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TRAGIC FLAW IN THE WORKS OF THOMAS HARDY

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ABSTRACT

The novel, *Jude the Obscure* is Hardy's last novel in the 'Novels of Character and Environment' and he devoted the rest of his life after its publication almost exclusively to writing poetry. In the preface to the first edition in 1896 Hardy explained that his main purpose was to narrate 'deadly war' between flesh and spirit and to outline the tragedy of unfulfilled aims - thus a tragic failure. In the last two novels of Hardy, namely *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* there are very few rustic characters and also the importance of the rustic characters is minimized. They do not act as commentators and as narrators as in the earlier novels. In these last two novels we notice Hardy moving away from the countryside to towns and the impact of growing sophistication on his characters.

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المستخلص:

إن رواية جود المغمور هي الرواية الأخيرة المشاركة لـ (هاردي) ضمن " روايات الشخصية والبيئة " ويذكر أنه قد كرس بقية حياته بعد منشوراته الحصرية الأخيرة لينصرف الى نظم الشعر. لقد أوضح هاردي في مقدمة طبعته الأولى الصادرة في عام 1896 على أن من بين أهدافه الرئيسية هي أن يروي الحرب الفتاكة بين الجسد والروح والخطوط العريضة للأهداف المأساوية التي لم تتحقق وكذلك الفشل الذريع في اثنين من الروايات الأخيرة لهاردي وهما روايتي دي اربرفيلز ورواية جود المغمور وهناك عدد قليل جدا من الشخصيات الريفية التي لا تعمل والتي قلل من أهميتها وهي لا تعمل كالمعلقين والرواة كما في الروايات السابقة، ونلاحظ أن هاردي قد ابتعد عن الريف وتحول الى المدن وبدى تأثير

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In many ways this novel is antithetical and complementary to *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. It clearly demonstrates, as Hardy stated in his contribution to 'The Tree of Knowledge' in *The New Review* of June, 1894, that boys need sex education as much as girls. The disasters of *Tess*¹ and *Jude*² spring largely from early sexual misfortune, and both are tragically fated to fall in love with intellectuals who are 'ethereal.' The comparison must not be pushed too far. Arabella is not exactly the counterpart of Alec. (Armstrong, 2007)

The character of Jude may have arisen due to the academic frustrations of his friend Horace Moule who committed suicide in 1873. Hardy later dropped the idea of suicide for his hero and he altered his plans due to the death of his cousin Tryphena Sparks. In the Preface to *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy said that parts of the novel had been suggested by the 'death of a woman.' This woman could be no other than Tryphena, a cousin

of Hardy's with whom Hardy fell in love. He could not marry her and she died prematurely in 1890 at the age of thirty eight³.

Hardy stated that in no book he had ever written contained less of his own life and that there is not a scrap of personal detail in it which needs some elaboration and explanation. *Jude the Obscure* does contain far more of Hardy's views and feelings and it is the most autobiographical of his novels. Jude's love for classical and theological studies is more or less the same as Hardy's. It is to be noted that in *Jude the Obscure* Hardy did not become involved in the omniscient author technique as in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. The scenes of inner and outer conflict were used to illustrate self-expression (Beatty, Claudius 1995).

In this novel Hardy seemed to be too much involved with his quarrel against society to disengage himself. He had already lost patience with English readers and critics, and was probably prepared at this stage to relinquish novel writing for poetry⁴. Whatever the reason, he seems to have decided that he had nothing to lose by expressing himself to the full (Blunden, 1942). *Jude the Obscure* is in many ways a great tragic novel, but it is too depressing and too contrived to command common assent. In this contrivance, Sue is the critical factor; she is so exceptional that Hardy did not dare to be as explicit as he might have been.

The plot is misleading, however, to judge by realistic standards. Nowhere is this more so than in the horrible scene which discloses the hanging of Sue's children and the suicide of Little Father Time. All this is part of a theme which is centred in Christminster, and relates to Jerusalem and the Crucifixion (Brennecