted to those qualities which he shares with the ape and the tiger (Pattison, 1902, 4).

For Huxley and Hardy, the grasping and bearish nature of humanity had to be transcended. It could be readily seen in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* that Alec, Joan and John Durbeyfield, and even Angel saw Tess as their natural possession; she was someone to control, to discard, and to exploit for own gratification.

The admiration that Hardy held for Huxley, surpassing his affinity with Schopenhauer or Spencer, and even with Darwin himself, probably owed a lot to Huxley's statement in his Romanes lecture where he pointed the way forward in ethical terms:

the practice of what is ethically best-what we call goodness or virtue-involves a course of conduct which, in all respects, is opposed to that which leads to success in the cosmic struggle for existence. In place of ruthless self-assertion, it demands self-restraint; in place of thrusting aside, or treading down all competitors, it requires that the individual shall not merely respect, but shall help his fellows ... It repudiates the gladiatorial theory of existence ... Laws and moral precepts are directed to the end of curbing the cosmic process and reminding the individual of his duty to the community, to the protection and influence of which he owes, if not existence itself, at least the life of something better than a brutal savage (Pattison, 1902: 4).

Huxley's statement is Christian in tone, without the supernatural underpinnings. In the aftermath of her seduction, Tess wrestles with her religious belief, discussing with an itinerant painter erecting signs whether God had really said 'Thy, Damnation, Slumbereth, Not' (Hardy, 2008a: 91). The painter full of evangelical zeal is about to paint 'Thou, Shalt, Not, Commit'- when Tess is disturbed by the anomaly about how she could be guilty of breaking the Sixth Commandment when she was raped? The narrator states that some people might have cried: 'Alas, poor Theology! at the hideous defacement – the last grotesque phase of a creed which had served mankind well in its time' (Hardy, 2008a: 91).

While Hardy was enthused by recent scientific discoveries, he always elevated human interests above scientific principles. He was betimes a believer in God, an atheist, a socialist, a snob, an unhappy husband and a desolate widower. He evolved from Christian believer to Agnostic; from a socialist author to a Victorian socialite; and from a driven romantic lover to an apathetic vindictive spouse. He was consistent in how his underlying mood was like his house at Max Gate: gloomy. Conversely, he could be transformed from a gloomy mind-set by a piece of music, a painting, or the scenery on Dorset's Jurassic coast. His resentment towards Emma meant the poem 'Lyonesse' remained unpublished with the poems of 1898, though the elegiac *Poems 1912-13* could only have come from the heart of a man who loved and

appreciated her in all her positive and negative moods. Despite the inconsistencies, in the final analysis, Hardy's compassionate humanity dictated his life and works. Despite his musings on life and death the fact that he lived until he was eighty-eight speaks volumes for his survival instincts.

While Hardy possessed the qualities of a polymath, with an intellectual grasp of the latest discoveries and developments in the later Victorian world of science and religion, he was primarily a man with the greatest concern for the suffering of the destitute. *The Life* shows Hardy's anathema to the evils of destitution, by showing property owners who are supported by a prostitute's earnings:

September 10th 1888. Destitution sometimes reaches the point of grandeur in its pathetic grimness: e.g. as shown in the statement of the lodging-house keeper in the Whitechapel murder: -He had seen her in the lodging-house as late as half-past one o'clock or two that morning. He knew her as an unfortunate, and that she frequented Stratford for a living. He asked her for her lodging-money, when she said, I have not got it. I am weak and ill, and have been in the infirmary. He told her that she knew the rules, whereupon she went out to get some money (Hardy, 1984: 223).  
Hardy's cryptic response to *The Times* report read: 'O richest City in the world! She knew the rules' (Hardy, 1984: 223).

His attitudes had altered considerably from twenty to forty years of age, as he changed from a Christian idealist to the disappointed observer, who saw that transforming religious ideals into happy emotional results was a highly problematic undertaking in a complex world. Beer quotes from a Hardy journal in 1876 when he was thirty-six:

If it be possible to compress into a sentence all that a man learns between twenty and forty, it is that all things merge in one another—good into evil, generosity into justice, religion into politics, the year into the ages, the world into the universe. With this in view the evolution of species seems but a minute and obvious process in the same movement (Beer, 1983: 257).

Being an avid reader of contemporary news, he understood that Tess Durbeyfield was an example of just one of many young countrywomen who had been taken advantage of by predatory men. Tess had seen her sweet trusting innocence violated by Alec Stokes, and her religious beliefs unsupported by the official church's position on motherhood outside

marriage. Thomas Huxley, whom *The Life* describes as a man who united a fearless mind with the warmest of hearts and the most modest of manners (Hardy, 1984: 125), was a kindred spirit of Hardy, who coined the term 'Agnostic' to describe his uncertainty at God's existence. Speaking as an Agnostic, he allegedly stated: 'I have no faith, very little hope, and as much charity as I can afford. Huxley's statement casts a cold if realistic eye on the challenge of transforming the Christian Ideals or virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity into a set of workable standards and ethics to which people could aspire'. Huxley's 'Romanes Lectures on Evolution and Ethics', in 1893, attracted a large amount of attention, and was the subject of much theological debate. Hardy, in describing himself as a meliorist, was following Huxley's paradigm: 'let us understand, once and for all, that the ethical progress of society depends, not on imitating the cosmic process, still less in running away from it but combating it' (Pattison, 1902: 5).

The view of the contemporary Idealist philosopher Pringle-Pattison (1897) on the cause of misalignments between humanity and nature, differs from the views of Huxley and Hardy. Pattison explores this in *Mans Place in the Cosmos* (1897):

Now the strength of the evolutionary theory of ethics lies in its frank recognition of the unity of the cosmos; and in this it is, so far, at one with the philosophical doctrine of Idealism to which it is otherwise so much opposed—the doctrine which finds the ultimate reality of the universe in mind or spirit, and its End in the perfecting of spiritual life (Pattison, 1902: 10).

Hardy's ethics collide with Pattison's description of the pernicious fallacy underlying Hardy's description of Tess's falling from innocence, wandering alone in the woods, a prey to her own reflections, terrified without reason by a cloud of moral hobgoblins (Hardy, 2008a: 97):

It was they who were out of harmony with the actual world, not she. Walking among the sleeping birds in the hedges, watching the skipping rabbits on a moonlit warren, or standing under a pheasant-laden bough, she looked as a figure of guilt intruding into the haunts of innocence. But all the while she was making a distinction where there was

no difference. Feeling herself in antagonism she was quite in accord. She had been made to break an accepted social law, but no law known to the environment in which she fancied herself such an anomaly (Hardy, 2008a: 97).

Reviewing the novel Pattison criticised Hardy's tendency to assimilate the moral and the natural, elevating the natural above the moral law. Buttressing his argument, he cites Matthew Arnold's perspective on man within nature: 'instead of saying that nature cares nothing about chastity, let us say that human nature, our nature, cares about it a great deal' (Pattison, 1902: 7). Hardy saw the integration of human and natural interests as unlikely in his lifetime.

It is perhaps it is in early adulthood that human and natural interests coincide; there is a primordial urge acting through Tess when she clasped his neck: 'and for the first time Clare learnt what an impassioned woman's kisses were like upon the lips of one whom she loved with all her heart and soul, as Tess loved him' (Hardy, 2008a: 208). Tess's affirmation of Angel occurs primarily through the sensation of touch, which is arguably more affirming than any spoken expression of love. It was a womanly gesture with greater profundity than merely declaring her love for him: 'so they drove to the gloom, forming one bundle inside the sail-cloth, the horse going as he would, and the rain driving against them. She had consented. She might well have agreed at first' (Hardy, 2008a: 208). Interestingly, Hardy is seen to favour natural processes over social conventions: 'the appetite for joy, which pervades all creation; that tremendous force which sways humanity to its purpose, as the tide sways the helpless weed, was not to be controlled by vague lucubration's over the social rubric' (Hardy, 2008a: 208). In their loving encounter, Nature has also temporarily softened Angel's rigidity.

Hardy's negative side was overall anti-life as it was presently constructed, and at times, it seemed that this aspect of his character wished for death or for some form of annihilation. He was fascinated by love but he possessed a morbid sense that Eros would always cede to the ultimate primacy of Thanatos. In peeling back layers of human

rationalisations, Hardy's fiction anticipates Freud's analysis of the eternal conflict between creation and entropy in *Civilisation and its Discontents*:

And now, I think, the meaning of the evolution of civilisation is no longer obscure to us. It must present the struggle between Eros and Death, between the instinct of life and the instinct of destruction, as it works itself out in the human species...and it is the battle of the giants that our nursemaids try to appease with their lullaby about heaven (Meisel, 1972: 130).

Hardy, at times, suggests that man and nature are not harmonious entities. He is empathetic with Nature ascribing to it a form of consciousness, and suggesting a mutual antipathy between two evolutionary forces operating at different tempos. As an intellectual rationalist, Hardy would have known that the rational morality of existence itself had been open to question from ancient times; they were many who were like him with one foot in and one foot out on the question of whether to go on or not, the Stoics, Schopenhauer and Camus being examples.

Davis outlined how Pattison linked Hardy's pessimism with the despair of Arnold's poem *Empedocles on Etna* (1867): 'no, we are strangers here, the world is from of old...To tunes we did not call, our being must chime' (Davis, 2004: 96). Pattison argued that the blind selection force in Darwinism is not intelligent enough to keep the cosmos successfully integrated once humans become more evolved. It was merely a stage in the evolution of man and nature. He argued that humanity could not return to its origin and had to press on, stating that the true nature of the cause only becomes apparent in the effect (Pattison, 1902: 11). Identifying the premature despair of Arnold and Hardy, Pattison was convinced that humanity needed the reassurance that comes with a sense of mission. He asserted that the gap, created by man was itself the further prompting of the cosmos at a new level (Davis, 2004: 96-97). Hardy's multi-factorial approach and individual comprehension of existence accommodated disparate ideas which produced his occasional resentment towards nature;

observing that its energy was solely interested in replicating itself without any inherent morality on whether its issue survived or not.

Hardy's method is not to blend the disparate constituents of the fiction, but to leave them individual, and identifiable in permanent suspension and dialectic with each other, a dialectic that will never achieve any form of Hegelian sublation. In deconstructing some of the traditional beliefs of the old structures of society without offering an alternative, Hardy lacked what Pattison described as a sense of mission (Davis, 2004: 97). As stated earlier, Hardy's philosophy consisted of identifying the problem, but not in offering solutions; he knew that solving the conflicts between amoral nature and ethical humanity would take millennia. As part of this sense of identifying the problem, Hardy comments on how former courtesies were disappearing from his contemporary society, a form of regression to natural if selfish ways:

Though my life, like the lives of my contemporaries, covers a period of more material advance in the world than any of the same length can have done in other centuries, I do not find that real civilisation has advanced equally. People are not more humane, so far as I can see, than in the year of my birth. Disinterested kindness is less. The spontaneous goodwill that used to characterize manual workers seems to have departed. One day of late a railway porter said to a feeble old lady, a friend of ours, See to your luggage yourself. Human nature had not sunk so low as that in 1840 (Hardy, 1984: 435).

Hardy was a sensitive person, traumatised by several conflicts like the Boer War and the First World War. His emotional pain shows in a letter to a Dr Saleeby in 1915. Here he makes the telling point that: 'If nature were creative, she would have created painlessness, or be in the process of creating it-pain being the first thing we instinctively fly from' (Hardy, 1984: 490). He was traumatised early in life by witnessing two public hangings that must have lodged in his memory and could have inspired the ultimate cruel fate of Tess. It was a catastrophic end to a woman's life, particularly for a character for whom he held a real affection. He describes Tess's beautiful presence in Blakemore Vale:

Tis a thousand pities your husband can't see 'ee now-you do look like a real beauty! said Izz Huett, regarding Tess as she stood on the threshold, between the steely starry without, and the yellow candlelight within. Izz spoke with magnanimous abandonment of herself to the situation; she could not be no woman with a heart bigger than a hazel-nut could be antagonistic to Tess in her presence, the influence which she exercised over those of her own sex being warmth and strength quite unusual, curiously overpowering the less worthy feminine feelings of spite and rivalry (Hardy, 2008a: 315).

Hardy contrasts this positive description with her miserable mood arising from her emotional pain caused by the hardships of a turbulent year at Flintcomb-Ash. Hardy's use of pathetic fallacy establishes how a scene can create a mood, and a mood a scene:

Here the landscape was whitey-brown; down there as in the Froom valley it was always green. Yet it was in that vale that her sorrow had taken shape, and she did not love it as formerly. Beauty to her, as to all who have felt it, lay not in the thing, but in what the thing symbolised (Hardy 2008a: 316).

*Tess of the D'Urbervilles* portrays the often-inharmonious interface between nature and humanity, and it expresses Hardy's relationship to Darwinism in natural, ethical and social terms. It replicates Hubert Spencer's application of Darwinism in the natural world to the realm of social and economic life in *Principles of Biology* (1864), which he saw as suggesting that the notion of the survival of the fittest was applicable to human as well in natural affairs. *The Lifestates* that as a young man 'he had been among the earliest acclaimers of *The Origin of Species*' (Hardy, 1984: 158). In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Hardy's sympathy lay in the special affinity between Nature and Tess; the novel implicitly indicts religious and societal ordinances for their oppression of the heroine. Tess's beauty is a manifestation of her inner harmony, and her idealism is never in accord with Alec's predatoriness nor with Angel's conditional affection. Their inverted pride does not allow them to see her as a child of Nature, instead viewing her as an object, and not as a breathing, feeling person, and they abuse her good nature spiritually, physically and emotionally. The oppression of her suitors' desires was as deadly to Tess's interest as was humanity's preying on pigs and rabbits in Hardy's fiction.

Hardy described how ethics were needed to nurture other species:

The discovery of the law of evolution, which revealed that all organic creatures are of one family, shifted the centre of altruism from humanity to the whole conscious world collectively. Therefore the practice of vivisection, which might have been defended while the belief ruled that men and animals are essentially different, has been left by that discovery without any logical argument in its favour. And if the practice, to the extent merely of inflicting slight dis-comfort now and then, be defended [as I sometimes hold it may] on grounds of it being good policy for animals as well as men, it is nevertheless in strictness a wrong, and stands precisely in the same category as would stand its practice on men themselves (Hardy, 1984: 373-4).

Hardy was an active campaigner for animal rights, as the *Apology to Late Lyrics and Earlier* makes clear:

And looking down the future that whether these few hold fast to the same: that whether the human and animal kindred races survive till the exhaustion or destruction of the globe, or whether these races perish and are succeeded by others before that conclusion comes, pain to all upon it, tongued or dumb, shall be kept to a minimum by loving-kindness, operating through scientific knowledge, and actuated by the modicum of free will conjecturally possessed by organic life when the mighty necessitating forces-unconscious or other-that have the balancing of the clouds, happen to be in equilibrium, which may or may not be often (Hardy, 1995: 527)

Hardy's reference to the balancing of clouds alludes to Job (37: 16), and casts a sceptical eye on a putative Providential harmony. The implication of Hardy's *Apology* is that humanity should foster human loving kindness instead of trusting to some imaginary Deity in the clouds, or on earth, that may not exist at all.

Hardy's reading of Darwin imparted a view of the world that was fundamentally different from that of his earliest poem 'Domicilium' (1856), written three years before *Origin of Species* (1859). Darwin revealed that the natural world underneath its beautiful facades was in a constant state of flux and warfare, with each species preying on the other in the struggle for survival. By the time he wrote *Jude the Obscure*, nearly forty years after 'Domicilium', Hardy's view was neither Wordsworthian nor pastoral, but rather a grim recognition that brutal realities were omnipresent, replacing former idyllic pictures of

nature. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Hardy describes nature as amoral even vindictive, a sinister power like Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798):

Though silent, these creatures bring their own message, for they are gaunt spectral creatures with tragical eyes - eyes which had witnessed scenes of cataclysmal horror in inaccessible polar regions of magnitude such as no human being had ever conceived.... Their message, it seems, is of a universe capable of unimaginable horror and tragedy, one in which Tess's personal tragedy seems inevitable and almost natural (Hardy, 2008a: 307).

Hardy's ambivalence on Nature's benign, malign, or indifferent intentions toward humans is presented again in his romantic view of farming in his poem 'In Time of The Breaking of Nations' (1915), suggesting symmetry between man and nature:

Only a man harrowing clods  
In a slow silent walk  
With an old horse that stumbles and nods  
Half asleep as they stalk (Hardy, 1995: 511, Lines 1-4).

*Tess of the D'Urbervilles* encapsulates the dialectic between the Darwinian processes in Nature, and the urgency for a human and ethical response. It is also, at a deeper level, an illustration of how the earthy soul of Tess copes with the soaring spirit of Angel, and is a classic example of the feminine-masculine opposition, or in Jungian terminology, that of the anima-animus. Tess's effort to ground the ascendant nature of Angel in the realities of human existence is heroic. His name alone is otherworldly, and he plays the harp, though for a long time he fails to see that Tess's experience of life in all its manifestations is a much more accurate compass to navigate the uncertain paths of life. The novel explores aspects of Darwinian Theory, where the strong prey on the vulnerable, and it reflects a changing Victorian philosophy, juxtaposing religious and humanist ideas. The itinerant sign writer who wrote 'Thy, Damnation, Slumbereth, Not. 2 Pet.ii.3. (Hardy, 2008:91) turns out to be a follower of the 'born again' preacher Alec D'Urberville, and the sign is synonymous with Alec's fire and brimstone sermonising, which was repugnant to Tess. In her display of

freethinking, Tess stands for individual conscience over doctrines that warn of damnation from a wrathful God who may never have experienced the sweet temptations of pleasure. The painter's next sign Thou, Shalt, Not, Commit -(Adultery?) (Hardy,2008:92) reveal how the Commandments are for general consumption without any allowances for special cases like Tess who rejoins: "'Pooh – I don't believe God said such things!'" (Hardy, 2008:92).

It can be argued that Angel's desire for Tess is a primordial one, laced with egotistical caveats. Tess's soul being closer to the earth, desires the intellectual soaring spirit of Angel to complete the disparate anima-animus aspects of her psyche. Being an embodiment of nature in her non-judgemental attitude towards Angel's past transgressions, and in her ease within the world of fauna and flora, she is reminiscent of Eve in the Garden of Eden. The highly educated Angel is ethically centred; he is almost a man-made creation with the dry mind of the intellectual, who sees Tess as the daughter of, or as a reincarnation of, the Greek divinities Artemis or Demeter. What defines Angel in many ways is what he is not; he has never encountered Tess's desperation in life. Coming from a highly respectable and secure background, he has the space and time to consider his options, and being a product of higher education, he was never tied to or dependant on others as was Tess in terms of the vagaries of her erratic family life. His life was not determined by the accidents of poverty, such as Tess's sudden misfortune in losing Prince, a prized family asset.

Due to the carelessness and deceit of others, Tess's life is a tale of continuous crisis management and quiet desperation. The consequence for Tess of her inherent sense of nobility within a society where the primary Darwinian social rule was to take care of the individual, led to her inevitable tragedy. Denied moral justice for her violation, she is symbolically sacrificed on the altar stone at Stonehenge, and is later a victim of a public-hanging. When the black flag symbolising Tess's execution is raised Angel Clare and Tess's sister Liza-Lu depart the macabre scene hand in hand, silent witnesses to a great tragedy of

which the general public were probably grateful to be unaware in all its complexities. The public's ignorance of what the celebrated English justice system had done in its name meant it avoided personal responsibility for its silent compliance in the shameful treatment Victorian society meted out to a truthful daughter of nature.

*The Life* ruminates on the inherited causes and effects of the internal and external conflicts that beset humanity, and the unsuccessful attempts to ameliorate them:

A woeful fact-that the human race is too extremely developed for its corporeal conditions, the nerves being evolved to an activity abnormal in such an environment. Even the higher animals are in excess in this respect. It may be questioned if Nature, or what we call Nature, so far back when she crossed the line from invertebrates to vertebrates, did not exceed her mission. This planet does not supply the materials for happiness to higher existences. Other planets may, though one can hardly see how (Hardy, 1984: 227).

The study of invertebrates and vertebrates was precisely the interest of Hardy's mentor, Thomas Huxley, and as a rationalist, Hardy would have been convinced that Darwin's theory unlocked the mystery of life, producing fresh paradigms. The novel is a graphic illustration of the underlying factors, which resulted in Tess's ordeal; as an entertainment, it is riveting, and how it represents humanity's many challenges on a blighted planet is quite profound.

## Chapter Six: Challenges and Crises in *Jude the Obscure*

Hardy's mission statement for what turned out to be his last novel is contained in the 1912

Postscript:

My opinion at that time, if I remember rightly, was what it is now, that a marriage should be dissolvable as soon as it becomes a cruelty to either of the parties-being then essentially and morally no marriage-and it seemed a good foundation for the fable of a tragedy ...and not without hope than a certain cathartic, Aristotelian qualities might be found therein (Hardy, 1994c: viii).

*The Life* records that the basis for Hardy's narrative in 1888 was:

A short story of a young man-who could not go to Oxford – His struggles and ultimate failure.Suicide.[Probably the germ of *Jude the Obscure*].There is something [in this] the world ought to be shown, and I am the one to show it to them-though I was not altogether hindered going, at least to Cambridge, and could easily have gone up easily at five-and-twenty (Hardy, 1984: 216).

Hardy's statement: 'I was not altogether hindered going' is highly debatable.In a letter to his sister Mary, the implication was that it would have taken too much of his time, and at that stage he had dispensed with his intention to take holy orders.Initially, Hardy saw the twin vocations of poet and parson of his early mentor the Reverend William Barnes as significant personal goals.Pite states: 'because Hardy took the idea of becoming a clergyman seriously, he was dejected when it proved impossible' (Pite, 2006: 122).*The Life* and a surviving letter to his sister Mary, offer conflicting accounts of why he abandoned religious vocation:

About this time Hardy nourished a scheme of a highly visionary character.He perceived from the impossibility of getting his verses accepted by magazines that he could not live by poetry, and (rather strangely) thought that architecture and poetry-particularly architecture in London-would not work well together.So he formed the idea of combining poetry and the Church-towards which he had a leaning-and wrote to a friend in Cambridge for particulars as to Matriculation at that University-which with his late Classical reading education would have

been easy for him, and knowing that what money he could not muster for keeping terms his father would lend him for a few years, his idea being that of a curate in a country village (Hardy, 1984: 52-3).

Hardy's letter to Mary Hardy described it as 'this notion far-fetched' (Pite, 2006: 121), adding that it seemed 'absurd to live on now with such a remote object in view' (Pite, 2006: 121). Pite questions *The Life's* statement:

This is evidently disingenuous. Even though, by 1866, Hardy was no longer a confidently committed, believing Christian, he had been so very recently. While his faith lasted, entering the Church would have made sense to him on idealistic grounds to pursue artistic interests, so perhaps it would prove a better place than architecture for the exercise of Hardy's talents (Pite, 2006: 121).

The novel primarily revolves around Jude Fawley's attempts to actualise two crucial desires, namely to attend Christminster, and to find a degree of contentment with his beloved, Sue Bridehead. The story's details are almost a treatise on marital breakdown, as it focuses on the attachments, separations and disappointments of love. Sue's capricious attitude to love finally empties Jude's font of goodwill completely, draining his spirit of the will to live. To keep expectations flowing, the emptying of the lover's spiritual resources by catastrophes large and small is occasionally interspersed with a minimal amount of joyful experiences. The novel was not written with a Patrician detachment, as its author still had issues that required a public airing. In psychological terms, this book was cathartic, and was a form of emptying; it represents a final fictive statement of Hardy's mature vision on life, religion and heterosexual love. Those themes drawn from internal conflicts that were omnipresent in the thirteen previous books, reached full maturity and clarity in this, his most controversial novel.

By 1895 Hardy had made the short geographical journey from his cottage in Upper Bockhampton to his mansion at Max Gate Dorchester, and the greater social journey from stonemason's son to a novelist of international fame and prestige and a few years later \*he was the recipient of the British Order of Merit. The upward trajectory of his career contrasts with

Jude Fawley's failure, and I would contend that Jude can be seen as a shadow, and a form of opposite to Hardy's own successes: Jude is the traveller on the road not taken, he is destined to remain always outside the walls of Christminster, and to be denied success in life. When Hardy's narrator states 'nobody comes' to help, he was not speaking personally; several people had afforded him great assistance, but intriguingly, he could have been. His final novel also brought him condemnation, as exemplified by the Bishop of Wakefield, who publicly burnt the book, as well as condemnation from Christian moralists who found the book salacious and blasphemous. He commenced writing the story in 1892, the year his father died, and also at time when his marriage was becoming very difficult. Whilst these disturbing factors may have contributed to an absence of sanguinity in the story, the portrayal of the virulent nature of fate and society against the best efforts of the Fawley family at times beggared belief.

The relationship between Hardy's inner and outer lives, and the representation of Jude's life, is multi-factorial, covering religion, education and love. Love, hate, religious belief and apathy permeate Sue and Jude's relationship, as it did that of Hardy and Emma. While Hardy arouses our sympathy for Sue, the facts show she has destroyed the lives of Phillotson and Jude. Sue's agnosticism and verbal sparring with Jude on religious matters may mirror Hardy's annoyance at Emma's increasing eccentricity, and her decline into religious mania. Jude and Sue and the other protagonists are all from poor rural backgrounds, and through work, good fortune, or the ingenuity demonstrated by Arabella succeed or fail to escape their Victorian travail caused by poverty. It was the twin threats of homelessness or hunger that drove the desperate efforts of Sue and Jude to provide sustenance and shelter for their family, and it would not take a gigantic leap of the imagination to consider Hardy himself inheriting the lucky and successful gene from his parents. *The Life* reports Hardy's

disgust at a contemporary youth's dying from malnutrition in what were obviously near famine conditions:

To go to the other extreme; as a child I knew a sheep-keeping boy who to my horror shortly afterwards died of want—the contents of his stomach at the autopsy being a raw turnip only (Hardy, 1984: 335).

Reviewing the book, his friend Edmund Gosse asked: 'what had Providence done to Mr Hardy that he should rise up in the arable land of Wessex and shake his fist at his creator' (Tomalin, 2006: 222). Gosse later wrote in *The Agony of the Victorian Age* (1918) that 'for a considerable time past everybody must have noticed, especially in private conversation, a growing tendency to disparagement, and even ridicule of all men and things, which can be defined as Victorian' (Davis, 2004: 10). Perhaps it was Hardy's conscience that had resisted his intentions to make his fiction less tragic. He was a patriotic Englishman, and living up to that responsibility, he took a full look at the worst in Victorian England, which was bitterly divided into two nations, one rich the other poor. He admired what Christminster offered in education; he admired the church as an example of living community; and having married twice, he must have seen the advantages of monogamy in a stable formal relationship. The young Jude is impressed with the intelligences in the great educational institutions: "What brains they must have in Christminster and the great schools", he presently thought' (Hardy, 2008c: 25). He describes Christminster as 'that ecclesiastical romance in stone' (Hardy, 2008c: 28). Jude loves Christminster in all its guises, but unfortunately, it was a case of unrequited love. Conversely, Sue as the exemplar of emerging female power, has huge reservations as to the efficacy of either its ecclesiastical or educational merits.

The novel contains considerable details of Jude's early life, and of how they psychologically contribute to the development of the man. His school teacher-mentor Phillotson confides in him:

'Well-don't speak of this everywhere. You know what a university is, and a university degree? It is the necessary hall-mark of a man who wants to do anything in teaching. My scheme, or dream, is to be a university graduate, and then be ordained' (Hardy, 2008c: 4).

The Phillotson-Jude relationship planted the seed of ambition for scholarship and ordination, reprising aspects of the young Hardy-Barnes roles. Similarly, Jude's allusions to Greek tragedies, Roman poetry, and Christian biblical texts had their early genesis in the formative Hardy-Moule relationship. Ironically, despite their undoubted abilities, neither Hardy nor Jude attended university. While this was regrettable for Hardy, he went on to accomplish far greater things for himself and others. The 1912 Postscript states:

The difficulties down to twenty or thirty years back of acquiring knowledge in letters without pecuniary means were used in the same way; though I was informed that some readers thought these episodes an attack on venerable institutions, and that when Ruskin College was subsequently founded it should have been called the College of Jude the Obscure (Hardy, 1994c: viii).

When the young and dislocated Jude encounters life's unfairness and dearth of compassion, his grand-aunt Drusilla is unaware of the proleptic consequences of her cruel remark: 'It would ha' been a blessing if Goddy-mighty had took thee too wi' thy mother and father, poor useless boy! (Hardy, 2008c: 7). Young Jude does not want to grow up, an emotion that resonates with the feelings of the younger Hardy. *The Life* states, 'he did not want at all to be a man, or to possess things, but to remain as he was in the same spot' (Hardy 1984: 20). Hardy's lack of early ambition ran counter to his mother Jemima's plans for her son's upward mobility. Whilst working on *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, four years before *Jude the Obscure*, he wrote to John Addington Symonds:

I often begin a story with the intention of making it brighter and gayer than usual; but the question of conscience soon comes in; and it does not seem right, even in novels, to wilfully belie one's own views. All comedy, is tragedy, if you only look deep enough into it (Tomalin, 2007: 222).

The last novel is representative of a society, and of its individual units, which are in transition from a repressed to a more liberal society. Hardy personally appears ambivalent on

the issues that are at the core of the novel. It is perhaps too simplistic to argue that the story concerns a male who sees his life as a sense of mission, namely to further his education academically; to become a religious minister; and to develop emotionally, through loving the woman of his choice. The oppositions to his life's ambitions reside in his society's severe restrictions to his advancement, and in the woman's ambivalence and rejection of his love. Jude and Sue are on different paths through life; hers is an intellectual journey, whereas Jude develops through exposure to the trials and errors of experience. For Jude, life is a mysterious process to be undergone and not explained through texts, whereas the powerful intellect of Sue applies a reductionist approach to living. Hardy's novel was influential in raising public consciousness about the restrictions placed by society on those without sufficient funds to further their education, or to provide accommodation for their families. Equally important was how the four lovers find love and lose it within institutionalised marriages. Sumner writes 'one of the purposes of *Jude the Obscure* is to show that society imposes unnecessary suffering on its members' (Sumner, 1981: 148). Hardy had great sympathy for those experiencing oppression, and he staunchly defended human fallibility:

We enter church, and we have to say, "we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep", when what we want to say is, "Why are we made to err and stray like lost sheep?" Then we have to sing, "My soul doth magnify the Lord", when what we want to sing is, "O that my soul could find some Lord that it could magnify! Till it can, let us magnify good works, and develop all means of easing mortal's progress through a world not worthy of them" (Hardy, 1984: 358).

For Hardy, fiction was arguably a psychic amelioration, with his narratives creating potent images drawn from his unconscious mind. It could be argued that the novel is a manifestation of Hardy's own unexpressed indignation and repressed anger at the portion of society that oppressed the greater part of the population through restrictions on access to education, and through repressive social structures. As has been demonstrated earlier, Hardy experienced discrimination personally, whether it was from the Reverend Shirley, or Emma's

family, or from the fact that the Hardy family lacked the funds to see him engage in period of study that amounted to ten years when he wished to enter Cambridge. Hence, despite his success, it is easy to imagine Hardy's defiance at Christminster University's elitism, couched in Job's quotation, and written in chalk by Jude on the wall of the college, which had recently rejected his application: 'I have understanding as well as you. I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?' Job xii.3 (Hardy, 2008c: 112). The bleak conclusion represented a radical change from the early novels *Desperate Remedies* and *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, which suggests that in *Jude the Obscure*, there is a degree of conflation between the author's and the character's experience. This suggests that Jude's experiences are almost personal to Hardy, whereas in the early novels, he was describing events at a distance. Jude's and Hardy's shared utterances are similar in tone to the various quotations from Job in the novel, which speak of regretting been born, rejecting life's pains: 'he was the sort of man who was born to ache a good deal before the fall of the curtain upon his unnecessary life' (Hardy, 2008c: 11). The next chapter on poetry will show many examples where religious rules, random fate, or selfishness in the beloved makes difficult situations impossible. While some of Jude's challenges correspond to Hardy's experience as an autodidact, the poems will convey a more direct communication of what Hardy really felt; in a way, Jude is a mediator of Hardy's ideas.

Jude's failures in love, education, and in Christian ministry, ironically emanated from his brightest visions. His chosen paths produced dark vistas of adversity because he did not comprehend the realities of the Victorian conventions, which, as a matter of course, placed insurmountable impediments in the way of people from his background. A hapless victim of society's indifference he demonstrates that 'whatever may be the inherent good or evil of life, it is certain that men make it worse than it need be' (Sumner 1981:148). The shadow of doubt in Hardy and in Jude was a universal condition revealed in Jude's failure to find a niche in

organised religion, a situation that then threw him back on himself, and on the women in his life. Thus, the leap of faith and surrender of rationality inherent in the challenge of Christian belief was also too great for Sue, while Jude's self-absorbed musing on his ambitious nature is interrupted by the playful, but determined, Arabella. He is unceremoniously wrenched from dreamy imagination to conscious awareness, the scene acts as a metaphor for the novel's *raison d'être*: the conflict between the spirit and the flesh:

"Ha, Ha, Ha! Hoity-toity!" The sounds were expressed in light voices on the other side of the hedge, but he did not notice them. His thoughts went on: - Euripides: Plato: Aristotle... Hebrew - I only know the letters as yet - Something smacked him sharply on the ear, and he became aware that a soft cold substance had been flung at him and had fallen at his feet (Hardy, 2008c: 31-3).

The different reactions of the main protagonists to the same set of circumstances created oppositions that illustrate the depth of character in men and women, all of which are emanations from Hardy's own complexity. **\*Jude's** immediacy in sexuality is part of his warm nature, **\*as** the only child of his Aunt Drusilla who is metaphorically depicted as the great autocratic mother-figure, he receives little role modelling or proper mentoring as preparation for encountering the wily Arabella or the strident intellectual Sue. He is at their mercy sexually and intellectually respectively, and has to develop his coping mechanisms from his actions and reactions to their ambitions. What sustains him in adversity is his intrinsic goodness, as by accepting his aloneness in times of difficulty, he faced his problems realistically, whereas the intellectual Sue's first resort is to the philosophical tracts from Gibbon and Mill. Arabella, when she exhausts Jude's usefulness to her, simply moves on to her next lover, finally ending up with Jude's doctor, Vilbert. There was no external power to which these star-crossed lovers **\*could turn**, as for Arabella, sex and love were transient and had no moral implications. For Jude and Sue, however, there was a more intellectual bond, as in their dire tragedy, Jude finds the inner resource to comfort Sue, while she regresses to a child's simplistic attitude to faith, blaming herself and Jude for flouting religious and social

ordinances, and thereby inviting the wrath of God. In their totality, they offer a panoramic view of Victorian rural peasant life in transition from trusting to questioning in terms of both God and of the wielders of political power.

Having mentally consigned his first wife Emma to the ranks of the religiously bewildered, Hardy also criticised his second wife Florence for her conventional attitude to religion, 'her weddedness to "the ordinances of Mother Church"' (Pite, 2006: 333), and his regret that she 'should have allowed herself to be enfeebled to a belief in ritualistic ecclesiasticism' (Pite, 2006: 333). He compounded that critical remark by suggesting: 'my impression ... is that you do not know your own views' (Pite, 2006: 333). Wishing that she would become emancipated from her religious conditioning, Hardy planned to send Florence a copy of Swinburne's notoriously erotic and pagan *Poems and Ballads* (Pite, 2006: 333). Hardy mirrors Sue in needing to be certain of romantic outcomes prior to making themselves committed and therefore vulnerable, Pite writes:

It is a remarkable feature of his temperament, revealed most when he was in love, that he needed so desperately to feel certain of the other person in the relationship and to be convinced that they were completely on his side (Hardy, 2007: 333).

These excerpts from his own struggles with reason and faith are vital to understanding Sue's *\*raison d'être*, because she adopts similar oppositions to Jude's religious beliefs, stating that the church has had its day. She quotes Swinburne to illustrate that Christ's crucifixion sacrifice has turned the world grey. D. H. Lawrence wrote that Sue better represents Hardy's intellectual side than any other character (Lawrence, cited in Guerard, 1963: 73).

Tomalin (2006), states that Hardy was an enlightened Victorian husband, who became successful and worldly, and who behaved generously towards Emma, though she was angry towards him:

But hurt and anger simmered inside Emma. She could not forgive him for no longer consulting her about his work, for refusing to encourage her in her efforts to write, for failing to help her find an agent or a publisher, as

he did for his women friends, and for his barely concealed attachments to them. She made her mind up that it was his rejection of Christian doctrine that was at the bottom of all this bad behaviour (Tomalin, 2007: 268).

Hardy's characters in general fall in love and suffer from its difficulties; throughout all the novels few if any would see love live up to their expectations. In pursuing love, they experience a suicide, attempted suicide, two murders, a natural death, and multiple separations. Jude's forthright statement concerning Sue's cerebral approach to love is both angry and pathetic:

But you, Sue, are such a phantasmal, bodiless creature, one who-if you'll allow me to say it-has so little animal passion in you, that you can act upon reason in the matter, and when we poor unfortunate wretches of grosser substance can't (Hardy, 2008c: 250).

She interiorised Jude's criticism, acquiring a guilty look, before engaging in a piece of self-rejection and replying to his admonishment in a tragic voice. That is her mode of defence, and it could be seen as a form of passive aggressive response, in that she is admitting her defect without evincing any intention to ameliorate it. Jude's emotional neediness is a product of his former isolation; it opposes the image of the masterful male implicit in the patriarchy that Sue resisted. The resultant dialogue is an illustration of dis-honest communication between cousins and lovers, who fulfilled their Aunt Drusilla's prophecy, namely that members of the Fawley family were fated to be unsuccessful in marriage:

[Sue] 'I don't think I like you today so well as I did, Jude!'  
[Jude] 'Don't you? Why?'  
[Sue] 'O, well-you are not nice-too sermony. Though I suppose I am so bad and worthless that I deserve the utmost rigour of lecturing!' ...  
[Jude] 'No, you are not bad. You are a dear. But as slippery as an eel when I want to get a confession from you'  
[Sue] 'O yes I am bad, and obstinate, and all sorts! It is no use your pretending I am not! people who are good don't want scolding as I do ... But now that I have nobody but you, and nobody to defend me, it is very hard that I mustn't have my own way in deciding how I'll live with you, and whether I'll be married or no!' (Hardy, 2008c: 250-1).

This prophecy has echoes of Jemima Hardy's own advice to her son, as we have mentioned before. The shifting nature of the dialogue, and the absence of good core principles in the protagonists, causes the drama *\*to* evolve. Their confusion and failure results from treating

each difficulty as a separate event rather than as a process of ongoing negotiation. Their immaturity is demonstrated in overall pettiness and over-reaction to what were mundane inter-personal matters. The superficiality and minimal integrity of Sue, which Jude imitates at times, contrasts with Hardy's earlier fiction. This new type of dialogue was less grounded than before, probably representing the shifting values of a society undergoing great change. Sue, in many ways, is an embodiment of the 'Age of Doubt'. The lovers from previous Hardy stories showed greater character depth and maturity, for example in the stronger personas of Farfrae and Elizabeth-Jane in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, and earlier still in Gabriel Oak, though less so in Bathsheba, in *Far From The Madding Crowd*. *Jude the Obscure* offers nothing much in terms of hope, concentrating on individual wants and dislikes, resulting in a paralysis of love through over-analysis. The compartmentalisation of Sue and her desires means that she is unable to see Jude as other than an extension of her desires. Her self-absorption means she cannot escape the prison and the person created by her indecisive nature.

The later novels were a melodramatic exploration of universal dilemmas, Hardy stated that all his characters 'express mainly the author' (Parks, 2007: 82). This suggests that Hardy saw the phenomenon of increasing selfishness in the macro-Victorian scene tainting inter-personal relations. Even the earlier tragic story of Tess contains the possibility of potential love, seeing Angel and Lisa-Lu walking off hand-in-hand after the heroine's execution, hinting that they may have a future together. The most important themes of God and love in *Jude the Obscure* were ultimately proven to be sterile ideas which led nowhere. Hardy's negative and pessimistic perspective on the issues of God and romantic love were mirrored, to some degree, by the attitudes of Sue in the book, but they remained a carefully guarded secret in his private life. The secret and deceitful nature of Arabella and Sue lay at the root of their pathological behaviour. The naive and trusting nature of Jude was a

virtuous contrast to their psychological dysfunction. Hardy presumably wrote in sorrow on the fate of good people: ‘remember that the best and greatest among mankind are those who do themselves no worldly good. Every successful man is more or less a selfish man. The devoted fail. “Charity seeketh not her own”’ (Hardy, 2008c: 350).

When love fails them or they fail it, the lovers become alienated from themselves and from society. Sue has changed her mind on the benefits of institutional marriage:

“Well”, she sighed, “you’ve owned that it would probably end in misery for us. And I am not so exceptional a woman as you think. Fewer women like marriage than you suppose, only they enter into it for the dignity it is assumed to confer, and the social advantages it gains them sometimes—a dignity and an advantage that I am quite willing to do without” (Hardy, 2008c: 250).

Sue and Jude resort to blaming each other, a course of action that is often the first refuge of a victim mentality. They become frustrated and depressed due to their personal struggles with fate and civilisation. Sue, in her sober senses, and Jude in drink, berate the church, educational authorities, archaic marriage laws, and their society’s inequalities, as causes for their own lack of success. Their frustrations, whilst understandable, create death-wishes in them both, beginning with a slow suicide of the spirit. Their difficulties reveal their dichotomies, which are manifested in the character flaws of Jude and Sue. In addition, in keeping their inner lives secret, they cannot outgrow the pains of life. Eschewing the protective wall of community by not participating in church affairs, Sue is friendless when confronting her very difficult challenges.

Jude’s grandiose dreams of Christminster are brought down to earth when he soon realises that the desire to possess the higher learning in books he has acquired is going to be a difficult and almost impossible task without guidance and tuition. It was the absence of supportive love in general, which invited Hardy’s statement: ‘but nobody did come, because nobody does; and under the crushing recognition of his gigantic error Jude continued to wish himself out of this world’ (Hardy, 2008c: 25). Overall, romantic love is absent in the novel

mainly because of Sue's preoccupation with herself. She does not possess the innate quality of loving kindness by placing Jude's interests above her own. The consequences were that the dynamics of reciprocity in love from Jude to her were smothered by her intellectual approach. Jude, whose innate destiny is to give of himself in loving kindness, morally survives, though he physically expires.

The birth of new ideas is contingent on the demise of former paradigms, and in *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy saw that antiquated marriage laws and religious rigidities were falling into disrepute, so he challenges them to a significant degree in this book. It was fear of damnation or unwanted pregnancy that kept previous generations in line, but Hardy saw that the ordinances that suited some members of society inflicted hardship on many others. The implications of Freudian theory confirmed what Hardy stressed earlier, and Freud's findings confirmed that humans were not in charge of their sexuality:

That the life of our sexual instincts cannot be wholly tamed, and the mental processes are in themselves unconscious and only reach the ego and come under its control through incomplete and untrustworthy perceptions—these two discoveries amount to a statement that the ego is not master in its own house. Together they represent the third blow to man's self-love (Beer, 1983: 13).

When Jude meets his first wife Arabella again, he realises that sexual attraction was the only basis for their union; it constitutes her power over him, a triumph of the flesh over the spirit. She has now deserted her second husband in Australia, and is passing herself off as a single woman. Jude thinks that 'Arabella's word was absolutely untrustworthy' (Hardy, 2008c: 174), and as a man of some principles himself, he realises that to live with a liar for the rest of his life, as the church and state would ordain, was a masochistic cruelty:

However there was only one thing now to be done, and that was to play a straightforward part, the law being the law, and the woman between whom and himself there was no more unity than between east and west being in the eye of the Church one person with him (Hardy, 2008c: 174-5).

The reuniting of the pair discloses several gravitational oppositions; intellectually he abhors Arabella, yet his animal qualities desire her. When married to Arabella, Jude sneakily attends a church service hoping to acquaint himself further with his real love Sue. The singers in the choir render a pathetic Gregorian tune, 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?' (Hardy, 2008c: 85), which was the very question that was engaging Jude's attention at this moment. As he put it: 'what a wicked worthless fellow he had been to give vent as he had done to an animal passion for a woman and allow it to lead to such disastrous consequences; then to think of putting an end to himself; then to go recklessly and get drunk' (Hardy, 2008c: 85).

Before the evolution of a new order, a state of chaos would reign which were the prevailing social and personal conditions in the narrative. It is arguable that the social issues, which *\*The Poor Man and The Lady* raised prematurely, were now dealt with in a deeper and broader manner in *Jude the Obscure*. It appeared to objective reviewers of the book like Havelock Ellis, and the French writer Pierre D'Exideuil, that Hardy was rightly afflicting the comfortable. Sir Edmund Gosse was one of six pall bearers at Westminster Abbey representing Literature when Hardy's ashes were buried in Poets' Corner, he knew Hardy well and how he could bristle at criticism of his work. Nonetheless, he risked his wrath when writing:

It is a very gloomy it is even a grimy, story that Mr Hardy has at last presented to his admirers... We do not blame him for the tone he has chosen to adopt, nor for the sordid phases of failure through which he drags us. The genius of this writer is too widely acknowledged to permit us to question his right to take us into scenes he pleases; but, of course, we are at liberty to say whether we enjoy them or no. Plainly, we do not enjoy them. We think the fortunes, even of the poorest are variegated with pleasures, or at least with alleviations, than Mr Hardy chooses to admit.... But in his new book Mr Hardy concentrates his observation on the sordid and painful side of life and nature. We rise from the perusal of it stunned with a sense of the hollowness of existence (Millgate, 1971: 325).

Despite his friendship with Gosse, it would have been out of character if some retaliation from Hardy were not forthcoming. The novel was close to Hardy's heart, and Jude would

have rivalled Tess in his fond affections for the time, place and experiences of his hero. Jude and Sue were hugely autobiographically-based, in that Hardy, at Jude's age, had similar desires, and his sisters, like Sue, had attended teachers' training colleges. Hardy's intentions were to discommode readers from their complacency, Sir Frank Kermode cited in Sumner (2000) comments on modern novel form in *Sense of an Ending*: 'merely to give form ... is to provide consolation... we want fiction not only to console but to make discoveries of the here and now... discoveries of dissonance' (Kermode cited in Sumner, 2000: 177). There is no doubt that some of Gosse's remarks rankled with Hardy drawing this response in *a* letter on his critique:

One thing I did not answer. The "grimy" features of the story go to show the contrast between the ideal life a man wished to lead, and the squalid real life he was fated to lead. The throwing of the pizzle, at the supreme moment of his young dream, is to sharply initiate this contrast. But I must have lamentably failed, as I feel I have, if this requires explanation and is not self-evident. The idea was meant to run all through the novel. It is, in fact to be discovered in *everybody's* life, though it lies on the surface perhaps than it does in my poor puppet's (Millgate, 1971: 326).

Gosse experienced how Hardy rejected any serious criticism of his work, as while Hardy used mock humility in denigrating his own work, there was still the barb at Gosse for his failure to understand the necessity to use the impact of the pig's offal as an intervention to disturb Jude's ruminations on his highest ideals. The gesture was highly symbolic of the clash between the spirit and the carnal, both in the novel, and in the mind of its author.

The novel deals with the attachments and separations of love and affection, and the opening line is a tiny harbinger of the much greater sadness to come: 'The schoolmaster was leaving the village, and everybody seemed sorry' (Hardy, 2008c: 3). Jude helps the departing teacher with his final packing, unlike the regular scholars and local men who 'stood at the present moment afar off' (Hardy, 2008c: 3). The term 'afar off' is an intertextual reference to how the disciples of Jesus stood at a safe distance at his crucifixion. Ingham, in her Explanatory Notes to the novel, quotes from different Hardy manuscripts when he was

composing the novel, and stresses the strong connection between the sacrificing nature of both Jude and Phillotson. At the awards Ceremony at the University at Christminster, Sue's dry irony is seen in her remark to Jude about Phillotson for whom Christminster is also latter-day Jerusalem: 'He is evidently coming up to Jerusalem to see the festival like the rest of us' (Hardy, 2008:318). Jude idealises Phillotson, and his departure to pursue a career in the church at Christminster is a seminal moment for the eleven year old: 'there was a quiver in his lip now, after opening the well-cover to begin lowering the bucket he paused ...his face wearing the fixity of a thoughtful child's who has felt the pricks of life somewhat before his time' (Hardy, 2008c: 4-5). Phillotson's move from the rustic backwater that is Marygreen to the seat of English academic learning of Christminster, is a stirring and challenging move for a man of his class with no guarantee of success. The move to University life, as well as Phillotson's and Jude's genuine affection for one another, parallels Hardy's close relationship with William Barnes, as has been discussed in earlier chapters.

Hardy's final novel illustrates the many acts of societal and personal selfishness, both unconscious and conscious, involving social conditions and human interactions. Generally speaking, the nature of virtue and vice is that their qualities can be activated through commission or omission. There was also another factor, which dictated the tragedy of outcomes in Hardy's last novel, residing in the mostly unconscious sense of apathy in the privileged social classes towards the less privileged. Hardy personally knew the disappointments of life, and consequently, understood the need for the bromide of compassion towards the oppressed. The good and evil acts of humanity in *Jude the Obscure* arise largely from two sources. These were the collective will enshrined in law, which governed Victorian society, and the individual units of humanity, whose successful participation within it depended on their acquiescence to a set of religious and legal ordinances to which many were not suited.

There was a strong, if invisible, connection between the established church in England and the wielders of political power and influence; to belong to one necessarily involved having the credentials to join and participate in the other. The minority upper-class did not dispense anything resembling loving-kindness to what they would in the main consider the lower orders of women, artisans, and farm labourers. It could be argued that their religious and moral affiliations were only an outward show, and that an air of snobbishness permeated from the top downwards. The academic at Christminster who refuses to consider Jude's request to enrol at the college implicitly tells him to stick to his own class as a manual worker in stone. This led to an unconsciously anti-Christian set of conditions, which percolated down to affect the poor. Whilst the primary focus of the novel is on how Jude and Sue cope with challenging the oppositions in the social classes, religion, education, sexuality, and marriage, the sub-text indicts the governing mores of Victorian society in the 1880's.

The paradox of love for Hardy is enunciated in the lines beginning with 'Love is a sower delight, and surged grief, A living death, an ever-dying life' (Hardy, 1975: 78), quoted in his first novel *Desperate Remedies*. They are taken from the opening lines of a sonnet by Thomas Watson (c.1556-92) in which a lover accuses, first the God of Love, and then his own mistress, for turning his life to misery. The fact is that Hardy, at different times, loved God and women making them the central subjects of his prose and verse throughout his long life. The shadows of his two great affections was that they both existed only as ideals of which he could never be certain, a challenge he was constitutionally unable to transcend, and he consequently rejected them both at times as unworthy recipients of his devotion and fidelity. From these disjunctions, it is feasible to argue that he found the task of transforming his ideals into practice either unworkable or even undesirable. In similar fashion, Jude Fawley's untried ideals, which are the pursuit of a career in religion, and a blissful relationship in marriage, are not realised. All he has to show for his herculean efforts is failure

in both endeavours: 'but his dreams were as gigantic as his surroundings were small' (Hardy, 2008c: 16). The sceptic in the rational Hardy would have felt that love was, in many ways, destroyed by its social circumstances and the religious rules of marriage. Love was seen as a lifelong commitment, initially joyful, but marriage could become a sterile union that killed romance: 'people go on marrying because they can't resist natural forces, although many of them know perfectly well that they are possibly buying a month's pleasure with a life's discomfort' (Hardy, 2008c: 249).

The novel's heroine, Sue Bridehead, initially so strong in her views, eventually finds that not knowing what she wants from love is a precursor to love's disappointments. Lawrence argued that Hardy's partiality to Sue's intellectualism arose from his personal image; a point that suggests that this lack of emotional intelligence was a trait, she shared with the author. For example, it was an omission on Hardy's part that he did not see the emotional pain he inflicted on both his wives, who each recorded their dissatisfaction with how he treated them. His failure to follow through on certain objectives reflected Hardy's attraction to procrastination; he failed to act decisively on troubling marital and religious issues. Sue concedes her indecisiveness to Phillotson:

Of course I, of all people, ought not to have cared what was said, for it was just what I had fancied I never did care for. But I was a coward- as so many women are- and my theoretic unconventionality broke down. If that had not entered into the case it would have been better to have hurt your feelings once and for all then, than to marry you and hurt them all my life after (Hardy, 2008c: 213).

The close affinities between Hardy's life and his last novel can be seen in the difficulties that follow when religious observance is opposed by its shadow: agnosticism. The attachments, separations, and reattachments that blur the boundary lines in *Jude the Obscure* were to an extent similar to Hardy's relationship to Emma and his involvement with women like Helen Henniker. Ingham writes: 'though Emma was a (pacific) supporter of women's suffrage, she was always conventional in moral and religious matters. This meant that his views on the evils

of marriage which Hardy elaborated in *Jude* and elsewhere, alienated her' (Ingham, 2003: 23). Hardy's concentration on love's darker aspects was unromantic, and Emma was deeply upset by Hardy's barely concealed admiration for other women. Jude wants to be held and listened to, but falling under the influence of the sexually alluring Arabella, he injudiciously marries her. Jude, who has a rich potential to love the right person, then tries to start a relationship with his cousin Sue, who is extremely complicated and who proceeds to dilute his emotional bank of love. Jude's forays in love lead to divorce, which in all the circumstances, is a small mercy for them both. Hardy, writing in *Nash's Magazine* on the difficulty of divorce which he entitled the article 'Laws the Cause of Misery' asserted that 'a marriage should be dissolvable at the wish of either party, if that party prove it to be a cruelty to him or her' (Ingham, 2003: 23). Hardy described the prevailing marriage laws as 'the gratuitous cause of at least half the misery of the community' (Ingham, 2003: 23). Ingham refers to the awarding of the Order of Merit to Hardy, stating that Emma 'commented bitterly that he had refused the knighthood which would have given her the title of "Lady Hardy" because he only wanted honours for himself' (Ingham, 2003: 23). Clearly, his real-life experience of a troubled relationship has had an influence on the complex relationships that form the core of this book.

The negotiations and oppositions involved in the Jude-Sue relationship are drawn from many of Hardy's influences, emanating in a variety of scientific, philosophical and religious sources, representing the eclectic nature of the novelist's interests. Hardy's empathy for his characters was based on well-grounded psychological insight, and these characters embodied his endeavour to highlight how modern thought opposed traditional attitudes. The themes and topics touched on and developed in the novel were issues having a serious impact on the lives of many of his contemporaries. In Sue's character, Hardy successfully captures the pivotal moment of change in women's position in English society. Approaching the

publication of *Jude the Obscure* in 1894, Emma complained that Hardy's interest in women's suffrage was nil stating that 'he understands only the women he *invents* - the others not at all' (Norman, 2011: 134). Emma had grown eccentric and she had moved herself to the attic at Max Gate. She described this separate haven to an American correspondent Rebekah Owen in 1899: 'I sleep in an Attic or two!....My boudoir is my sweet refuge and solace – not a sound penetrates hither [sic]' (Ingham, 2003: 21). In a letter to a recently married friend, Emma extolled the virtue of keeping apart from Hardy:

Keeping separate a good deal is a wise plan in crises-and being both free-and *expecting little* neither gratitude nor attentions, love, nor justice, not *anything* you may set your heart on. Love interest – adoration, & all that kind of thing is usually a *failure-complete* –someone comes by & upsets your pail of milk in the end. If he belongs to the public in any way, years of devotion count for nothing (Ingham, 2003: 21).

It was a particularly bitter message to write to a newly-wed. Emma was angry that her home life had turned out so badly, writing several letters to Hardy's sister Mary that were grossly insulting, describing her in-laws as a coven of witches: 'you are a witch-like creature & quite equal to any amount of evil-wishing and speaking. I can imagine you & your mother & sister on your native heath raising a storm on a Walpurgis night' (Ingham, 2003: 22). Their marriage had deteriorated considerably from the romantic bliss captured in 'Lyonesse'. It was characterised by a sterile distancing, and was a relationship that was lacking in any meaningful communication, with Hardy and Emma living in separate apartments. This period in Hardy's life coincided with his writing of the very gloomy late novels, especially *Jude the Obscure*. Emma felt it was her misfortune to be married to Hardy declaring 'he stabs you with his pen' (Gibson, 1999: 73). The next chapter on Hardy's verse is extremely revealing on the convulsions of Hardy's love entanglements with Emma and others.

In a very repressive era for women, Sue finds translating her theories into happy emotional results almost impossible. Hardy's romantic obsession with women did not include perceiving them as solely sexual objects. He was in the vanguard of promoting a greatly

increased role for women in society, and the Suffragette leader Millicent Fawcett invited Hardy's contribution to a pamphlet on the issue. Hardy wrote:

I have for a long time been in favour of woman-suffrage. I fear I shall spoil the effect of this information (if it has any) in my next sentence by giving you my reasons. I am in favour of it because I think the tendency of the woman's vote will be to break up the pernicious conventions in respect of manners, customs, religion, illegitimacy, the stereotyped household (that it must be a unit of society), the father of a woman's child (that it is anybody's business but the woman's own, except in cases of disease or insanity) (Ingham, 2003: 23).

Emma and many others were quite shocked by the contents of *Jude the Obscure*, her *chagrin* was especially based on the novel's sexual immorality and irreligion.

The quartet of lovers: Jude, Sue, Arabella and Phillotson, is comprised of individuals with incompatible natures, making them unsuitable to each other. It is within the difficulties of love, marriage, and separations that their unhappiness exists, which begs the question: if there were no marriage, would there have been no tragedy? The answer to that question lay in how the majority of married couples up to and including Hardy's time accommodated their differences. It is probable that many would have elevated the retention of the bonds of institutionalised marriage above their personal desires, and this was precisely what Sue failed to do. The politicians of the era who framed the laws, did not want to alienate their religious partners in governance, so many people were condemned to live in unions where resentments and regrets were commonplace and ongoing.

The conditions inspiring Hardy's fiction were everywhere. Hardy's portrait of Sue, attempting to find a stable compass in what were the varying tides of late nineteenth century England and America, invited identification and compassion for her situation. An intellectual woman like Sue would have found the prevailing conditions of 'Coverture' anathema. Coverture was a legal doctrine whereby a woman's legal rights were subsumed by those of her husband. It was subsequently modified by the Married Woman's Property Act of 1882. Single women like Sue as a *feme sole*, had rights to property herself, but when she

married Phillotson, she would have forfeited these rights. Married women were in legal terms called *feme covert*, with the woman being under the protection and influence of her husband – her lord and protector. It would have been completely at variance with her characterisation and the plot if Sue had meekly surrendered her independence to any suitor. Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady* paints a picture of the 'New Woman', who exercises control over her own life in social and economic activities, pointing up the differences between the roles of women in the old and the new worlds. James's heroine Isabel, differs hugely from Sue in their material situation; Sue had no money. American society from a social class perspective was not written in stone like its Anglo counterpart. The Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 makes divorce possible without an Act of Parliament, but on unequal terms for men and women. Hardy begins 'Part Fourth, At Shaston', with a quotation from John Milton: 'Whoso prefers either Matrimony or other Ordinance before the good of man and the plain Exigence of Charity, let him profess Papist, or Protestant, or what he will, he is no better than a Pharisee' (Hardy, 2008c, Part Fourth).

Jude is both a flawed and heroic individual who loves Sue too much. He declares himself presciently: 'Well – I'm an outsider to the end of my days' (Hardy, 2008c: 318). In response to Sue's jealous burst of disappointment that Jude may return to his legal wife Arabella, whom she thinks is too coarse for him, Jude's states:

Perhaps I am coarse too, worse luck!...I have the germs of every human infirmity in me...I do love you Sue, though I have danced attendance on you for so long for such poor returns ...It is all very well to preach about self-control, and the wickedness of coercing a woman. But I should just like a few virtuous people ... to have been in my tantalizing position with you through these late weeks! -they'd believe, I think, that I have exercised some little restraint in always giving in to your wishes' (Hardy, 2008c: 256).

This heartfelt appeal for understanding is a typical Jude response; he is too reasonable for his own good. He expects that Sue's sweet reasonableness corresponds to his, and though her liberal attitude does surpass his own views at times, she admits 'my nature is not as

passionate as yours' (Hardy, 2008c: 231). Her statement may have been her euphemism for a more serious deficiency: a lack of human warmth. Sue would have been seen at the time as a 'New Woman' rejecting marriage, though she is not adventurous in a sexual way: 'but I never yielded myself to any lover, if that's what you mean. I have remained as I began' (Hardy, 2008c: 143).

The novel questions whether the majority of the English population were fitted by temperament or conditioning for marital bliss. The following dialogue between Sue and Jude amounted to an outrageous attack on family values:

[Sue] 'And I don't like to say no, dear Jude. But I feel just the same about it now as I did all along. I have just the same dread lest an iron contract should extinguish your tenderness for me, and mine for you, as it did between our unfortunate parents' ...

[Jude] 'Still, what can we do? I do love you, as you know, Sue' ...

[Sue] 'I know it abundantly. But I think I would much rather go on always living as lovers as we are living now, and only meeting by day. It is so much sweeter - for the woman at least, and when she is sure of the man. And henceforward we needn't be so particular as we have been about our appearances' ...

[Jude] 'Our experiences of matrimony with others have not been encouraging, I own, said he with some gloom; either owing to our own dissatisfied, unpractical natures, or by our misfortune ...

... [Sue] 'I think I should begin to be afraid of you, Jude, the moment you had contracted to cherish me under a Government stamp and I was licensed to be loved on the premises by you - Ugh, how horrible and sordid! Although, as you are, free, I trust you more than any other man in the world' (Hardy, 2008c: 249).

Sue has placed her principles above personal interaction with Jude, and the excerpt represents an early modern attitude to love and marriage implicitly attacking the prohibition, which religion, and restrictive marriage laws, imposed on divorce; Sue is against the imprisoning nature of the concept of marriage for life. The piece suggests that Sue is controlling Jude with a cold logical argument, when what he really requires was a hot-blooded woman like Arabella. Jude's passionate nature and Sue's intellectual abilities constantly confront each other.

Hardy also highlighted the issue of family planning as a way of solving the conflict between sexual abstinence and desire, and this was a thought-provoking issue in the late

Victorian era. In developing the Malthusian theme used earlier in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the implicit ideological message for Jude and Sue is to be prudent parents, limiting their progeny. Little Father Time upbraids Sue for getting pregnant again: 'O God, mother, you've never a-sent for another; and such trouble with what you've got' (Hardy, 2008c: 323). Little Father Time almost convinces Sue that they would be both better off dead: "'it would be better to be out o' the world than in it, wouldn't it'?" [Sue] "It would almost, dear" (Hardy, 2008c: 322). The exchange illustrates some of the pressures contributing to an Eros-Thanatos divide; Sue decides to endure life despite the odds, whereas Little Father Time decides to cross the irrevocable Rubicon between life and death. There is a certain unselfish nobility in the suicidal and homicidal actions of Little Father Time; there is a sacrificing love behind his tragic note: 'Done because we are too menny' (Hardy, 2008c: 325). The final act in the tragedy that was his young life was undertaken out of synchronicity with the society's general values.

Arabella and her tragic son, Little Father Time, embody the virtue-vice oppositions. Arabella, despite her machinations, is a practical woman to whom the thought of suicide would never occur. After their reunion, Jude notices she wears a real sapphire diamond ring, which is a testament to her ingenuity and survival instincts. She exists in life's grey areas; her experience of bar work; her experience of two marriages; her experience of living in two different hemispheres of the world, all make her sceptical rather than loving. She will use love's ideals, even religious dogma, to suit her own purposes as when she traps Jude into a second marriage. Arabella's cynicism knows few boundaries in relating her version of what the minister said to her when marrying Jude again:

Well' he was a very nice gentlemanly man indeed. He said to me as gentle as a baby when all was done: "Mrs Fawley, I congratulate you heartily", he says. "For having heard your history, and that of your husband, I think you have both done the right and proper thing. And for your past errors as a wife, and his as a husband, I think you ought now to be forgiven by the world, as you have forgiven each other.... The church don't recognise

divorce in her dogma strictly speaking”, he says: “And bear in mind the words of the Service in your goings out and your comings in: What God hath joined together let no man pull asunder” (Hardy, 2008c: 372).

Arabella plies Jude with alcohol in order to get him to the altar, an act that reactivates his drinking problem. At the ceremony, Jude is little more than a bemused participant. Arabella states:

“But Jude, my dear, you were enough to make a cat laugh! You walked that straight, and held yourself that steady, that one would have thought you were going ‘prentice to a judge; though I knew you were seeing double all the time, from the way you fumbled with my finger” (Hardy, 2008c: 372).

Hardy used dissonance to discommode his readers and to elicit a similar reaction in society. It was his way of getting their attention. Hardy did not always run from the dark side of his nature but exteriorised it throughout his work. The incongruity of ‘Little Father Time’ hanging his siblings prior to hanging himself is an example of Hardy writing from dark interiority; such an action destroys hope, the ultimate refuge. It was a huge departure from literary convention, which Rosemary Sumner (1995) felt almost failed to fit. The prominent critics Gregor and Irwin however, felt that without the inclusion of this dark episode, the novel would not have reached the heights it achieved (Sumner, 1995: 82). Hardy described how hope exceeds the bitterest experience:

Thought of a determination to enjoy. We see it all in nature from the leaf on the tree to the titled lady at the ball ... It is achieved, of a sort, under superhuman difficulties. Like pent-up water it will find a chink of possibility somewhere. Even the most oppressed of men and animals find it, so that out of a thousand there is hardly one who has not a sun of some sort for his soul (Hardy, 1984: 222).

It is hope that creates and nullifies expectations, and Victorian Christians found Hardy’s outlook inimical to their hopes. Hardy’s belief that fate and human agencies dampen the most optimistic projections was akin to someone crying in the wilderness; a message difficult for humanity who had enough negativity to deal with as it was.

The gist of Hillmans book *Suicide and the Soul* is that no one has the right to dissuade an individual intent on self-murder, as it is an unalienable right of the person's soul.

*Jude the Obscure* shows how daring Hardy was in alluding to child murder and suicide. By including extreme episodes, he went to the edge of the reader's credibility in plot and structure in an otherwise realistic novel. In a disturbing narrative trope, Little Father Time is a rationalist who commits insane acts. He is the unplanned love child of Jude and Arabella who are unsuited to marriage and to each other. He is a living paradox: 'he was Age masquerading as Juvenility, and doing it so badly that his real self showed through the crevices' (Hardy, 2008c: 266). His real self is a child with a depressive outlook: 'I should like the flowers very much, if I didn't keep on thinking they'd all be withered in a few days!' (Hardy, 2008c: 286). Whilst mature in ways, he is essentially a rejected child, eager to fit in, constantly fearing rejection. The tragic nature of Little Father Time results from rational deduction not insanity, and shows Hardy's antipathy to suffering. Hardy is anticipating such existential angst in this novel, as suicide can be seen as a possible response to a life devoid of meaning and belief, and Hardy in his uncompromising way, is showing how such actions can occur even in children. In his own early life, he had seen hardship and privation, and in this book, the actions of Little Father Time demonstrate how for some people, life can be just unbearable. Certainly, it is a shock for the reader. The child's suicide note attacked the lack of accommodation for poor families, and as previously shown, *The Life* also highlighted the evils of destitution, showing property owners who were supported by vice, and discussing the parasitical nature of living off prostitutes' earnings, and stressing that these women were more than likely to have come from deprived families. Arabella is without a moral compass; is highly opportunistic; and is destructively short-sighted. She gives her son Little Father Time away to Jude and Sue who are strapped for money, without a proper home, and still in doubt as to the future of their relationship.

In the final scenes of the novel, Hardy juxtaposes lust and death in macabre synchronicity, depicting Arabella with doctor Vilbert's arm around her, while simultaneously conscious of 'the imprint on her mind's eye of a pale, statuesque countenance she had lately gazed upon', which was Jude's (Hardy, 2008c: 395). Arabella and Vilbert constantly seek the main chance; they each exemplify, in the words of Wilde's character Lord Darlington in *Lady Windermere's Fan*, 'someone who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing' (Wilde, 2014: 67). Speeches from the degree ceremony, and the pealing of the joyous bells within the hearing of Jude's death, are anomalous in terms of the traditional dignity afforded to death, as they serve as a mock ironic commentary on Jude's intellectual ambitions in his lifetime. The description of the dead Jude, lying 'covered by a sheet, straight as an arrow' (Hardy, 2008c: 396), whilst through the window the 'Joyous throb of the waltz entered from the ballroom at Cardinal' (Hardy, 2008c: 396) are heard from a college ballroom, mixes lifeless death with carefree abandonment. The story illustrates how the ruthless triumph over the meek, as the idealist Jude falls prey to Arabella and Vilbert. The arrow reference echoes Arabella earlier sexual scheming as she lies seductively on the ground 'straight as an arrow' (Hardy, 2008c: 47); hers is an arrow which finds its mark. Vilbert and Arabella are two of a kind who place personal desires above honest integrity. They have no time for postponing their gratification, nor suffering through the legitimate pains of life.

Hardy identified with the Stoics' values, the governing philosophy of the Roman Empire. Stoicism accepted that in circumstances of personal ruin, disgrace or terminal disease, the rational thing was to end one's life, and many prominent Stoics committed suicide (Magee, 1998: 46). In *Jude the Obscure*, the lovers, and the child Little Father Time, equate their failures with personal shortcomings rather than with impersonal fate. Their low self-esteem manifested in self-rejection and suicide. Taking one's life was more provocative and subversive than Hardy's targeting of the class system, or his anti-religious stance in the

society of the era: it was a taboo subject which was widely ignored. Jude's remark that 'events did not rhyme as he had thought' (Hardy, 2008c: 12) shows how, in the face of overwhelming tragic circumstances willpower becomes redundant. The young Jude had revealed an adolescent's frustration, a pattern that followed him into manhood: 'if he could only prevent himself growing up! He did not want to be a man' (Hardy, 2008c: 12). He later attempts suicide on a frozen lake, and finally, when very ill, he decides to see Sue, exposing himself to the cold and a heavy wetting that results\* in his death. The whole Fawley family had become outlaws due the opposition of overwhelming acts of fate, and confusion over their wants and needs:

"Where do we go to?" asked Time in suspense.  
"We must sail under sealed orders, that nobody may trace us .... We mustn't go to Alfredston, or to Melchester, or to Shaston, or to Christminster. Apart from those we may go anywhere"  
"Why mustn't we go there father?"  
"Because of a cloud that has gathered over us; though 'we have wronged no man, corrupted no man, defrauded no man!'<sup>1</sup> Though perhaps we have 'done that which was right in our own eyes'<sup>2</sup> (Hardy, 2008c: 296-7).

Little Father Time's fatalism hardened in response to the travails of his life, seeing suicide and murder as a solution to his family's predicaments of poverty and imminent homelessness. *The Life* defines tragedy in the following manner:

Tragedy. It may be put in brief: a tragedy exhibits a state of things in the life of an individual which unavoidably causes some natural aim or desire to end in catastrophe when carried out (Hardy, 1984: 182).

Little Father Time, in an act of selfless love, removed the burden of himself and his siblings, in an act that hoped to provide a fresh start for Jude and Sue. Hardy depicts how unfitted many young men and women of the era were to marriage. In conversation with Sue on their forthcoming second marriage, Jude reflects on marriage: ‘what Arabella had been saying to me has made me feel more than ever how hopelessly vulgar an institution legal marriage is – a sort of trap to catch a man - I can’t bear to think of it. I wish I hadn’t promised to let you put up the banns this morning!’ (Hardy, 2008c: 261). The co-dependent quartet in the story was a study in how familial traditions in marital conditions can harm relationships in those unwilling or unable to construct fresh paradigms. Aunt Drusilla had warned Jude and Sue off marriage, believing there was some kind of evil spell on their family members in the whole area of matrimony. Phillotson required a mate as a rite of passage to fulfil his manhood ideals despite the humiliations heaped on him by Sue.

Hardy hints at a Shelleyian concept of two becoming one, a unity of autonomous but surrendered individuality, but there is no evidence that it worked in reality, and certainly not in this novel. The abstract idealism of Jude and Sue lacks the chemistry of fully integrated personhood. The difficulty was that neither Sue nor Jude had fully matured emotionally; they were not full individuals *per se*. There was little evidence that Sue possessed any maternal or compassionate instinct in her behaviour towards either husband. Hardy had a predominantly cerebral rather than an over-emotional outlook on his own marital relationships. The absence of children in Hardy’s own marriage precluded the development of the maternal in Emma, and one suspects Hardy personally knew little about nurturing fatherhood, which left the family focus exclusively on one another. As cousins, Jude and Sue have a familial relationship, but such familiarity can produce rivalry rather than emotional closeness. If they had been strangers who fell in love, they would have been excited by the strangeness of the beloved.

The usurped Phillotson's conversation with his old college friend Gillingham captures the soulful desires of Jude and Sue for unity:

[Phillotson]: Their supreme desire is to be together-to share each other's emotion, and fancies, and dreams.

[Gillingham] Platonic! [Phillotson] Well no. Shelleyian would be nearer to it. They remind me of –what are their names-Laon and Cythna. Also of Paul and Virginia a little. The more I reflect, the more entirely I am on their side! (Hardy, 2008c: 223).

Jude and Sue's past and present lives are microcosms of the inequitable and repressive Victorian society, permeated from the top down with social injustice, hypocrisy and humbug, and a social structure, which conditioned them to be losers. In a tale concerning oppressors and the oppressed, the laws of the land were constituted by the powerful to keep everyone in their proper station. It was hard to feel special in a society where one was largely anonymous, and bereft of power and influence. Hardy's picture of them is arguably as tragic as anything he wrote, and though there is some psychic pathology in the quartet, the real sickness was the unconsciousness of their society, which marginalised them. Hardy has been criticised for leaving much unsaid, a narrative technique that made him a target for reasonable and unfair speculation. Nonetheless, he showed extraordinary courage in highlighting the anomalies and injustices at the heart of struggling families and society.

The temporal setting of Hardy's last novel was an important decision, as in this period his country was neither a democracy nor a meritocracy. *Jude the Obscure* represents the nadir of how Hardy's fiction deplores his bitter disappointment at the church's failure to speak seriously to modern thinking minds. It illustrated the considerable challenges faced by young intellectuals in a time of rapid change as they struggled to integrate conflicting theories and circumstances into a successful set of life principles. Sue, as the quintessential new woman, could not cast a vote, and Jude as a budding intellectual was rejected by Christminster University on the basis of his background. Hardy's gift was to juxtapose a society split in two in narrative form, rather than in a report or in a polemic, where women and the under-class as

a whole bore the brunt of much of the social inequality. If to cherish is a form of love, then the treatment meted out to both of them was quite the opposite, namely neglect of their talents, and rejection of their democratic rights. All their brightest hopes remained stillborn in what Hardy rightly described as the richest nation on Earth. Both protagonists were and remained obscure in terms of influence and geography. The dying Jude reflects to Mrs Edlin:

As for Sue and me when we were at our own best, long ago-when our minds were clear, and our love of truth fearless-the time was not ripe for us! Our ideas were fifty years too soon to be any good to us. And so the resistance they met brought reaction in her, and recklessness and ruin on me! (Hardy, 2008c: 388).

The spirit of love and marriage contained in *Jude the Obscure* is unambiguously negative, which suggests that his mild pessimism on love's delights in *Desperate Remedies* (1870) had hardened into scepticism over the intervening period of twenty-five years.

The tragedy of Sue parallels that of women in the eighteen seventies and eighties in England. They also had the odds against them in matters of marital breakdown and education. Hardy's two sisters and his cousin, Tryphena Sparks like Sue attended Teacher Training Colleges, an act that was ground breaking for people from their class. Whilst not quite University standard, it was a step in the right direction. John Stuart Mill encountered huge opposition in bringing about the first parliamentary debate on women's suffrage, and his call to the House of Commons remains impressive:

I know there is an obscure feeling, a feeling which is ashamed to express itself openly-as if women had no right to care about anything, except how they may be the most useful servants of some men ... This claim to confiscate the whole existence of one half of the species for the supposed convenience of the other appears to me, independently of its injustice, particularly silly (Wilson, 2002, 313-4).

The religious commitment at the altar to love, honour, and obey was seen as patriarchal rhetoric, constituting a further injustice to women and it was not limited to the poorer classes. Mill ended his address on a very sombre note:

I should like to have a return laid before this House of the number of women who are actually beaten to death, kicked to death, or trampled to death by their male protectors; and in an opposite column, the amount of the sentences passed, in those cases where the dastardly criminals did not get off altogether (Wilson, 2002: 314).

Hardy in *Jude the Obscure*, promoted the right of Sue to challenge male supremacy and to interrogate the dictation to females from religious and educational authorities. She is seen to be superior in intellect, and more anticipatory of future social developments than Jude, whose vision is retrospective and backward looking. This novel was subversive to Victorian cultural values, as Hardy's prose challenged the national narrative that everyone lived in the best of all possible worlds. It also broke with the love-myth that young man meets young woman, marries, and lives happily ever after. Historically, it was a transitional period in society and the changes were visible which required constant adaptation. In 1885, T.H.S. Escott, the editor of *The Fortnightly Review*, reflected: 'we have written with the conviction that the epoch in which we live is one of profound transformation, intellectual and social, abounding in new needs, new points of view, new questions' (Newsome, 1997: 2). *Jude the Obscure* reflected to the temporal powers an unflattering visage of itself.

From the unpublished *The Poor Man and the Lady*, to *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy described social conditions of hunger, oppression, inequality, and discrimination. The academic historian A. N. Wilson's in *The Victorians* quotes Reverend Francis Kilvert to describe the poverty that Hardy knew very well:

Tuesday, 9 January 1872-Went to see Caroline Farmer and read to her the latter part of Luke vii. On my way thither I fell in with a boy in the lane named George Wells. He was going to beg a bit of bread from a woman who lived at the corner of the Common under the Three Firs. He said he did not know the name of the woman but she knew his mother and often gave him a bit of bread when he was hungry. His mother was a cripple and had no parish relief, sold cabbage nets and had nothing to give him for dinner. Then a different figure and face came tripping down the lane. Carrie Britton in her bright curls and rosy face with a blue cloak, coming from the town with a loaf of bread from the bakers for her grandmother (Wilson, 2002: 426).

Jude had access to bread as he delivered the loaves that Aunt Drusilla baked and sold. Kilvert's recollections showed clearly that in matters of faith or marital relationships, the rich were favoured over the poor. Love was never a priority when hunger haunted a house. This is seen when Sue sells her pet pigeons. The immorality of humans killing animals for their food sees Sue rejecting conventional Victorian savagery, freeing the pet pigeons that her misfortunes forced her to sell. Like Jude, she criticised nature's incongruity: 'why should nature's law be mutual butchery' (Hardy, 2008c: 296). The absence of any visible evidence of providential love or husbandry for all of creation was Hardy's *bête noir*. Jude's relationship with Aunt Drusilla shows him to have been a burden, and the relationship possessed few if any moments of warmth or affection. The forthright final novel was a thinly disguised satire on Victorian repression of new ideas and the hostile reception it received was a testimony in itself to the novel's content.

The context of time and place are of crucial importance in understanding the tone and substance of Hardy's final novel. Hardy was instinctively attuned to what was going on in his society, and his story of Jude and Sue concerns human beings against whom all the odds are stacked. It is not an exaggeration to say that *Jude the Obscure* is to a great extent a religious book, dealing with how the conventional religious beliefs of the era impacted on the lives of both protagonists. A.N. Wilson's seminal work *The Victorians* argues that 'Hardy is certainly the most religious of all great English novelists, the most spiritually engaged of all great Victorian writers' (Wilson, 2002:432). Jude's story is an allegory of the divide between religious belief and unbelief; he sustains his affection for faith as Sue resents it in equal measure. Jude is a Job-like figure who endures, despite his many vicissitudes to the end. Equally, it is a book whose other main concern is to show heterosexual love in all its guises. The novel identifies with the drift away from the affection which people formerly held for religious practice, marriage laws, and the nuclear family's position as a pillar of society. It

would be difficult to defend the book against the contemporary charge that the story was anti-religious, and that it posed awkward questions for those who believed in the love of God, and in the indissolubility of marriage.

The general assumption that England was predominantly a Christian country was challenged by the only Victorian census held on religious attendance. The statistician, Horace Mann, concluded that ‘a sadly formidable portion of the English are habitual neglecters of the public ordinances of religion’ (Davis, 2004: 98). John Henry Newman, a devout Christian, spoke of the Victorian world as a place full of material independence and active business life, but he saw little evidence of God therein. In *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1864), he stated ‘if I looked into a mirror, and did not see my face, I should have the sort of feeling which actually comes upon me, when I look into this living busy world, and see no reflection of its creator’ (Davis, 2004: 99). *Jude the Obscure* is representative of the intellectual outlook at the *fin-de-siècle*, based largely on recent scientific discoveries, and was now an opposition in print to the religion of the Establishment. For these reasons, the book produced heated debate, as well as throwing light on what passed for Christianity in late nineteenth century England. Sue is a liberal-minded woman and unconventional, at least in her ideas: “‘and I [look] for something broader, truer”, she insisted. “At present intellect in Christminster is pushing one way, and religion the other”; and so they stand stock-still, like two rams butting each other” (Hardy, 2008c: 144).

The religious census in England and Wales of March 1851 revealed that only half of the population attended public worship, and half of that amount again attended the national established church. It seemed that when people rose up the social scale, they converted from Dissent to Anglicanism, the Church of the establishment, more than likely for social or business advantage. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* described how literally there was one church for the affluent and another for the poor. The shock the figures gave to the religious

authorities is summed up in the words of the historian James Anthony Froude in *Nemesis of Faith* (1849), in which he regretted that an old faith was preserved only ‘in false show of reverence either from cowardice, or indolence, or miserable social convenience’ (Davis, 2004: 98). Newman’s *Apologia* captures the slide towards agnosticism, stating that the Victorian world was similar to an orphan in a Dickens’s novel:

A boy of good make and mind, with the tokens on him of a refined nature, cast upon the world without provision, unable to say whence he came, his birthplace or his family connections (Davis, 2004: 100).

This excerpt from Newman could easily refer to the conditions that produced Jude. His ambition is to become a minister of the church, and there was perversity in the plot as his beloved Sue is a Trojan-horse figure, who questions, and even undermines, his Christian beliefs. She says that she thought Jude had given up the idea of becoming ordained (Hardy, 2008c: 144), to which Jude replies, ‘of course not. I fondly thought at first that you felt as I do about that, as you were so mixed up in Christminster Anglicanism’ (Hardy, 2008c: 144). Sue’s fast-disappearing emotional attachment to the old faith mirrors Hardy’s own dilemma: ‘to be sure, at times one couldn’t help have a sneaking liking for the traditions of the old faith as preserved by a section of thinkers there in touching and simple sincerity; but when I was in my saddest, rightest mind I always felt: “O ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of gibbeted Gods”’ (Hardy, 2008c: 144). Jude’s reply: ‘Sue, you are not a good friend of mine to talk like that!’ (Hardy, 2008c, 144), demonstrates the depth of their oppositions.

Hardy’s disdain for the church’s over-concentration on philosophical debate instead of practical compassion is illustrated in Jude and Sue’s desperation after their children’s deaths:

“They are talking about us, no doubt!” moaned Sue. “We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men”. Jude listened- “No- they are not talking of us, ” he said. “There are two clergymen of different views, arguing about the eastward position. Good God- the eastward position, and all creation groaning!” (Hardy, 2008c: 327).

The moral crisis engendered by the decline of religious belief grew exponentially. Forty years after the religious census, *Jude the Obscure* expressed the sceptical views of the intellectual *avant garde*. Hardy's destiny was never confined to the conflict between faithless science and unscientific faith. His moral sense rebelled against the God of wrath inherent in St. Peter's quotation cited in 'Thy, Damnation, Slumbereth, Not' (2: Pet. ii. 3) (Hardy, 2008c: 91). He was well aware of the outcome of people's reluctance to love one another, and did not require any further proof of human wretchedness and its damnable consequences.

A cogent description of the heroine Sue Bridhead in her pomp would be that she was intellectual, anti-Christian, coquettish in nature, who made life difficult for all the men she encountered in love. The contemporary writer and psychiatrist Havelock Ellis said she was very much a young questioning nervous woman in accord with her time. Ellis stated that Sue was not unusual, and that he had treated many similar young women of her age and nervous disposition professionally. It is within the degrees of virtue and vice, rather than their extremes, where Hardy's focus on love in *Jude the Obscure* resides. It is in the grey area, in-between the shining lights of the spirit's quest for loving, and the soul's disappointments, that the dramas surrounding the love experiences of Jude and Sue take place. The exception to this pattern was the killing by Little Father Time of his two siblings, before he took his own life. The continuous acceptance and rejection of the beloved are peak and valley experiences indispensable in the loving process between Jude and Sue. What complicates the love stories further is that throughout the novel Jude and Sue become at times Jude-Arabella-Sue, or Sue-Phyllotson-Jude, in eternal triangles that make the complex relationship between the first cousins extremely unconventional and even more difficult to analyse. It is perhaps sufficient to say the Arabella and Phyllotson's involvements are aberrations, albeit ones with very serious consequences, in the lives of the main protagonists. What Hardy described in the

(1895) Preface to the First Edition, 'without a mincing of words, of a deadly war waged between flesh and spirit' (Hardy, 2008c), in this instance is an illustration of the soaring spirit of young Jude endeavouring to escape the nets of his society, in similar manner to Stephen in Joyce's *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Conversely, it also refers to Sue's efforts to connect with life in all its vicissitudes from an emerging idealist's perspective; endeavouring to see if her ideas can be transformed into positive results. With the rapidly changing times as a backdrop, reflecting an increase in agnosticism, a clamour for democracy in education, and women's liberation, almost a hundred years after Mary Wollstonecraft, the protagonists were desperately trying to find inner visions that could work in the real world. As working-class intellectuals, Sue and Jude add to their contemporary challenges by falling in and out of love.

The constant change of attitudes lies at the heart of Jude and Sue's predicament; their relationship is a matter of ongoing negotiation between two young adults possessing many similarities and great differences in both ambition and disposition. Jude wants to further his religious education along traditional lines, as Sue looks to the statues Greek and Roman Deities in search of fresh paradigms. Jude resents Sue's implicit requests that he abandon his religious ambitions. This was a reverse of Emma and Hardy, theist and atheist respectively. After the publication of his last novel, Emma's opposition to Hardy's anti-religious stance hardened further; she had taken more pride that an antecedent of hers was an archdeacon in the church than in all Hardy's novelistic success. Sue represents Hardy's desire for reform in religious, social and educational attitudes, and she tells Jude that the railway station is the new and popular venue as the cathedral has had its day (Hardy: 2008: 128). She repositions a Christian picture in her room, replacing it with the pagan statues of Apollo and Venus, and constantly criticises the recycled teaching methods of Christminster University, stating that 'an intellect at Christminster is new wine in old bottles....The medievalism of Christminster must go, be sloughed off, or Christminster itself will have to go' (Hardy, 2008c: 144).

How the lovers deal with the highs and lows of loving encounter marks a rite of passage, a crucial stage in character development. At the age of twenty-three John Keats wrote to his brother stating that being intelligent is not enough, that one's intelligence has to be converted into a soul. 'Do you not see', he wrote, 'how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a soul....Call the world if you please "The Vale of Soul-Making." Then you will find out the use of the world' (Moore, 2004: 29). There are conventional expectations as to how love and marriage should be constituted which have a particular resonance with Sue who in her strength opposes traditional values in religion, education and heterosexual affairs.

Hardy's compassion for Jude is manifest in his depiction of the variance between the ideal and the reality. Jude's lack of the proper parenting and school tutoring, which could have imparted the skills and self-respect to enable him to withstand Arabella's crude sexual gesture, also demonstrates the anomaly of putting advanced sophisticated ideas into the mind of a youth from the rural working class. The Christminster academic refers to Jude's trade and background when rejecting his application. For Jude, becoming an undergraduate and succeeding in graduating would allow him to appropriate a middle-class culture and its status in one huge leap. However, he originates in obscurity and returns to it, equating to a failure to progress academically and socially. In conventional terms, this may represent failure, but the sensitive reader will see how heroic his efforts have been, and how his intellect has prospered as a consequence. Hardy demonstrates that Jude's ideal was thwarted by his poverty and lack of influence. Sue remarked:

You are one of the very men Christminster was intended for when the colleges were founded; a man with a passion for learning, but no money, or opportunities, or friends. But you were elbowed off the pavements by the millionaire's sons (Hardy, 2008c: 144).

Jude's conflicts are in the main theoretical or external, unlike those of Sue, which are unconscious and repressed. An addiction to learning and Christminster reveal his underlying grandiosity:

I have acquired an average student's power to read the common ancient classics, Latin in particular.... I have read two books on the Iliad, besides being pretty familiar with passages such as the speech of Phoenix in the ninth book.... I have also done some Hesiod; a little scrap of Thucydides, and a lot of Greek Testament.... I know something of the Fathers, and something of Roman and English history ....I will be a D.D. before I have done ....Meanwhile I will read, as soon as I am settled in Christminster the books I have not been able to get hold of here: Livy: Tacitus: Herodotus: Sophocles: Aristophanes (Hardy, 2008c: 31-33).

Jude's character with its contradictory elements is not neurotically flawed in the way that Sue's is dysfunctional. Jude never 'uses the flight into neurosis' (Sumner 1981: 148), the Freudian term for avoiding personal growth or maturation. Freudian theory is mirrored in Jude's coping mechanisms, using substitutive gratifications to lessen frustrations, notably his obsession with Christminster, and the difficulties with Sue, to whom he has also, in an emotional sense, become addicted. Freud's statement that intoxicating substances make humans insensitive to life's pain is paralleled in Jude's periodic bingeing on alcohol. His theory also corresponds to Jungian theory that the illegitimate avoidance of pain leads to human neurosis, constituting one of the underlying causes of addiction. Jude's sub-conscious desire is to be heard, respected and appreciated in love. When those desires are not met, he acts them out:

Jude Fawley with the self-conceit, effrontery, and aplomb of a strong-brained fellow in liquor, threw in his remarks somewhat preemptorily; ... with an insistence that would have appeared pitiable to himself in his sane hours (Hardy, 2008c: 114).

Jude is an example of an autodidact's failure to understand that all of his newly acquired knowledge will have to be digested, reflected, and crucially tested in real life situations over the rest of his life. It will take years for Jude to assimilate all the knowledge he has

accumulated, and the pressing need to support a wife and family are the pressures which prove insurmountable. Even the gifted Hardy found the obstacles placed in his way as he attempted to access third-level education too daunting. Jude's and Hardy's shared utterances are similar in tone to the quotations from Job in the novel, regretting been born, rejecting life's pains. The losing life-wagers of Jude in love, education, and Christian ministry illustrate the tragedy of his plight, demonstrating why talent and ambition are not always productive without a great deal of financial and emotional support; the very qualities lacking in his short lifetime. His paths flowed from sincere if unrealistic inner concepts, and he faced adversity heroically and realistically without the insight that Victorian conventions had placed insurmountable impedimenta in his way, to stifle his legitimate ambitions. Jude Fawley is the proxy for Hardy's *cri de coeur*; for the man he could have been. *Jude the Obscure* was in ways Hardy's greatest achievement; in this work he combined his skills as a storyteller, literary experimentation, and a zeal for social and religious reform. His love of animals and the landscape and above all his humanist and democratic qualities and their shadows all coalesce in a literary production that conveyed in narrative form what life was like for those of talent and ambition without pecuniary means who lived in obscurity as the Victorian era concluded.

## Chapter Seven: Ambivalence in the Poetry of Thomas Hardy

Hardy spent the last thirty years of life composing poetry, some of the highest order, his themes were similar to those of the novels, mournful of the pain of life, and how most individual life wagers were destined to be losing bets. It can be argued that ambivalence was one of Hardy's greatest assets as it gave him the priceless quality of having an open mind on everything for the duration of his life. Hence, his oft-quoted remarks taken from the 1895 Preface to *Jude the Obscure* that his utterances were merely seemings or impressions, making them only provisional conclusions:

Like former productions of this pen, *Jude the Obscure* is simply an endeavour to give shape and coherence to a series of seemings, or personal impressions, the question of their consistency or their discordance, of their permanence or their transitoriness, being regarded as not of the first moment (Hardy, 1994c: vi).

The archetypal psychologist James Hillman remarks that 'philosophy can conceive life and death together. For philosophy they need not be exclusive opposites, polarised into Freud's Eros and Thanatos, or Menninger's Love and Hate, one played against the other' (Hillman, 2011, 59). Any in-depth reflection on the natural world will reveal how each moment contains life and death, attraction and its nemesis. Hardy perceived the eternal *gestalt* moment in Nature where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. As a pastoral novelist, Hardy illustrated how monolithic Nature was at times engaged in conflict with its constituent parts, as were individual segments with one another. A polytheist by disposition, he identified and accommodated the psychic oppositions thrown up between ethical values and unconsciousness as by their very nature their conflicting dynamics stimulated his exploring

nature. Hardy's poetry examines the degrees of Life and Death, Love and Hate in a unique manner. His concentration on whether to opt for life or death, to love or not, are the fundamental basis for the greater portion of his poetics. Hardy was an observer of human frailty, capturing the foibles of behaviour and character defects in prose and poetry with the expressed hope that this could lead to their amelioration. A contemporary poet the theist T.S. Eliot felt that Hardy in concentrating on the negative aspects of life without offering a panacea for them was in some ways a Nihilist.

It is clear from what Eliot wrote about Hardy that philosophically he was opposed to the thrust of Hardy's portraiture of the dismal lot of circumstances inherited by the human race. Eliot, a poet of a transcendental disposition, believed that when one accepted that life was difficult it led to its transcendence which was in direct opposition to Hardy's disgruntled speaker. The lines 476-480 from the third poem of Eliot's *Four Quartets* 'Dry Salvages' written in 1941, when German planes were bombing London on a nightly basis, showed humanity in a very poor light. Eliot who was what Hardy had been; a monotheist, a believer in Christ's resurrection similar to Hardy's mentor the Reverend William Barnes. Eliot felt there was an older religious philosophy worth keeping and he wrote against making too big an issue of Darwin's Theory of Evolution:

It seems as one becomes older,  
That the past has another pattern, and ceases to be mere sequence-  
Or even development: the latter a partial fallacy  
Encouraged by superficial notions of evolution,  
Which becomes, in the popular mind,  
A means of disowning the past (Eliot, 1991: 194).

Eliot due to his monotheist outlook viewed life through the prism of the psycho-synthesis afforded by his Christian belief; that though life was difficult all would be well, whereas Hardy remained ambivalent and troubled in accommodating conflicting religious and atheistic ideologies that remained unresolved within him to the end of his life.

Hardy's personal sensitivity to criticism of his work terminated his career as a novelist, and opened up a new beginning as a publishing poet. This was partially a tragedy for his readership, as the novelist, up to the late nineteenth century, provided a public service; indeed, the messages Hardy conveyed through his novels gave many readers the opportunity to consider and reflect upon fundamental questions affecting them and their social conditions. As a novelist, Hardy dealt with the deepest emotional, religious and social issues in a manner that could be said to anticipate psychoanalysis. Hardy was a force to contend with for ultra-conservatives, and the oppression he endured from reactionary forces almost compelled him to find a different discipline that permitted free expression, without the baggage of coping with entrenched perspectives. Like his heroic characters, Henchard, Tess and Jude, Hardy himself was now stepping outside convention by painting fresh pictures in a new genre. Writing in the 1912 Postscript to *Jude the Obscure*, at a time when he was firmly established as a poet of some stature, he put into context why he changed from novelist to poet:

We Britons hate ideas, and we are going to live up to that privilege of our native country. Your picture may not show the untrue, or the uncommon, or even be contrary to the canons of art; but it is not the view of life that we who thrive on conventions can permit to be painted (Hardy, 1994c: XIV).

Generalisations often have some truth at their core, and Hardy's statement is in line with the stereotype of English people being conservative in nature and reserved in behaviour. The switch of genres was a seminal moment in a new career.

The introduction to *The Works of Thomas Hardy* (1995), suggests that: 'it is true that Hardy persistently counteracts the optimism of his age: he opposes the Victorian theory of human "progress"; he revolts against Tennyson's beatific vision or Browning's passionate belief in personal immortality; above all he furiously rejects the idea of sympathy and goodness of Nature' (Hardy, 1995: vi). In addition, Hardy's poetry in general takes a very

unsentimental approach to love and human existence. ‘A Young Man’s Epigram on Existence’, written when he was twenty-six, captures his quintessential outlook on life:

A senseless school, where we must give  
Our lives that we may learn to live!  
A dolt is he who memorises  
Lessons that leave no time for prizes (Hardy, 1995: 281).

This early poem demonstrates that Hardy was addressing a universal rather than a strictly English problem; it suggests that the difficult transit through life for many people made little sense without some reward. The ‘prize’ promised by the Christian religion for enduring a life of pain, anxiety and downright unfairness, was the promise of bliss in the next life. The poem ‘Hap’, written when he was twenty-six, conveys his religious doubts:

If but some vengeful god would call to me  
From up the sky, and laugh: ‘Thou suffering thing,  
Know that thy sorrow is my ecstasy,  
That thy love’s loss is my hate’s profiting!’

Then would I bear it, clench myself, and die,  
Steeled by the sense of ire unmerited;  
Half-eased in that a Powerfuller than I  
Had willed and meted me the tears I shed.

But not so. How arrives it joy lies slain  
And why unblooms the best hope ever sown?  
Crass Causality obstructs the sun and rain  
And dicing Time for Gladness casts a moan ...  
These purblind Doomsters had as readily strown  
Blisses about my pilgrimage as pain (Hardy, 1995: 7).

The archetypal psychologist and writer James Hillman could be describing Hardy when he states:

Depression lets you live down at the bottom. And to live down at the bottom means giving up the Christian thing about resurrection and coming out of it; light at the end of the tunnel. No light fantasy; and then the depression at once becomes less dark. No hope, no despair. (Hillman, 1991: 157).

Hardy's crisis of identity existed in the tension between the social sophistication of the elevated *milieu* he had joined, and the simplicity of his early and formative rural background. At twenty-six, he revealed to his sister Mary a serious intention to enter the church though religious doubts followed soon afterwards. The poem 'The Impercipient' (1898), declares his awakening to unbelief:

That with this bright believing band  
I have no claim to be,  
That faiths by which my comrades stand  
Seem fantasies to me ... (Norman, 2011: 35).

At twenty seven, Hardy, perhaps influenced by Swinburne and Darwin, wrote the very anti-religious poem 'Hap' around a time of his personal religious crisis. The poem 'The Drinking Song', from the collection *Winter Words*, came towards the end of his life, and is more rounded and compassionate. It shows an understanding of human foibles and humorously lightens the gloom of 'Hap' and can be seen as a kind of amelioration. He observed that seemingly certain philosophical, scientific, and religious truths were being replaced by later doctrines to the befuddlement of humanity, as these more modern perspectives revealed life as being much more complex than had been hitherto imagined. A stanza from the 'Drinking Song' refers to Einstein's mind-numbing scientific discovery of Relativity:

And now comes Einstein with a notion-  
Not yet quite clear  
To many here-  
That's there's no time, no space, no motion,  
Nor square nor straight,  
But just a sort of bending-ocean. (Hardy, 1995: 866)

The author's insight on the inner reality behind the external performance is captured in: 'If all hearts were open and all desires known-as they would be if people showed their souls-how many gapings, sighings, clenched fists, knotted brows, broad grins, and red eyes should we see in the marketplace!' (Hardy, cited in Davis, 1983: 371). Hardy's poem, 'The Caricature', from his collection *Human Shows*, contrasts secrecy with its shadow,

transparency. It concerns a relationship between an experienced coquettish woman and her younger lover, a painter, that founders due to what he perceives as her dishonest self-serving motives, driving him to do an insane act; he moulded 'on the real its mock'; / of beautiful brow, lip, eye, and lock- / Composed a laughing stock' (Hardy, 1995: 728). In his revenge, he paints her in grotesque caricature which he conceals from her, it is a source of great laughter to him, until he finds out much later from a friend that 'She loved once, loved whole souled' (Hardy, 1995: 729). Realising that the 'Lady Lu' had found love with him at last, he is driven crazy by the knowledge, which he continues to keep hidden from everybody. The gloom of his rash act showed on his features afterwards confirming the adage that one is as sick as one's secrets. This is similar in its theme to Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* who in order to preserve a beautiful façade, has made a pact with the devil to have his evil acts inscribed on a painting kept hidden in his attic. In the *denouement*, Gray is transformed into a withered and decrepit old man the opposite of his beautiful young self:

... "Why do you laugh?" she said one day  
As he gazed at her in a curious way.  
"Oh-for nothing", said he. "Mere play."

... Thence onward folk would muse in doubt  
What gloomed him so he walked about,  
But few, or none, found out (Hardy, 1995: 729).

Hardy's long life was accompanied by lucidity of thought up to the end, it allowed him to focus particularly on mortal questions like love and hate, and hope and despair, without needing the bromide of palliative remedies. This was a significant achievement, as the unhappiness contained within the great majority of his over eight hundred extant poems, arose from one who wished it were otherwise.

A poem which captures Hardy's enigmatic nature was 'The Darkling Thrush' included in *Poems of the Past and Present* dated 31st December 1900 where the landscape acts a metaphor for the conditions of life over the previous hundred years.

I leant upon a coppice gate  
When frost was spectre-gray,  
And Winter's Dregs made desolate  
The weakening eye of day.  
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky  
Like lanterns of broken lyres,  
And all mankind that haunted night  
Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be  
The Century's corpse outleant,  
His crypt the cloudy canopy  
The wind his death-lament.  
The ancient pulse of germ and birth  
Was shrunken hard and dry,  
And every spirit upon earth  
Seemed fervourless as I (Hardy, 1995: 137).

Hardy next pictures an aged thrush from 'The bleak twigs overhead' / 'In full-hearted evensong / Of joy unlimited / Upon the growing gloom' (Hardy, 1995: 137). The bird's ecstatic song mirrors human hopes that despite evidence to the contrary all is well. Despite Hardy's awareness of the bleakness of things, he perseveres that a way to the better may exist. The thrush's joy acts a dialectic to a rationalist's gloom.

At roughly the mid-point of his *official* verse publication, on Christmas Eve 1915, he published the Nativity poem 'The Oxen' in the *London Times*. The hopes expressed in the poem are consistent with the aspirations of an individual who expressly stated that he had been looking for God for fifty years, and that if God existed, he would have found him. Over the whole thirty years of poetry composition, the horrors of global warfare almost extinguished the remnants of innocence and lightness of spirit in the author. The spectre of

war changed what had been sceptically conjectured into a form of conviction that civilisation and progress had come to a juddering halt with the advent of war. The major combatants in World War I all came from nominally Christian countries, suggesting that Christianity had failed to keep the peace. Hardy felt that humanity had been deluded and that transforming the Christian ideals of brotherly love and forgiveness into reality was beyond human ken. The hopes of 'The Oxen' were replaced by the hopelessness of the quatrain, 'Christmas 1924', published posthumously in the *Daily Telegraph*:

'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 (Orel, 1976: 134).

For Hardy human hopes and history did not rhyme. The real oppositions were arguably between choices; blindly accepting the narrow simplistic vision of the prevailing conventions or else exploring life in all its myriad and dark complexities.

As a humanist author, whose primary responsibility was to the aesthetic, he did humanity much service by deconstructing religious belief from a rationalist's perspective. The final poems entitled *Winter Words* (1928), written at 88 years of age, defended his self-protectiveness by asserting that he was consistently inconsistent. The poem 'So Various' (1928), encompasses a life from his youth to the last year. It is a good summary of Hardy's thought, offering personal insight into a multifaceted man full of contradictions. The conclusion is not sad, but victorious in spirit:

Now ... All these specimens of man,  
So various in their pith and plan,  
Curious to say,  
Were one man. Yea,  
I was all they (Hardy, 1995: 830).

Even though after his mid-twenties he was no longer a monotheist, he steadfastly remained true to some very fundamental perspectives as the champion of the underprivileged and the oppressed. He sought justice for the voiceless from the representatives of religion and those who ruled the land, all the time being aware that these were the structures that propagated the myths he opposed.

Philip Larkin, speaking on Radio 4 in 1983, stated that for him Hardy's poetry was a turning point. Larkin's affinity to Hardy is contained in his poem 'This Be the Verse' (1971), from the collection *High Windows* (1974):

Man hands on misery to man.  
It deepens like a coastal shelf.  
Get out as early as you can,  
And don't have any kids yourself (Larkin, 1974: 30).

Larkin, initially influenced by Yeats's visionary poems, eventually embraced Hardy's more direct and personal brand of poetry. Larkin, cited in Hardy (1995), said 'the dominant emotion in Hardy is sadness' (Hardy, 1995: vi):

I don't think Hardy as a poet, is a poet for young people. I know it sounds ridiculous to say I wasn't young at twenty-five or twenty-six and that's precisely what I found in Hardy. In other words, I'm saying that what I like about him primarily is his temperament and the way he sees life. He's not a transcendental writer, he's not Yeats, he's not an Eliot; his subjects are men, the life of men, time and the passing of time, love and the fading of love (Larkin, 1983: 175).

The core of Larkin's statement is in accord with the sentiments expressed in 'A Young Man's Epigram on Existence', quoted earlier in the chapter. Eliot's *The Wasteland* deals with the moral and physical pollution caused by humanity's unawareness. It was within the series of poems entitled *Four Quartets*, particularly so in 'East Coker' and 'Burnt Norton', that he offers a way out of human darkness. 'East Coker' describes a time of difficulty and desire for hope: 'I said to my soul be still, and wait without hope' and 'the sickness must grow worse in order to find healing'. Eliot, with his Christian perspective, is looking at a similar situation,

but from a very different perspective. This is clear in Hardy's poem, 'In St Paul's A While Ago', whose lines refer to how St. Paul and succeeding generations have obscured what Christ really had to say: 'that strange Jew, Damascus bound, / Whose name, thereafter travelling round / To this precinct of the world, / Spread here like a flag unfurled' (Hardy, 1975: 679). Hardy's poem suggests that it may be the voice of St. Paul rather than that of Jesus that people have listened to since: 'to frame this pile, writ his throughout the ages: / Whence also the encircling mart / Assumed his name, of him no part, / And to his vision-seeking mind / Charmless, blank in every kind' (Hardy, 1995: 679).

In 1898, aged fifty-eight, Hardy published his first book of poetry, entitled *Wessex Poems*. It was a strange and bold departure for a writer who had become famous and financially independent through creating fourteen novels and over three dozen short stories. When many men of his age were considering retirement, the creative fires were still burning brightly for Hardy, and would do so for the next thirty years. Two factors combined to alter his course from the habits and disciplines of the previous twenty-five years (1870-1895), which had seen greater concentration on novel composition. The first factor was his love of poetry as a mode of expression; the second was the hostile reception of *Jude the Obscure* which some of the most powerful Victorian critics had attacked. They labelled him as immoral, and as an opponent of marriage, and anonymous and libellous correspondence were sent to him at Max Gate. He received a letter containing the ashes of the book. Hardy's 1912 Postscript to *Jude the Obscure* read:

So much for the unhappy beginning of Jude's career as a book. After these verdicts from the press its next misfortune was to be burnt by a Bishop-probably in his despair at not being able to burn me (Hardy, 1994c: vii).

Neither did Chesterton escape retribution, as Hardy's traditional retaliation for a felt-grievance is captured in the poem 'Epitaph for G.K. Chesterton':

Here lies nipped in this narrow cyst  
The literary contortionist  
Who prove and never turn a hair  
That Darwin's theories were a snare  
He'd hold as true with tongue in jowl,  
That Nature's geocentric rule  
... true and right  
And if one with him could not see  
He'd shout his choice word 'Blasphemy' (Hardy, 1976: 954).

The Christian beliefs of Chesterton had been indirectly attacked in *Jude the Obscure*, as well as in 'Hap'; a poetic interpretation of Darwinian Theory, which could be read as rampant atheism:

'If some vengeful god would call to me, From up the sky, and laugh:  
'Thou suffering thing, Know that thy sorrow is my ecstasy, That the  
love's loss is my hate's profiting' (Hardy, 1995: 7).

The dialectical oppositions between Chesterton's Christian beliefs and Hardy's faith in Darwinian Theory were deep and life-long. The vitriolic nature of Hardy's 'Epitaph for G. K. Chesterton' revealed his darker side; a largely concealed ego, in opposition to what Havelock Ellis' and many others estimated him to be. The virulence of the attacks on Hardy were what tipped the balance away from the novel to verse, a *metier* in which he was at least equally proficient. The shift from fiction to poetry meant that Hardy avoided the constant on-going criticism from self-appointed moralists and religious apologists, which was his lot from *Tess to Jude*:

Good Friday 1892. Read review of 'Tess' in The Quarterly. A smart and amusing article; but it is easy to be smart and amusing if a man will forego veracity and sincerity. You can see in every line that the reviewer has his tongue in cheek. The article is, in fact, full of boorish brutality and lust. In one place Bludyer says the story is told in a coarse manner; in another that it is not ... Well if this sort of thing continues no more novel writing for me. A man must be a fool to deliberately stand up to be shot at (Hardy, 1984: 259).

Hardy was a sensitive man, particularly so in handling what he considered the spurious criticism of shallow reviewers. The 1912 Postscript to *Jude* illustrated how literary opinions were formed or malformed:

One incident among many arising from the storm of words was that an American man of letters, who did not whitewash his own morals, informed me that, having bought a copy 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 was pleased to call 'a religious and ethical treatise' (Hardy, 2008: xlv).

Hardy concluded that 'there is nothing that men will not find fault with' (Hardy, 1984: 257). His poetry challenged the harsh judgements in those resistant to change. He challenged the suppression and oppression from critics and censors, the so called gatekeepers of public morality, who were the people controlling the levers of publishing power up to the end of World War I. Those particular censors, when viewed in the context of an obscene and horrendous war, were similar to the blind guides in Matthew (23:24) who strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel. It was in this culturally regressive climate that Joyce's novel *Ulysses* was banned on the grounds that it was indecent for many years after that conflict ended.

*The Life's* assessment of his poetry was modestly understated, as if anticipating critical rejection: 'I do not expect much notice will be taken of these poems: they mortify the human sense of self-importance by showing, or suggesting, that human beings are of no matter or appreciable value in this nonchalant universe' (Hardy, 2008: 389). James Gibson wrote 'success as a poet did not come easily. Hardy was so uncertain of the welcome that *Wessex Poems* would receive that he told his publishers that he would take on his shoulders the financial risk of producing the book' (Gibson, 2011: 13). There is little sense of Yeatsian or Keatsian transcendence in Hardy's poetics, it is rather an unvarnished exposition of how humanity's hopes are consistently raised only to be dashed by malevolent fate or human opposition in a meaningless universe. This section will demonstrate the reactions of several

eminent poets and critics, supporters of and objectors to Hardy's verse, including Philip Larkin and Thomas Stearns Eliot.

Larkin stated in 1966 that he regarded Hardy's *Collected Poems* as 'many times over the best body of work this century so far has to show' (Hardy, 2006: XVII) Eliot, who was born in America, was an Anglophile at heart, becoming a naturalised British subject, and renouncing his American citizenship. As a churchwarden, who declared himself an Anglo-Catholic, he would have found Hardy's poetry inimical to his religious beliefs. Gibson, in the Thomas Hardy Society publication, contrasts the poetic styles of Eliot and Hardy:

This very personal nature of his writing is not liked by some critics, possibly because with it goes a lack of intellectual abstractions, scholarly allusions, and critical difficulties which in the poetry of someone like T.S. Eliot provide so many opportunities for the writing of books of endless commentary and explanation. (Gibson, 2011: 13)

Eliot was antipathetic towards Hardy, but like Chesterton later, he softened his harsh stance on his contemporary and fellow-poet. Initially, he was openly hostile to Hardy's independent if iconoclastic views on religion and morality, which ran counter to his own views. Chesterton, Eliot, and many others would have considered the tenor of lines from 'God's Education' and 'God's Funeral' to be blasphemous:

God's Education

I saw him steal the light away  
That haunted in her eye:  
It went so gently none could say  
More than that it was there one day  
And missing by-and-by

I watched her longer, and he stole  
Her lily tincts and rose;  
All her young sprightliness of soul  
Next fell beneath his cold control,  
And disappeared like those

... Said I: "We call that cruelty-

We, your poor mortal kind”  
He mused. “The thought is new to me  
Forsooth, though I men’s master be.  
Theirs is the teaching mind”!(Hardy, 1995: 261)

#### God’s Funeral

... O man-projected Figure, of late  
Imaged as we, thy knell who shall survive?  
Whence came it we were tempted to create  
On whom we can no longer keep alive?

“Framing him jealous, fierce, at first  
We gave him justice as the years rolled,  
Will to bless those by circumstances accurst,  
And longsuffering, and mercies manifold.

“And tricked by our own early dream  
And need of solace, we grew self-deceived  
Our making soon our maker did we deem  
And what we imaged we believed

... And they composed a crowd of whom  
Some were right good, and many nigh the best ...  
Thus dazed and puzzled “twixt” the gleam and gloom  
Mechanically I followed with the rest. (Hardy, 1995: 307-309).

What is clear from those two poems is that they filled a descriptive need of the reality of religious belief from a rationalist’s perspective, for believers and agnostics alike. To an extent, Hardy’s poetics filled the vacuum between agnosticism and atheism.

Hardy stated that if Galileo had said in poetry what he said unambiguously to the Inquisition, then they would have left him alone. He found affinity with the Nietzschean proposition that ‘God is dead’. Implicit attacks on religion meant church apologists retaliated. *The Life* declared his scepticism on modern religion:

The old theologies may or may not have worked for good in their time. But they will not bear stretching further in epic or dramatic art. The Greeks used up theirs: the Jews used up theirs; the Christian have used up theirs. So that one must make an independent plunge, embodying the real, if only temporary, thought of the age. But I expect that I shall catch it hot and strong for attempting it (Hardy, 1984: 344).

Larkin wrote ‘a writer’s life dictates his books: unless its pattern changes, he will ultimately seem to be re-enacting them. What is surprising is that he should so often be unaware of the fact’ (Hardy, 1983: 254). *The Life* demonstrates Hardy’s desire for the greater transparency and personal autonomy which poetry facilitated:

In future I am not going to praise things because the accumulated remarks of ages say they are great and good, if those accumulated remarks are not based on observation. And I am not going to condemn things because a pile of accepted views raked together from tradition, and acquired by instillation, say antecedently they are bad (Hardy, 1984: 167).

It is useful to reflect on what kind of individual Hardy had evolved into when commencing his career as a poet. Irwin states:

Hardy was a simple man, but he did not have a simple mind .... He was a trained architect, a musician, and a self-taught classicist. He was intimate with the scriptures and had a wide knowledge of literature and art and of certain periods in history, particularly the Napoleonic Wars. He was well informed in geology, astronomy and certain aspects of archeology. To some temperaments such specialised modes of knowledge might have constituted little more than a hobby, intellectual extras, dispensable supplements. Hardy incorporated them in his general view of the world. Often his poetry is positively illuminated by his understanding of science, history or classical literature (Hardy, 2006: viii).

*The Life* states: ‘speaking generally, there is more autobiography in a hundred lines of Mr Hardy’s poetry than in all the novels’ (Hardy, 1984: 425). While the narrator’s comments in a novel can be a general guide to the author’s point of view, the verse contains greater clarification on the connectedness between the poet’s emotion, spirit, soul and mind. Poetry as a vehicle to connect directly with the reader is a more effective medium than fiction; it is also a form of language that, by avoiding the need for rational narrative discourse, can offer insights into the unconscious through images, symbols and connections at the level of rhyme

and rhythm of its language. Hardy was an emotional man who wrote in good part inspired by his emotionality.

Irwin's introduction to the *Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy* states:

To Hardy the question returns again and again: how is such uniqueness of feeling, such intensity, to be reconciled with our modern awareness of the infinitesimal brevity of the particular life, whether of insect or man. Our strongest sensations and highest values seem no worth whatsoever in the wider scheme of things (Hardy, 2006: XVI).

This is a deep question for reflective people, as well as for the individuals who feel that life is as it is, pushing the question away. His poem, 'Waiting Both', possesses some qualities of Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*, where the protagonists Vladimir and Estragon are waiting for God or 'something' to arrive, unsure if 'it' ever will (Beckett, 2011). 'Waiting Both' records a conversation between a human and a celestial star both in the thrall of evolution:

A star looks down at me,  
And says: "Here I and you  
Stand, each in our degree;  
What do you mean to do, -  
Mean to do?"

I say: "For all I know,  
Wait, and let Time go by,  
Till my change come" -just so,"  
The star says: "So mean I : -  
So mean I." (Hardy 1995: 665).

The poem suggests that star and human alike are victims of the evolving creative process. Hardy assigns consciousness to the celestial body, the dialogue between the two entities alludes to the connectivity in the cosmos; a type of terrible order.

If Hardy felt that as a poet he would be free from irrational criticism in apportioning blame and ridicule to the putative Creator of existence, he was gravely mistaken. 'In Tenebris II' emerged immediately after *Jude the Obscure*, and it portrays how 'the shouts of the many

and strong' crush all that is 'low voiced', and the poet 'feels that delight is a delicate growth cramped by crookedness, custom and fear' (Hardy, 1995: 154), yet unafraid he holds, 'a full look at the worst' is the way to human betterment (Hardy, 1995: 154). In 'In Tenebris II', Hardy goes against the tide of Victorian positivity, which speaks of 'nothing much the matter; there are many smiles to a tear' (Hardy, 1995: 154). By identifying what he termed the 'Cause of Things' anthropomorphically, he found himself in familiar deep and troubled waters; he had earlier experienced similar retribution in describing The President of the Immortals in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* as sporting with Tess's misfortunes. 'In Tenebris II' shows the poet's dissatisfaction with his domicile on Earth: 'Till I think I am one born out of due time, who has no calling here' (Hardy, 1995: 154), and 'Then what the matter is I, I say. Why should such a one be here?' (Hardy, 1995: 154). The poem describes the fate of a dissident's reluctant participation in life:

... Who holds that if way to the better there be, it exacts a full look at the Worst,  
Who feels that delight is a delicate growth cramped by crookedness,  
custom, and fear,  
Get him up and gone as one shaped awry; he disturbs the order here.  
(Hardy, 1995: 154).

*The Life* records Hardy's letter to Mr Alfred Noyes, who was a friendly critic, in 1920 outlining his sober opinion on the First Cause's amorality: 'loveless and hateless I have called it, which neither good nor evil knows' (you will find plenty of these definitions in *The Dynasts* as well as in the short poems)' (Hardy, 1984: 217). The letter sees the re-emergence of Hardy's fighting qualities arising from his frustration at how critics could twist his meanings:

But it has always been my misfortune to presuppose a too intelligent reading public, and no doubt people will go on thinking that I really believe the Prime Mover to be a malignant old gentleman, a sort of King of Dahomey – an idea which so far from my holding it, is irresistibly comic (Hardy, 1995: 217).

Hardy's accumulated knowledge created the inner vision out of which he wrote, and many perspectives constantly contended for supremacy. Hardy would label these perspectives mere 'seemings', or impressions, rather than incontrovertible facts of life. Many of the themes dealt with in the fiction resurface in the poetry, such as issues of God, love, marriage and death, while Hardy's maturity brought a fresh approach to topics concerning war, peace, old age and loneliness. Nature in its many guises was incorporated into poems expressing Hardy's unique perspective on all these issues. Hardy's inclusive quality of mind saw insects possessing different qualities of mind, and their short existences are a metaphorical representation of the transient nature of humans in context of the cosmos. 'An August Midnight' shows the action synchronising with the chiming of a clock in his depiction of the eternal 'now':

A shaded lamp and a waving blind,  
And the beat of a clock from a distant floor:  
On this scene enter-winged, horned and spined-  
A longlegs, a moth, and a dumbledore;  
While 'mid my page there idly stands  
A sleepy fly, that rubs its hands ...

Thus meet we five, in this still place,  
At this point of time, at this point in space.  
- My guests besmear my new-penned line,  
Or bang at the lamp and fall supine.  
"God's humblest, they!" I muse. Yet why?  
They know Earth's-secrets that know not I (Hardy, 1995: 134).

The poem also shows the inter-connectedness of all things as the besmirchment of the page elicits a human reaction, and the poet's senses are stirred by insects hitting the lamp-shade.

An indicator of Hardy's poetic legacy was how he influenced his fellow war-poets Rupert Brooke and Siegfried Sassoon. Hardy's Boer war poem 'Drummer Hodge' dignified a young and innocent Wessex man, without much education, thrown into a grave without due ceremony:

They throw in Drummer Hodge, to rest  
Uncoffined-just as found: His landmark is a kopje-crest  
That breaks the veldt around ...

Yet portion of that unknown plain  
Will Hodge for ever be  
His homely Northern breast and brain  
Grow to some Southern tree (Hardy, 1995: 83).

The lines from Brooke's war poem 'The Soldier 1914 Part V', evoke echoes of a pacifist doomed to imminent death due to the call of national duty: 'If I should die, think only this of me: That there is some corner of a foreign field that is forever England' (Brook 2010: 139). A closely-related Boer War poem by Hardy entitled 'A Wife In London' (December 1899), shows a wife in a house in a Thames-side lane awaiting news from the war. The messenger is smart, perfunctory, with a missive that says 'He-has fallen-in the far South Land ...' (Hardy, 1995: 83). A day later in foggy and smoggy London 'the postman nears and goes' delivering a letter from her late husband 'whom the worm now knows'. The letter promises sunny Summer weather with home 'planned jaunts' and a deepening love when reunited (Hardy, 1995: 83); the poem is an excellent example of Hardy's views of human life as being lived under the gaze of a malignant fate.

Hardy's war poetry is contradictory; as the First World War progressed, the toll of the dead and wounded badly affected the British national psyche. Hardy's inner chauvinist fought with the humanitarian in him, in an ongoing dialectical ambivalence. Hardy's deepest hopes are in sympathy with the real threat to Britain, and he composed 'A Call to National Service' (1917):

Up and be doing, all who have a hand  
To lift, a back to bend. It must not be  
In times like these that vaguely linger we  
To air our vaunts and hopes; and leave our land

Untended as a wild of weeds and sand  
- say, then, "I come!" and go, o women and men  
Of palace, ploughshare, easel, counter, pen;  
That scareless, scathless, England still may hand

Would years but let me stir as once I stirred

At many a dawn to take the forward track,  
And with a stride plunged on to enterprise,

I now would speed like yester wind that whirred  
Through yielding pines; and serve with never a slack,  
So loud for promptness all around outcries!(Hardy, 1995: 514).

At the bleakest time of the deadly conflict of World War I, with spirit of the call to arms and a general mobilisation of resources, Hardy's patriotism surfaced, triggering an ambivalence, revealed in his personal correspondence, which pointed to a different pre-war attitude:

Sir- I should like to be allowed space to express in the fewest words a view of Count Tolstoy's philosophical sermon on war, of which you print a translation in your impression of today and a comment on your leading article. The sermon may show many of the extravagances of detail to which the world has grown accustomed in Count Tolstoy's other writings. It may exhibit, here and there, incoherence as a moral system ... But surely all these objectors should be hushed by his great argument, and every defect in his particular reasoning's hidden by the blaze of glory that shines from his masterly indictment of war as a modern principle, with all its senseless and illogical crimes. Your obedient servant, Thomas Hardy (Hardy, 2007: 331).

Hardy's praise for Leo Tolstoy's (1828-1910) pacifism did not extend to Tolstoy's love of life; his canon opposed Tolstoy's view captured in his epic novel *War and Peace* (1869): 'the most difficult thing – but an essential one – is to love Life, to love it even while one suffers, because Life is all. Life is God, and to love life means to love God' (Dyer, 2012: 278).

Hardy's enigmatic nature can be discerned in his ambivalence towards war and peace; assuming that the dialectically opposed sentiments of the poetry towards war are genuinely heartfelt expressions, it revealed Hardy as possessing conflicting attitudes, particularly so when under severe emotional pressure. He wrote war propaganda poetry entitled *Poems of War and Patriotism* (1917), describing the emotions of departing soldiers in the 'Men Who March Away' (1914), who are observed by a 'Friend with a musing eye', who suspects that war is nothing but a 'purblind prank' (Hardy, 1995: 506). The poem states that 'the soldiers believe in [their] heart of hearts', that 'Victory crowns the just' (Gibson, 2001: 538), implying the Providential Will at work, a sentiment directly opposed by 'God's Funeral'

(1908-1910), which suggested there was nothing but a blind and hostile fate. It is another example of those contradictions that seemed to drive him throughout his life and art.

Hardy was more influenced by the extremes of patriotism than D.H. Lawrence, who many critics consider his literary successor. At the height of the national jingoism caused by the threat of losing the conflict, the Nottingham writer and Modernist Lawrence opposed the war (Zytaruk, 2002: 219). He refused to enter a poetry contest sponsored by Harriet Monroe's journal *Poetry* (1915). Lawrence's poem represents his attitude:

I am not in the war zone  
I think I am much too valuable a creature to offer myself to a German  
bullet gratis and for fun  
Neither shall I go in for your war poem.  
The nearest I could get to it would be in the vein of  
The owl and the pussy cat went to sea  
In a beautiful pea green boat. (Lawrence, (1915) cited in Zytaruk and  
Boulton, 2002: 219).

Lawrence disliked the war edition of *Poetry* that resulted from the contest. He wrote unambiguously to Monroe and composed the iconoclastic 'Passages from *Ecco Homo*' (1915). He revised this for the *Egoist* magazine, retitling it 'Eloi Eloi Lama?' (1915), which suggests that God had abandoned humanity to its suicidal ways. The poem describes the bloodlust and masochistic leanings of a soldier seeking forgiveness from God:

Why should we hate them, with this hate incarnate?  
Why am I bridegroom of War, war's paramour?  
What is the crime that my seed has turned to blood?  
My kiss to wounds (Tedlock, 1952: 410).

Lawrence's letter in (Zytaruk, 2002: 219) reveal him as taking a consistently contrarian position with respect to the national bellicose mood; he saw the war as dissonance, as negative human pathology, as a perversion of the sexual instinct, and as seed turned to blood. Conversely, Hardy, as we have seen, was more ambivalent and diffident towards British national interests, and at times this diffidence can be seen to over-ride his humanitarian

qualities. It could be said that Hardy parked his pacifist principles at different times during the First World War. As far as England and Hardy were concerned, World War I was a battle for national survival, whereas the earlier Boer Wars were skirmishes in comparison, conflicts based on British Empire building. 'The Man He Killed' (1899), is an anti-war poem written at the time of the second Boer war:

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

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 (Hardy, 1995: 269)

Hardy wrote that the two Boer Wars (1880-81 and 1899-1902) had marginalised Christian values in England, confirming the adage 'without war there are no heroes':

A vast multiplication of books on the war itself, and the issue of large quantities of war like and patriotic poetry. These works naturally throw into the shade works that breathe a more quiet and philosophic spirit; a curious minor feature in the case among a certain class of writers being the guise under Christian terminology of principles not necessarily wrong from the point of view of international politics, but obviously anti-Christian, because inexorable and masterful (Hardy, 2007: 320).

For Hardy, even the issue of war is subsumed under the issue of the Christian and religious world-view.

The very irregular publishing chronology of the poems meant that their views do not necessarily represent Hardy's mature or final observations on existence; the sonnet 'Hap', for

example, was written in 1866-67 when he was twenty-six, whilst working as a trainee architect but not published until included in the volume *Wessex Poems* thirty two years later. His constant later editing of the poems meant that there is no chance of equating the poem's views with a particular age of the poet. The poem 'Lyonesse', celebrating his courtship of Emma circa 1870-1874, was not published until forty years later in 1914, when Emma had already died. This may reflect that whilst Emma lived, he may not have wished her to know the deep love he had once held for her as an inspirational muse. The poetry also illustrates certain life-long divisions between Hardy's emotional attachment to religious faith and his agnosticism. Attending Stinsford church with his parents in rural Dorset, the young Thomas would have observed and believed in their simple faith, though as a young man in his mid-twenties, and influenced by the intellectual and more secular outlook in London, he suffered a crisis of religious belief. 'In Church', taken from *Satires of Circumstances*, shows the foibles of humanity in a holy setting. It shows how the preacher has not mastered his pride, and implies that religion, like other outer manifestations of power, relies on a performance:

“And now to God the father, ” he ends,  
And his voice thrills up to the topmost tiles:  
Each listener chokes as he bows and bends,  
And emotion pervades the crowded aisles.  
Then the preacher glides to the vestry-door  
And shuts it, and thinks he is seen no more

The door swings softly ajar meanwhile,  
And a pupil of his in the Bible class,  
Who adores him as one without gloss or guile,  
Sees her idol stand with a satisfied smile  
And re-enact at the vestry glass  
Each pulpit gesture in deft dumb-show  
That had moved the congregation so. (Hardy, 1995: 391)

As a poet, Hardy was no longer hamstrung by regressive censorship, and like Swinburne before him, he could articulate in verse what he really felt needed saying. He was a very unusual phenomenon: a Victorian realist who wrote only poetry in the twentieth century.

Hardy was a very loyal friend, and two of his life-long friendships were with the Revd William Barnes and George Meredith, themselves poets of good stature, representative of the early Dorset and London years, and possessing religious and non-religious outlooks respectively. He wrote poems of praise upon the passing of these individuals who were of great assistance to him as a maturing adult and budding poet-novelist. There is deep affection and gratitude, combined with the supernatural suggestion of light from the east in Hardy's final paean to Barnes, 'The Last Signal-A Memory of William Barnes' (1886):

... Then, amid the shadow of that livid sad east,  
Where the light was least, and a gate stood wide,  
Something flashed the fire of the sun that was facing it,  
Like a brief blaze on that side.

Looking hard and harder I knew what it meant-  
The sudden shine sent from the livid east scene;  
It meant the west mirrored by the coffin of my friend there,  
Turning to the road from his green

To take his last journey forth-he who in his prime  
Trudged so many a time from that gate athwart the land!  
Thus a farewell to me signalled on his grave-way,  
As with a wave of his hand (Hardy, 1995: 444).

George Meredith (1828-1909) was also a wise counsel to Hardy who expressed his gratitude when Meredith died through the poem 'George Meredith' (Hardy, 1995: 279):

Forty years back, when much had place  
That since has perished out of mind  
I heard that voice and saw that face.

He spoke as one afoot will wind

A morning horn ere men awake  
His note was trenchant, turning kind

Of late, when we two met once more  
The luminous countenance and rare  
Shone just as forty years before

So that, when all tongues declare  
His shape unseen by his green hill,  
I scarce believe he sits not there  
No matter. Further and further still  
Through the world's vaporous air  
His words wing on –as live words will (Hardy, 1995: 280).

The sixth line 'his note was trenchant, turning kind' (Hardy, 1995: 280) is a beautiful evocation of their first encounter, recalling Meredith's careful handling of Hardy's blazing, if indiscreet enthusiasm, in *The Poor Man and the Lady*. The 'luminous countenance and rare' probably refers to Meredith's impressive appearance, and the line 'I scarce believe he sits not there' alludes to his friend's larger than life persona, and almost theatrical ways.

Meredith's poetry arguably lay somewhere between Barnes's acceptance of life in all of its vicissitudes, and Hardy's defiance of the cruelty of existence. Meredith, who was always an avuncular influence to Hardy, embraced the Renaissance concept of a providential Earth (*Animus Mundi*). He reasoned that 'man's spirit and brain no less than body are earth born, not dropped from heaven. Humans are autochthonous. Earth, of which we are a part, is spirit as well as matter, flame as well as clod' (Trevelyan, 1906: 114-115). Meredith, like Wordsworth before him, expressed his loving contact with the Earth in her many moods. For Meredith Mother Earth despite her faults was the power that he revered. In a physical sense, Meredith's lifespan bridged the Wordsworthian and Hardy eras. Hardy, unlike Meredith, seldom made the case for the positives in life. As a poet-philosopher, Meredith's perspective lies somewhere between Wordsworth's 'nature's holy plan' from 'Lines Written in Early Spring', and Hardy's 'Hap'. Meredith's 'The Lark Ascending' (1881) demonstrates his

affinity and love for Mother Earth, and for those humans who conquer self and serve their fellows, 'touch purest', 'because their love of Earth is deep' (Trevelyan, 2012: 115). The historian George Macaulay Trevelyan wrote in his volume on Meredith's poetry :

So far as he makes statements at all, Mr Meredith takes the common-sense middle position, which is far from either optimism or pessimism. But the body of his ethical doctrine is larger and more important than his necessary vague cosmology, which at its best is only a poetical form to convey the essence and temperament of his ethic; and since his ethic is not as dour as Carlyle's, he has been labelled an optimist. He preaches acceptance and joy as a part of duty....With him, the flower blooms on the rock. But even in his ethic; the rock is always there, under the flower (Trevelyan, 1906: 112).

Hardy's *Time's Laughingstocks and Other Verses* (1909), was a collection of ninety poems written over a period of forty years. The collection includes 'The End of the Episode':

Indulge no more may we  
In this sweet-bitter pastime:  
The love-light shines the last time  
Between you, Dear, and me.  
... Ache deep; but make no moans:  
Smile out; but stilly suffer  
The paths of love are rougher  
Than thoroughfares of stones. (Gibson, 2001: 227).

The poem offers an insight into Hardy's outlook on what looks like the end of a love affair. Its gritty resignation suggests an individual who is oblivious to pain as an agent in developing character and loving relationships. A reviewer for the *Daily News* complained of *Time's Laughingstocks*, that throughout the volume 'the outlook[is] that of disillusion and despair' (Wright, 2002: 313). Hardy wrote back to the newspaper, asserting that more than half the 90 poems in the volume 'do not answer to the description at all' (Wright, 2002: 313). This equation is somewhat ironic, reflecting the balance between Hardy's hopes and scepticism. Pite suggests that 'if in fact Barnes taught Hardy anything, it was that he would be wisest never to complain' (Pite, 2006: 72). Clearly this is one piece of advice that Hardy did not follow.

Barnes's spiritual nature offers a striking contrast to Hardy's more material outlook. The dialect poem 'Zickness' (Sickness), from the collection *Poems of Rural Life in the Dorset Dialect* (1879), reveals Hardy's former mentor's attitude to life:

'An' bags of money at the end of time  
Can't buy a soul'  
Nor meake amends vor crime (Barnes, 1844).

Where Hardy left both Emma and Florence in an emotional sense at least, Barnes, whose wife was taken from him in death, mourned her passing. There is sadness but little bitterness in 'Woak Hill' (Barnes, 1844), and 'The Wife a-Lost' (1859), and the poems are great expressions of personal grief:

'Woak Hill'  
... But I still think that, in soul,  
She do hover about us;  
To ho vor motherless children,  
Her pride at Woak Hill  
... on the road I did look around, a talken  
To light on my shoulder;  
An' then led her in at doorway,  
Miles wide vrom Woak Hill  
... But no; that my Meary mid never  
Behold herself slighted,  
I wanted to think that I guided  
My guide vrom Woak Hill (Hearl, 1966: 309).

'The Wife a' Lost'  
Since now beside my dinner-bboard  
Your voice do never sound,  
I'll eat the bit I can avword  
A-vield upon the ground;  
Below the handsome bough, my love, where you never did dine,  
An' I don't grieve to miss you now,  
As I at home do pine (Barnes, 1999, Poem No.659).

Both poems convey the grief experienced by Barnes at his wife's premature death, and also the challenging isolation of raising five children alone. He shows gratitude and emotional loyalty for the memory of his wife-guide, coping with her absence in general surroundings, but suffering unbearably within the home they shared. The term 'home' has a double meaning here; it also acts as a metaphor for the poet's heart.

There is an intriguing personal mystery surrounding two poems Hardy wrote just a year after he married Emma. The final verse of 'We Sat at the Window', dated (Bournemouth 1875), suggests disgruntlement with newly-married life:

We were irked by the scene, by our own selves; yes  
For I did not know, nor did she infer  
How much there was to read and guess  
By her in me, and to see and crown  
By me in her.  
Wasted were two souls in their prime,  
and great was the waste, that July time  
When the rain came down (Hardy, 1995: 402).

A second poem from the same year, entitled 'To a Sea Cliff', expresses his deep unhappiness when on holiday with Emma at Durlston Head, near Swanage, its final verse is sad, implying an isolated soul, and a fracture of their relationship:

He slid apart  
Who had thought her heart  
His own, and not aboard  
A bark, sea bound ...  
That night they found  
Between them lay a sword (Hardy, 1995: 755)

What does the reference to the sword mean? It was prescient of the state of marriage awaiting Hardy and Emma. The marriage was riven by class divisions and religious oppositions. At thirty-five Hardy was now an Agnostic, whereas Emma was studiously Anglican High Church. It is reasonable to argue that while Hardy's family was initially Anglican, they were

not overly devout in practice. The spirit of his love for Emma contained in the life changing verses of 'Lyonesse', seems to have vanished when the initial romantic bliss was transformed into perceiving the beloved as 'other'. The initial state of happy matrimony had reverted to isolated individualism. Hardy's courtship of Emma was largely long distant over four years, and the tendency imaginatively was probably to extol her virtues and dismiss any shortcomings. When idealised love is confronted by the reality of daily cohabitation with someone who is quite strange and different, it presents challenges, some of them insurmountable. Their love failed to overcome its fault lines of class distinction and religious faith versus non-belief. When Hardy's novels were acceptable to his resident critic, Emma, she accommodated their other differences, but when he attacked the religion in which her family was immersed for generations, she probably saw it as a personal attack. Another explanation was that as Hardy was somewhat of a workaholic, and he found co-habiting with Emma at holiday-time was not as stimulating to him as his art.

'After a Journey', from *Poems 1912-13*, recalls their better days:

Yes: I have re-entered your olden haunts at last;  
Through the years, through the dead scenes I have tracked you;  
What have you now found to say of our past-  
Scanned across the dark space wherein I have lacked you?  
Summer gave us sweets, but autumn wrought division?  
Things were not lastly as firstly well  
With us twain, you tell?  
But all's closed now, despite Time's derision

I see what you are doing: you are leading me on  
To the spots we knew when we haunted here together,  
The waterfall, above which the mist-bow shone  
At the then fair hour in the fair weather,  
And the cave just under, with a voice so hollow  
That it seems to call out to me from forty years ago,  
When you were all aglow,  
And not the thin ghost that I now frailly follow (Hardy, 1995: 328).

Emma's death shook Hardy to his foundations emotionally, as their alienation meant that he was unaware how seriously ill Emma had become. The atonement *Poems 1912-13* are self-accusatory and elegiac in tone, and they are a cathartic form of amends, and a bromide for his guilt feelings. They contain loving sentiments mixed with thoughts of indifference. The final time that Emma entertained guests, Hardy humiliated her, ushering her from the room before receiving the Order of Merit. 'The Going', from this collection, is full of regret at what might have been if Emma and he had achieved a *rapprochement*:

... Why, then, latterly did we not speak,  
Did we not think of those days long dead,  
And ere your vanishing strive to seek  
That time's renewal? We might have said,  
"In this bright spring weather  
We'll visit together  
Those places that once we visited."

Well, well! All's past amend,  
Unchangeable. It must go.  
I seem but a dead man held on end  
To sink down soon.... O you could not know  
That such swift fleeing  
No soul foreseeing-  
Not even I -would undo me so! December 1912.(Hardy, 1985: 319).

Hillis Miller's study of Hardy and his art, *Distance and Desire* (1970), argues that Hardy dealt superficially with the problems of living:

Though Hardy finds that his consciousness separates him from the world, he does not turn away from what he sees to investigate the realm of interior space. He and his characters are distinguished by the shallowness of their minds. They have no profound inner depths leading down to the 'buried self' or to God. They remain even in detachment oriented toward the outside world and reflecting it, mirror like. Though Hardy remains turned towards the exterior, looking at it or thinking about it, his movement of retraction separates him from blind engagement and turns everything he sees into a spectacle viewed from outside (Miller, 1970: 3).

This is an interesting theory, and it may explain in part Hardy's successful methodology for coping with the apparent dichotomy between his inner and outer life. Miller's suggestion is that a gap existed between what Hardy thought and felt. On the main issues of religion, love, war and social class, Hardy the individual was divided making him ambivalent.

If Hardy internalised the hopelessness and lack of empathetic feeling contained in the poem 'Thoughts at Midnight-Part written 25th May 1906', and published posthumously, he was more than a depressive. The words show his hostility towards humanity and are quite devastating in its estimation of his fellow travellers:

Mankind, you dismay me  
When shadows waylay me!-  
Not by your splendours  
Do you affray me,  
Not as pretenders  
To demonic keenness,  
Nor your ill-teachings  
Nor your false preachings  
Nor your banalities  
And immoralities, Not by your daring  
Nor sinister bearing;  
But by your madneses  
Capping cool badneses  
Acting like puppets  
Under Time's buffets;  
In superstitions  
And ambitions  
Moved by no wisdom,  
Far-sight, or system,  
Led by sheer senselessness  
And preciencelessness  
Into unreason  
And hideous self-reason ...  
God, look he on you  
Have mercy upon you!(Hardy, 1995: 798).

In defence of Hardy, he may have simply laid out without fear or favour how banal humanity appeared to him.

Analysing Hardy's poem 'The Winds Prophecy', the poet and critic Donald Davie comments on the poem's overall grimness, bearing in mind that the westward journey it describes was the one on which he met Emma; albeit that poem was written long afterwards when things had turned out badly between the former lovers. In the poem, the elements menace the traveller, and it makes associations with modern Victorian technology – 'the gulls glint like silver flecks', and the sea appears as 'muddy monochrome'. Those references may refer to the daguerreotype photograph named after the French inventor L. Daguerre who pioneered an early photographic process in the early Victorian era. Davie extracts a couple of lines which hint at the forthcoming rise of the proletariat through the successful industrialisation of Britain: 'these industrial associations gather until we wonder whether the huzza-ing multitude stanza is not a dangerously mercurial proletariat' (Davie, 1972: 19). Hardy's poem alludes to the rise of the proletariat in England, and to a changing of the social order, which one side of him would have welcomed, but which the other would have rejected on the grounds that if everyone possessed privilege, then privilege had no value. Davie stated 'we know that Hardy was capable of such disparaging sentiments about the masses. In 1891, he had written in his diary something which he transcribed for his ghosted autobiography' (Davie, 1972: 19). *The Life* records his innate elitism and ambivalence on social class:

Next day-wet-at the British Museum: 'crowds parading and gaily traipsing round the mummies, thinking today is forever, and the girls casting sly glances at the young men across the swathed dust of Mycerinus (?) They pass with flippant comments the illuminated MSS-the labour of years-and stand under Rameses the Great joking. Democratic government may be justice to man, But it will probably merge in proletarian, when these people are our masters it will lead to more of this contempt, and possibly ruin art and literature!.... Looking, when I came out at the Oxford Music Hall, an hour before the time of opening, there was already a queue. (Hardy, 1984: 247).

The quote signifies that Hardy was distinctly unhappy with the sight of young adults treating the hallowed halls of the museum as a venue for spotting members of the opposite sex. In 1891, he was fifty-one years old, very rich and successful, and past such dalliances. His romantic entanglement in Dorchester with Gertrude Bugler may provide some insight that what he really felt were twinges of jealousy. When his comments on the upper classes are juxtaposed with how *The Life* posthumously revealed Hardy's disenchantment with the aristocracy, it showed an aspect that could be described as curmudgeon, or someone who was at least prone to miserable moodiness:

The watching presence of so many portraits gives a distinct character to this dinner....In speaking, the Duke of Cambridge could not decide whether he had ended his speech or not, and so tagged and tagged on a bit more, and a bit more, till the sentences were like acrobats hanging down from a trapeze. Lord Salisbury's satire was rather too serious for after dinner. Huxley began well but ended disastrously; the Archbishop was dreary; Morley tried to look a regular dining-out man-of the world, but really looked what he is by nature, the student. Everybody afterwards walked about, the Prince of Wales included, remaining till twelve. .... I spoke to a good many; was apparently unknown to a good many more I knew. At these times men do not want to talk to their equals, but to their superiors (Hardy, 1984: 207).

A wintry spirit haunts the collection of poems entitled *Winter Words*. Another poem from the group entitled 'A Wish for Unconsciousness', declares:

If I could but abide  
As a tablet on a wall,  
Or a hillock daisy-pied  
Or a picture in a hall,  
And as nothing at all,  
I should have no doleful achings,  
I should hear no judgement call  
Have no evil dreams or wakings,  
No uncouth or grisly care;  
In a word, no cross to bear (Hardy, 1995: 800).

As Hardy reached his final years, the mood of his poems crystallised his life-long desire to be removed from human existence. The poem 'Love Letters', also from *Winter Words*, deals with a man broken by the rejection of his beloved and who soon after commits suicide:

"Well, " said he then; they are my old letters.  
Perhaps she-rather felt them fetters ...  
You see, I am in slow decline,  
And she's broken off with me. Quite right  
To send them back, and true foresight;  
I'd got too fond of her! To-night  
I burn them -stuff of mine!"

He laughed in the sun-an ache in his laughter-  
And went. I heard of his soon death after. (Hardy, 1995: 802)

The over-riding messages from *Winter Words*, published in Hardy's final year of life, is melancholic with the perspective becoming cynical at times. His poetry is consistent with a writer who had become disillusioned with the brightest ideals in love and life, and this meant that domestically, he was not an easy man with whom to live.

Hardy's second marriage was initially a great convenience to both parties as they held literature in high regard. It is doubtful if Florence loved Hardy in a conventional way, as he was forty years older than she was. Their house at Max Gate was gloomy, and perhaps Florence took on Hardy's innate sadness as a challenge; indeed, she later became very depressed herself. She was a secretary *in situ*, probably a sexually compliant wife, and the union afforded her opportunities to mix with royalty, nobility and Edwardian celebrities. Their house in Dorchester afforded security and a status above her own humble origins. Hardy remained as single-minded about his life as ever, writing poetry all day, sometimes into the evening, leaving Florence more solitary than a newwife might have expected. Florence said that Hardy's explanation for his lack of attention was 'that when the wheels are turning it is a mistake to stop them' (Tomalin, 2006: 321); she added, 'he is working

practically all day until after dinner ... and yesterday feeling very much inclined for work he did not even go for a daily walk' (Tomalin, 2006: 321). After the initial loving encounter with Florence, Hardy reverted to breaking down his life into rigid compartments. 'The Wind's Prophecy' alludes to the poet's soul being caught between the gravity of female oppositions, which could have been a poetic description of his mind-set when Gertrude Bugler entered his love-life, occasioning heartache to Florence:

I say: "Thus from my lady's arms  
I go: those arms I love the best!"  
The wind replies from dip and rise,  
"Nay; toward her arms thou journeyest" (Davie, 1972: 17).

The writer's well-documented liaisons with budding female authors, actresses and socialites like Mrs Florence Henniker, whom Emma and Florence both knew well, reveal a man of unintegrated separate parts. Hardy's relationship with Henniker lasted thirty years, and was full of intensity from Hardy's perspective, during which he was emotionally disloyal to both wives. Tomalin writes 'nine or ten poems allude to his love for Florence Henniker. Most are wistful, a few desolate. It is wonderful to see him being shaken by a new subject into new adventurousness in his writing of verse' (Tomalin, 2007: 248). His disappointment at a broken 'date' is illustrated in 'Broken Appointment' (1893):

You love not me,  
-I know and knew it. But. Unto the store  
Of human deeds divine in all but name,  
Was it not worth a little hour or more?  
To add yet this: Once you, a woman came  
To soothe a time-torn man; even though it be  
You love not me? (Hardy, 1995: 124)

The poem contains the pathos of unrequited love, though it is not a pathetic appeal for the beloved to reciprocate his feelings. Rather it eulogises platonic love between men and women. The implied reference to the poet's need for compassionate human company could

only have come from one with deep humanitarian instincts. Henniker and Hardy complemented each other as her compassionate attitude towards the unhappy and the unfortunate was bromide for the frustrated poet who could not have what he desired. What was also disturbing to Hardy was that Henniker was reading passages aloud to a house party and 'he much regretted having sent the effusive ones' (Tomalin, 2007: 250). 'I lost confidence in you somewhat, he told her' (Tomalin, 2007: 50). This cameo illustrates their differing attitudes to the relationship': he was in love, while she treated his romantic ardour as a kind of conquest.

His relationship with Florence was very selfish on his part, and according to a servant, Ellen Titterington, Florence spent 'day after day attending to the wants of an exacting old man' (Pite, 2007: 451). Another servant, Annie Mitchell, mentioned the strain on Florence, describing her as a 'very nice, considerate woman, but she was not strong' (Pite, 2007: 450-1). The pattern of Hardy's life with Emma repeated itself. Florence suffered from her nerves, and by 1919, her doctor diagnosed a nervous breakdown. This may have been occasioned by Hardy's treatment of her, and by her awareness of his connections with other women. Indeed, the suspicion exists that Florence and himself were romantically involved during Emma's lifetime. He left both wives isolated and unfulfilled in their large house with gloomy surroundings. Hardy's flawed character re-emerged with his fascination for the local actress, Gertrude Bugler, causing Florence great resentment, though Hardy persisted with his obsession.

Hardy's great success and burgeoning literary reputation meant he was no longer in anyone's debt or shadow. He felt his success elevated him above the crowd, and this affected his relationship with Emma. Around this time he took a different view to one expressed in 'Lyonesse'. The poem 'He Abjures Love' (1893) offers an insight into his altered perspective on love. Three stanzas of the poem reveal a lover who is awaiting inevitable

disappointment. The poet's intuition concerning love's demand to elevate the beloved above personal self-interest is he believes not worth the consequences:

At last I put off love,  
For twice ten years  
The daysman of my thought.  
And hope, and doing;  
Being ashamed thereof,  
And faint of fears  
And desolations, wrought  
In his pursuing,

I was as children be  
Who have no care;  
I did not shrink or sigh,  
I did not sicken;  
But lo, Love beckoned me,  
And I was bare,  
And poor, and starved, and dry  
And fever-stricken.

-I speak as one who plumbs  
Life's dim profound,  
One who at length can sound  
Clear views and certain.  
But-after love that comes  
A scene that lours,  
A few sad vacant hours,  
And then, the Curtain.(Hardy, 1995: 220).

The unpublished *Poor Man and the Lady* had been rejected on the basis that it portrayed the upper classes as being uniformly bad. Emma held an upper-class disdain for Hardy, telling Edward Clodd that 'a man who had humble relations shouldn't live in the place where he was brought up and scathingly referred to his relatives' background as "peasant class"' (Norman, 2011: 134). Two poems Of Hardy's, 'On the Esplanade', and 'A Wife Awaits', offer evidence that Hardy experienced the intensity of ephemeral moments of anticipation and

rejection in love. To that end, he was something of a *bon vivant*, enjoying the excitement of the chase and flirtations with many women. The known evidence of his encounters with fashionable women fans does not reveal that there was ever a full consummation of these liaisons. Recent critics such as Tomalin, Gibson and Irwin, suggest that he was neither dull company nor a miserable man. Irwin, in conversation, gave it as his opinion that it is a mistake to paint Hardy as a miserable individual, and he recommends a perusal of James Gibson's work, *Thomas Hardy: Interviews and Recollections* to reinforce this point. Gibson's book contains a welter of opinions from celebrated writers and prominent people of the Victorian epoch and afterwards, who offer pro and contra views on Emma and Hardy, some of it quiet critical, particularly in regard to Emma's eccentricity. The majority of Gibson interviewees describe Hardy as unfailingly courteous, helpful and somewhat shy with the mien of a country gentleman.

Gibson's work deals with his life including interviews and recollections with figures from the literary and political world, and with the contemporary society beyond. On balance, Hardy was perceived in a positive light, unlike Emma who came in for criticism due to her efforts to control her husband. Hardy's fellow writers were aware that he was somewhat of a literary genius though he remained taciturn in the company of famous people. It shows the difference between the Hardy the social person and inner man. The different perceptions of many well-known people from his era show him to be something of a dark horse:

I fear I have always been considered the Dark Horse of contemporary English Literature ...I was a child till I was 16; a youth till I was 25; a young man till I was 40 nor 50 ... I believe it would be said by people who knew me well that I have a faculty (possibly not uncommon) for burying an emotion in my heart or brain for forty years, and exhuming it at the end of that time as fresh as when interred (Hardy, 1984: 408).

Hardy's reference to the 'Dark Horse' is affirmed by Gibson (1990) quoting from conversations Hardy had with Henry Nevinston in 1903. Hardy said 'Tchaikovsky's music had exactly the modern note of unrest. Best of all he liked to go to St. Paul's to hear the

chanting' (Gibson, 1999: 77). Nevinson notes from 1906 quoted Hardy: 'he spoke with some bitterness of an eminent critic who had said Hardy's books would not live because they had no moral principle; and he complained that the critic had not attempted to show that there was such a thing as a moral principle' (Gibson, 1990: 78). Hardy's complexity and dark interior is acutely captured in another of Nevinson's recollections:

as I expected, he spoke much about the hangman; also about the horrible scenes at public floggings on a waggon in the market-place, and how a cruel hangman would wait between each lash to let the flesh recover its feeling, while he squeezed the blood off the thongs. (Gibson, 1999: 77).

The kaleidoscope of views, and the variety of humours ranging from farce to black-humour contained in Gibson's work on Hardy affirm its author's claim that his research 'has convinced me that Hardy was anything but the miserly, miserable, reclusive man portrayed by somebiographers. Most of those who actually knew him personally were charmed by his kindness, his hospitality, his vitality, his sense of humour, his modesty and his intense curiosity about life (Gibson, 1999: xi). Some views expressed by poets and novelists who visited Hardy at Max Gate were to say the least uncharitable, bordering on malicious gossip. To quote just one of several negative statements from prominent writers who were shown hospitality by Hardy, the writer George Gissing after a visit wrote:

Last week I accepted an invitation to go down to Dorchester, and stay for a couple of days with Thomas Hardy. Now Hardy is a man of far less intellectual vigour and distinction than Meredith. Born a peasant, he yet retains much of the peasant's views of life ... I grieve to find he is drawn into merely fashionable society, talks of lords and ladies more than ordinary people. Most unfortunately he has a very foolish wife—a woman of higher birth than his own, who looks down upon him, and is utterly discontented. To my great surprise he did not know the names of flowers in his own fields! A strange unsettlement appears in him; probably the result of his long association with such a paltry woman (Gibson, 1999:50).

Hardy, as a shy personality, would have been in awe of many of the visitors who were as famous as he was but who had been classically educated, and hence for whom etiquette was second nature. Hardy had to work extremely hard to reach the exalted levels he attained; the character assassination he endured spoke more of their probity than his own.

Devoted to poetic composition requiring intense concentration Hardy would understandably have sought momentary relief in pleasant dalliances. 'On the Esplanade Midsummer 10 p.m.', contains a mysterious woman playing the harp, and a couple dancing, exhibiting Hardy's romantic side pondering on future trysts:

Inside a window, open, with undrawn blind,  
There plays and sings  
A lady unseen a melody undefined:  
And where the moon flings  
In shimmer a vessel crosses, wheron to the strings  
Plucked sweetly and low  
Of a harp, they dance. Yea, such did I mark. That behind,  
My Fate's masked face crept near me I did not know!(Hardy, 1995: 678).

The allegory is to ships of fate that pass in the night, and the promise of a romantic tryst. Hardy's personal musical abilities define the instrument if not the melody; he does not know if there will be an outcome from the passing there; it is decidedly mysterious.

The depiction of a woman's disappointment in love and marriage arises from Hardy's observation of how some men love the excitement of the chase, leaving their life-partner at home. Hardy's poem, 'A Wife Waits' (1909), is written from a cynical and fatalistic perspective by a poet who has seen too many sweet dreams founder when selfishness replaces selflessness:

Will's at the dance in the Club-room below,  
Where the tall liquor-cups foam;  
I on the pavement up here by the Bow, [The cross-street in Casterbridge]  
Wait, wait, to steady him home.

Will and his partner are treading a tune,  
Loving companions they be;  
Willy, before we were married in June,  
Said he loved no one but me;

Said he would let his old pleasures all go

Ever to live with his Dear,  
Will's at the dance in the Club-room below,  
Shivering I wait for him here (Hardy, 1995: 225)

The poem concerns the betrayal of a woman's trust by her husband philandering ways, illustrating how Hardy drew on both the masculine and feminine sides of his nature. It reveals that trust contains the seeds of betrayal, a very pessimistic perspective.

The greater value of Hardy's poetry above the fiction is that it deals with a longer time-frame, and includes the cataclysms of World War One, and the revolutionary changes in the social order in England. Whilst Hardy's difficulties with Emma were already an issue by the time he wrote *Jude the Obscure*, they deteriorated further over the rest of her life. The serious breakdown experienced by his second wife, Florence, would have changed the poet's outlook on romantic love. Whilst it can be erroneous to link Hardy's life to his poetry, the tenor of the verse suggests that it is separated by no great distance from his life experience. It was not a case of a man of literary genius cocooning himself in a study writing poetry solely from his imagination. Larkin describes Hardy's *ménage à trois*:

A subject for a short story; a world-famous writer in his sixties, married to a hostile and eccentric wife, meets a young woman who is infatuated with literature. They meet secretly, she helps him with his books. The wife dies and they marry, but the writer, tormented by remorseful memories, recreates his former love in a sequence of poignant poems, neglecting his second wife to do so. (Larkin, 1983: 254)

The point in question relates to how it is unlikely that Hardy, an unhappily married man in 1895 when *Jude the Obscure* was published, would have written with such warmth and poignancy on his life companion Emma, as he did almost twenty years later when he published *Poems 1912-13* after her death. In the interim, he had changed considerably. Whilst a facile reading of this collection of Hardy's reminisces of former and better times with Emma might conclude they are gushing words of atonement for Hardy's guilty feelings, they are not solely rose-coloured romantic paeans, containing as they do some judicious barbs here and there in line with his ambivalent nature. Mirroring existentialist divisions, the couple had

used different stairways to their separate apartments at Max Gate. 'Without Ceremony', included in *Poems 1912-13*, concerns estrangement, separate existences, and the loss in final separation of death:

It was your way, my dear,  
To vanish without a word  
When callers, friends, or kin  
Had left, and I hastened in  
To rejoin you, as I inferred.

And when you'd a mind to career  
Off anywhere-say to town-  
You were all on a sudden gone  
Before I had thought thereon,  
Or noticed your trunks were down

So, now that you disappear  
For ever in that swift style,  
Your meaning seems to me  
Just as it used to be:

Good-bye is not worth while! (Hardy, 1995: 323).

Giving expression to the depressive side of human nature was arguably one of Hardy's greatest assets, as it balanced the contemporary view, which saw life only as a shining endeavour, conquering all. 'The Impercipient' contains no identification with those who lived on the crest of the waves:

Since heart of mine knows not that ease  
Which they know; since it be  
That He who breathes All's-Well to these  
Breathes no All's-well to me,  
My lack might move their sympathies  
And Christian charity!(Hardy, 1995: 60).

To write poetry, which constantly skirted the borders of melancholy, loneliness, and hopelessness, took immense courage, as Hardy excavated his unconscious mind to forge

words and phrases that described the darker vistas of the mind. The lack of children was a huge loss and he revealed the sad irony of a servant becoming pregnant whilst Emma remained childless. The child's father was visiting the girl surreptitiously, and it was ironic that the servant-girl was punished though her dismissal because of her achieving what the Hardys hoped for, but could not obtain – namely a child. It was a classic case of how circumstances affect events; Hardy defended Tess to the limit when she became pregnant out of wedlock. Two poems taken from the collection *Times Laughingstocks* reveal the fates of two young women who follow or fail to pursue their instincts in love;

'Julie-Jane'

Laugh; how 'a would laugh!  
Her peony lips would part  
As if none such a place for a lover to quaff  
At the deeps of a heart

Julie, O girl of joy,  
Soon, that lover he came.  
Ah, yes; and gave thee a baby-boy  
But never his name ...

-Tolling for her, as you guess;  
And the baby too ... 'Tis well.  
You knew her in maidenhood likewise?-Yes,  
That's her burial bell. (Hardy, 1995: 229)

Hardy's poem 'The Orphaned Old Maid' suggests that for some participants in love's lottery there can be no happy endings:

I wanted to marry, but father said, "No-  
'Tis weakness in women to give themselves so;  
If you care for your freedom you'll listen to me,  
Make a spouse in your pocket, and let the men be"

But now father's gone, and I feel growing old,  
And I'm lonely and poor in house on the wold,

And my sweetheart that was found a partner elsewhere,  
And nobody flings me a thought or a care. (Hardy, 1995: 228)

The obverse of his depression would arguably express an Edenic idyll without pain which he would have found dishonest. 'The Earth's Corpse' (1902), reflects life on Earth after Armageddon, when his wish for extinction would be granted:

O Lord, why grievest Thou?-  
Since life has ceased to be  
Upon this globe, now cold  
As lunar land and sea,  
And humankind, and fowl, and fur  
Are gone eternally,  
All is the same to thee as ere  
They knew mortality  
... Nay, nay: things are not the same  
As they have earlier been  
... As when, in Noe's days  
I whelmed the plains with sea,  
So at this last, when flesh  
And herb but fossils be,  
and, all extinct, their piteous dust  
Revolves obliviously,  
That I made the Earth, and life, and man,  
It still repenteth me!(Hardy, 1995: 114).

The poem shows a contrite God agreeing with Hardy and regretting Earth's creation; this would seem to be in opposition to Hardy the humanitarian.

The poets Hardy admired greatly were Shakespeare, Shelley and Keats, and his contemporary Swinburne. Hardy's poems 'To Shakespeare after Three Hundred Years' (1916), 'Shelley's Skylark' (1887), and 'At Lulworth Cove a Century Back'[Keats](1920), honour their influence. His friendly correspondence and admiration for Algernon Swinburne has already been referred to in a previous section. Hardy was inexorably drawn to life's tragedies, and occasionally possessed a Luciferian *Non Serviam* disposition, as signified in

the lines of the blinded Gloucester in Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1606) 'As flies to wanton boys, are we to gods, They kill us for their sport', which he cited in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Another influence was the poetry and life of his friend and mentor, the stoical William Barnes, whose view of life was perceptive, compassionate and sad. Philip Larkin (1983), writing on Barnes's poetry states: 'Barnes was a remarkable man, a kind of successful Jude Fawley, who began his life as the son of a small holder and gradually made his way from village school to town school, a B.D. at Trinity College, Cambridge, and the living at Winterborne Came, near Dorchester' (Larkin, 1983: 150).

Comparing the lives of Hardy and Barnes, it is clear how their personal temperaments caused and directed the attitudes and trajectories of their careers. The contemporary diarist Frank Kilvert described Barnes's attitude to poetry, noting that 'that there was not a line which was not inspired by love for and kindly sympathy with the things and people described' (Larkin 1983: 150). Hardy's line 'wasted were two souls in their prime' (Hardy, 1995: 403), and his 1912 comments in the Postscript to *Jude the Obscure*, that 'a marriage should be dissolvable as it becomes a cruelty to either of the parties' (Hardy, 2008: xiv), suggests that unlike Barnes, Hardy's commitment to love was not self-sacrificing. Interestingly, after Emma's death in November 1912, Hardy found three manuscripts in her hand: *Some Recollections*, *What I Thought of My Husband*, and *The Pleasure of Heaven and The Pains of Hell*. He burned the two with religious overtones, keeping Emma's thoughts on him, which may have fuelled the regrets and his attempted amends in the *Poems 1912-13*. Once again, poetry serves as a more direct expression of emotion and feeling than many other genres.

Hardy has a reputation as a pessimistic writer, and the veracity of this label depends on the reader's disposition. Hardy's poetry deals with challenging universal conditions and situations arising from human participation in love, war and religious affairs. Many readers

would be uplifted to see a celebrated author identify and portray the severe challenges which they had experienced themselves in those areas of perennial debate. Chesterton softened in his criticism towards Hardy and eventually saw that Hardy's pessimism was merely the obverse of his own optimism:

'The first great Victorian I ever met, I met very early, though only for a brief interview: Thomas Hardy ...He did not avoid the topic of his alleged pessimism; he defended it but somehow with the innocence of a boy's debating club. In short, he was in a sort of gentle fuss about his pessimism, just as I was about my optimism. He said something like this: I know people say I'm a pessimist, but I don't believe I am naturally. I like a lot of things so much; but I could never get over the idea that it would be better for us to be without both the pleasures and the pains, and that the best experience would be some sort of sleep' (Chesterton, cited in Gibson, 1999:46)

It may have been coincidence but Chesterton and Barnes were optimistic in nature and they also shared great enthusiasms for the Christian religion, which Hardy rejected.

There may well have been a connection between Hardy's abandoning of the certainties of religion for a life of personal discovery without it, as the latter was a far more difficult undertaking and may have added to his innate sadness. Hardy's ostensible blasphemy was an accidental result of his sudden separation from traditional beliefs and the institutional church. Darwinian Theory did not sit easily with an individual whose family was steeped in religious observance and church music for at least a century. What contemporary churchmen like the Bishop of Wakefield saw as his perversion, Hardy would have regarded as his freedom of conscious choice. The anti-religious stances taken by Hardy in 'God's Funeral' and 'God's Education' do not completely represent the perspective of Hardy; they represent some aspects of his views but these are countered by other poems, which stress another side of his character. The absurd comments by Chesterton that Hardy was some sort of village atheist, brooding on the vicissitudes of the local idiot hurt Hardy, and his response to Chesterton, as we have seen, was couched in terms that were also personally insulting. Neither was there much fraternal love shown to fellow-writer George Moore in "Epitaph for George Moore", On one who thought no other could write English like himself':

No mortal man beneath the sky  
Can write such English as can I  
They say it holds no thought of my own  
What then, such beauty(perfection) is not known

Heap dustbins on him:  
They'll not meet  
The apex of his self-conceit (Hardy, 1976: 954).

Pite writes that Hardy when eighty-eight, and in the final months of his life, he took to settling old score with critics and rivals, and putting the finishing touches to *The Life* (Pite, 2006: 462). This suggests that beneath the cultivated exterior of a liberal and urbane individual, there lurked a petty-mindedness completely at variance with the image Hardy projected, and the general perception of him as an avuncular if shy presence: another of those defining oppositions that pulled him in different directions in his life and art. The attribution to Florence as author of *The Life* was a serious error confirming how deceptive Hardy could be at times. It suggests that while he left Upper Bockhampton a long time earlier, aspects of its parochialisms and *petite bourgeoisie* values manifested in his defensiveness, and some petty rivalries still remained endemic.

Hardy stated that *Winter Words* would be 'probably my last appearance on the literary stage' (Hardy, 1995: 795), and he foresaw the probable reactions of some critics to the volume and stated in the 'Introductory Note' that 'My last volume of poems was pronounced wholly gloomy and pessimistic by reviewers-even by some of the able class' (Hardy, 1995: 795). In his usual defensive reaction to what he considered harsh criticism, he believed that he had been typecast as the poet who illustrated the depressive side of life, irrespective of the fact that he had 'in selecting them [the poems of the volume], I had been, as I thought rather too liberal in admitting flippant, not to say farcical, pieces into the collection' (Hardy, 1995: 795). He continued 'as labels stick, I foresee readily enough that the same perennial description will be set on the following pages' (Hardy, 1995: 795), and this was definitely a

case of getting his retaliation in first. Hardy was pugnaciously contentious in verse and fiction, giving vent to feelings of outrage when confronted by what seemed to him exploitation, superstition, and the human foible of doing the same thing perennially and expecting different outcomes.

One example of these feelings of outrage at social ills can be found in his poem, ‘The Lady in the Furs’, which implicitly targets the social unconsciousness and lack of thoughtfulness of the rich:

“I’m a lofty lovely woman”  
Says the lady in the furs,  
In the glance she throws around her  
On the poorer dames and sirs:  
“This robe, that costs three figures,  
Yes, is mine,” her nod avers

True, my money did not buy it,  
But my husband’s, from the trade;  
And they, they only got it  
From things feeble and afraid  
By murdering them in ambush  
With a cunning engine’s aid.

“True, my hands, too, did not shape it  
To the pretty cut you see  
But the hands of midnight workers  
Who are strangers quite to me:  
It was fitted, too, by dressers  
Ranged around me toilsomely.

“But I am a lovely lady,  
Though sneerers say I shine  
By robbing Nature’s children  
Of apparel not mine  
And that I am but a broomstick,  
Like a scarecrow’s wooden spine.” (Hardy, 1995: 825)

The poem is a further example of how visionary Hardy was in exposing the exploitation of the of First World economics on Third World workers. The irony of the poem is that Hardy may well have socialised with the wives of industrialists just like the lady in the furs. In his long and varied social life, his sensitive antennae would have detected the double standards of people who enriched themselves through keeping others in poverty. The exploitation of the poor by the rich was an abhorrence to Hardy who was a contemporary of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. *The Dorsetshire Labourer* is a testament to Hardy's care and concern for the labouring class of Dorset. In this text, honourable mention is given to the great Victorian reformer Joseph Arch. The power of landowners to evict their worker tenants and their family's is almost too cruel to comprehend, as is the squalor of the cottages and the poor wages. Hardy knew Disraeli and the future King of England in a social context, but his affinity was to the background of his family who were manual workers. The Tolpuddle Martyr's came from just a few miles away from Hardy's home in Upper Bockhampton. Hardy would have identified with another realist writer Honore de Balzac who wrote : 'Behind ever great fortune lies a great crime'.

'He Resolves to Say no More' contends with John 8: 32: 'Then you will know the truth and the truth shall set you free', demonstrating that up to the last poem, Hardy both entertained and abjured biblical precepts, and this opposition was live within him. The final lines are defiant:

"And if my vision range beyond  
The blinkered sight of souls in bond,  
-By truth made free-  
I'll let all be'  
And show to no man what I see." (Hardy, 1995: 887)

Hardy bitterly resented being called a pessimist, and often tried to correct what he considered a misnomer: 'what is... alleged to be 'pessimism' he upheld in the 'Apology' accompanying

*Late Lyrics and Earlier*, is, 'in truth, only such questionings in the exploration of reality, and is the first step to the soul's betterment, and the body's also' (Hardy, 1995: vi). Whether his life experience is mirrored poetically or not, disappointing episodes affect most people, so his outlining of universal setbacks is justified. Therefore to summarise his literary efforts as the ruminations of a depressive was trite and unjustified, as what he is attempting to do is to give voice to the sadness that is an essential aspect of the human condition.

Whilst painted as a pessimist and an atheist by many, Hardy's final act on earth was anything but negative. *The Life* recounts these moments illustrating how Hardy's internal debate on the merits of Christian sacrifice as a life principle versus the pleasure principle persisted. On December 26, 1927, aged 87, Hardy requested that Florence read from the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* the gospel accounts of the Nativity and The Massacre of the Innocents (Hardy, 1984: 479). He remarked that there was not a grain of evidence that the gospel story was true in any detail. After a lifetime of scepticism towards God, he was still emotionally religious. On his deathbed, he asked that Browning's poem 'Rabbi Ben Ezra' (1864) be read aloud. He was extremely alert, and Florence commented on the wishful intentness with which he listened. It was remarkable that a dying man of eighty-seven could absorb Browning's thirty-two stanza poem. The poem was somewhat unusual in terms of Browning's general output, as it concerns the joy, pain and suffering contained in a lifetime, and it celebrates the gift of old age. Florence also recalled Hardy's request for the blasphemous, self-accepting and humanity-forgiving verses of Edward Fitzgerald's translation of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*:

Oh, Thou who Man of baser Earth didst make,  
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake:  
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man  
is blackened-Man's forgiveness give-and take!(Fitzgerald, 1984: 480).

His final actions were positive in the extreme, consistent with a writer who loved and engaged with life's mysteries. His exploring nature held good to the end, his life and work were honest endeavours to seek the ultimate truth if it existed at all.

## Conclusion

Approaching Hardy's life and work from a psycho-spiritual humanist perspective afforded the study insights into how the soul and spirit of his opus were both inharmony and conflict. Looking at his personal upward social movement, and at the experimental and daring nature of his major works of fiction, it is clear that his indefatigable spirit wanted to scale the very heights of human experience and share it with his readership. Hardy's poetry is a distillation of the life-wagers that individuals make, and whilst most of the conclusions result in negative outcomes, they are true to the realities of life and death. His *oeuvre* coincidentally or otherwise is opposed to hazy romantic ideas on love and war and takes issue with unexamined religious faiths. Initially, he sought fulfilment for his spiritual needs through Christian study, debate and religious observance, but it is arguable that his soul's requirements lay in his desire to portray the obstacles impeding the happiness promised by church authorities. Another *cause celebre* for Hardy was how to transform the Christian dictum to love one another into a happy emotional result for his fellow English subjects, the majority of whom he termed walking somnambulists. Hardy, being very much a realist, knew that his immediate task was not to offer solutions, but to take a full look at the worst of the human condition in the hope of some amelioration. His wide reading of Greek and Roman classical texts, and of the ancient and modern Judeo-Christian biblical texts, confirm his spiritual ambition. Conversely, the needs of his soul were fulfilled by his staying extremely close to his roots in the earth of Wessex; the settings and domicile of his major characters.

A metaphorical representation of this was that his ashes were placed in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey, while his heart was interred in Stinsford churchyard near Dorchester where he lived. The brown earth of Egdon heath and Dorset's magnificent Jurassic coastline were important entities that shaped the lives of Hardy's players. The controversial reception of his work from the mid-eighteen eighties to nineties was the consequence of an author pushing out the boundaries of free expression, which had a bewildering effect on the gatekeepers of public morality. Whilst the thesis's approach is a highly individual one, it nonetheless adds to the bank of knowledge in Hardyian research due to the emphasis it places on the unique divisions that complement and oppose each other; at the core of the thesis is the spirit-soul divide in Hardy's life and art. Freud detected from his reading of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* that Hardy knew his psychoanalysis, possessing such universal insights into human psychology informed Hardy of the rich source of precious material that could be mined from the unconscious mind.

His origins in the rural community near Dorchester at the very beginning of Queen Victoria's long reign, a time of great changes in English society, was of great benefit to a writer with a questioning mind. It is clear that Hardy's saturnine temperament coloured his perceptions from an early age, and many comparisons have been drawn to Hardy's affinity in mood and literary output with the pessimism of the German Philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer who also challenged the value of human existence. What was clear from his early deep attachment to his schoolteacher Julia Martin was that he would often be attracted to women of a social rank above his own. This trait to socialise as an equal within the higher echelons of society meant that when he became a successful novelist he mixed with many of the great personages of Victorian society. This demonstrated that he was splitting himself between what he was and what he had become. The younger and older Hardy are metaphorical representations of the Jungian psychological conditions *puer* and *senex*, which

were aspects of the psyche demanding recognition, particularly in his poetry. His memory of events, while viewed through the prism of consciousness, was largely an unconscious process, and that is why the posthumous love poems to Emma were full of admiration, with no mention of the disagreements that marked decades of their marriage. Compounding the inner divide in Hardy were the class structures of the era, which were almost absolute in segregating the affluent and the poor. The facts of social life in the era in which he lived were that your background determined your present standing. As the thesis has revealed critics of Hardy like the contemporary writers Gilbert Chesterton, Henry James and George Gissing sniped at Hardy's rural upbringing, social status, and his lack of a formal classical education. Being an ultra-sensitive individual who seldom forgot a slight, he would have consciously or otherwise used his pen as a weapon to combat snobbery and privilege.

By his mid-twenties, he had become a devotee of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, which challenged his traditional beliefs and he became like many other Victorian intellectuals an agnostic in religious outlook. This movement of placing secular concerns above religious laws had personal consequences, as he never really shook off his deep emotional attachment to church worship. His questioning of religious dogma and the clear anomalies between what Christianity espoused and carried through in practice gave further momentum to a writer whose outlook was similar to Job's; wishing he had never been born. There is abundant evidence in this thesis that finding the faults in society's mores became for Hardy a *raison d'être*. Conversely, his compassion for individual humanity under the oppression of conventional society is seen in his drawing of Jude Fawley, a character in many ways similar to the author as a young man. The major difference between them was that Hardy had a succession of wise mentors who made his passage at crucial times easier whereas Jude was largely reliant on his own very limited resources.

In his thirties and enjoying success as a novelist he married Emma Gifford who was from a religious and higher social background. Their union was not blest with children nor was it harmonious in the longer term. The tensions between them spilled over into scenes where Hardy publicly humiliated his wife. There was an ample bitterness between them built up over the years, which Hardy could draw upon as material for marital discord in the novels. This discord would be the basis for his attack on the marriage and divorce laws as they pertained to women particularly. His reading of J.S. Mill's essays particularly *The Subjection of Women* converted him to the cause of Women's Suffrage though Hardy's second marriage to Florence Dugdale was also problematic, and she underwent a nervous breakdown. Hardy was particularly remorseful over his neglect of Emma and he used the entitled *Poems 1912-13* as a form of atonement, albeit posthumously. Perhaps Hardy said in verse what he could not state face to face.

From his mid-thirties to mid-fifties, Hardy's career as a novelist burgeoned, though his novelistic output during those years was received by many as *risqué*, subversive and fatalistic. *Jude the Obscure* became the *bête noir* of the novel genre in England in the 1890's, and further afield in the United States, though its reception in France was much more welcoming. The opprobrium the novel brought with its publication was quite vicious resulting in its burning by the Bishop of Wakefield. There is no doubt that its excessive criticism caused an abrupt end to Hardy's career as novelist. Hardy was a sensitive man who did not spare or pander to the sensibilities of those with whom he sought issue. In a paradoxical way he became an icon for many, despite his stated oppositions to the archaic religious and legal ordinances of his society, he was generally contentedly iconoclastic. Whilst tilting at God or Fate and injustices of various kinds Hardy recognised that life went on regardless. This thesis was innovative in the sense that it identified Hardy's strong spiritual nature revealed in his intellectual negativity and emotional pain towards the

conditions governing human and other forms of natural life. The methodology adopted was to take a psycho-spiritual humanist and holistic approach to his life and art refraining from any moral judgement on the character of Hardy. The thesis illustrated the substantial differences and unbridgeable gaps existing between the attitudes of Hardy the private individual, and the coyness of the internationally celebrated novelist-poet, whose work became both a reference point and a rallying-call for society's oppressed underclass and minorities such as the highly dependent farm labourers and subjugated women of the period. His opus was iconoclastic to the privileged in late Victorian society, who were often moribund within archaic religious and social ordinances, which Hardy felt may have worked in their time, but were now damaging to his fellow English subjects. The rules governing his society were anachronistic, but were retained because English society was highly resistant to change, and Victorian conventionality acted as impedimenta to those of a liberal outlook and the democratically inspired seeking changes in society. The findings of the thesis confirms that Hardy's major works of fiction provide an imaginative record of what the prevailing rural conditions in the Victorian period were like for an author who experienced them at first hand.

The thesis engaged with the public reaction to Darwinian natural and social evolution, which raised major religious and social issues at the time. It dealt with how Hardy made the Nature-Ethics dialectic accessible to a larger public audience, removing it from the elite Oxbridge debating chambers populated by Huxley, Spencer, Wilberforce and Arnold. The thesis's most original contribution to Hardy research was the analysis of the anomalies and gaps that existed between Hardy's and his character inner and outer lives, which could be reasonably termed spiritual maladies. Their divisions were what made the fiction compelling, and the poetry furnished strong evidence of the author's true perspectives. The chapter on Alcoholism is a case in point, as the ranting and inexplicable behaviour of Henchard, Jude and the self-destructive drive of Hardy's friend Horace Moule were simply outer manifestations

of the complexities resulting from the gravitational pull of disparate and conflicting inner images, flickering and fluctuating like a poor quality film on a faulty projector.

As alcoholic abuse revealed what lay beneath the rind of Henchard's and others social pathology, Hardy's frustrations and anger at Victorian society's mal-treatment of so called inferior beings namely prostitutes, redundant farm workers, and victims of sexual exploitation similar to Tess, were assuaged through the catharsis of his fiction. The thesis referred to Freudian theory on why palliative remedies are needed to cope with the grind of human existence, as well as to Jungian concept of individuation, which correspond to Hardy's statement in *The Life* that each individual should form their own philosophy based largely on their own experience and wisdom. As informational sources, William James seminal work *The Varieties of Religious Experiences*, and James Hillman's works *A Blue Fire*, and *Suicide and the Soul*, provided crucial insights on the divided nature of people, and on how the imagination is the most important resource available in comprehending the competing demands of the spirit-soul divide. In this regard, the Jungian argument that 'the Gods are in our diseases' is proven correct as Hardy and many of his characters are a disease in need of a treatment to achieve a modicum of psycho-synthesis. As oppositions to Fate and the inability to consider others lie at the heart of all pathologies, Jung would have stated that it would have taken an approach to some power outside oneself to arrest the particular malady, which caused so much misery and pain in the Hardyian *oeuvre*.

The contemporary critics George Meredith, Leslie Stephen, David Lawrence and Virginia Woolf, and even the hostile Henry James and T.S. Eliot, all considered Hardy to be a pastoral novelist of great merit, if sometimes falling short of the highest literary standards. This shared opinion occurred because Hardy wrote out of his own ground; he knew the daily challenges for survival facing his family and neighbours in Upper Bockhampton. Therefore, to a large degree, his fiction and poetry were based on factual observance. When

his skill in observing the difficulties involved in adapting to the rapidly changing values at the *fin-de-siècle* are also taken into account, the strong connections between his life and art are clear. His portraiture of Victorian life in general, and in rural Dorset in particular, was the work of a literary genius and a master storyteller. In this regard, whilst English writers have shown great creativity in novel composition it must be conceded that Hardy was largely self-taught and rough spots in his characterisations, pattern and plot were inevitable.

The thesis has dealt extensively with the difficulties Hardy encountered with church authorities, and with his unbelief in a personal God. It is possible Darwin's scientific explanation for the origin of life merely copper-fastened Hardy's doubts about the existence of an omnipotent creator. He was never fulfilled in his marriages, and found some consolations and palliative remedies offered by romantic love dalliances with women who, through their unavailability on moral grounds or age differences, seemed never to have led him anywhere ultimately. This absence of any sustaining relationship meant that he continued to search for an elusive fulfilment to the very end of life. The instances of loving fulfilment for the protagonists in either of Hardy's genres is rare indeed, the exceptions to the usual bleak and dark romantic encounters being Gabriel Oak and Elizabeth-Jane who, through their lower expectations and realistic acceptance that whilst life is difficult successful marriages present an even greater challenge, achieve a sustained happiness. Evidently, Hardy found his long journey through the myriad conditions thrown up by life of such importance that he devoted the whole of his adult life to portraying it in a broad spectrum of colours. Allegorically, his inscape was manifested in art images, generally in brown and dun Autumnal colours, as illustrated in *The Return of the Native*. It is also expressed in the image of an old thrush with a weak song on the bare branches of a Winter's hoary frost in 'The Darkling Thrush', and those images predominate over the landscape of flowers in Summer, suggesting that Hardy on balance did not expect too much from life. This may have meant that his life

### *Conclusion*

was unfulfilled, but the ongoing desire to experience fulfilment was one of those oppositions that gravitationally extended his imaginative and aesthetic sense in a dialectical process. This process resulted in a corpus of novels and poems which stand in testament to the human condition, and which add profoundly to our understanding of ourselves, and our place on this planet.

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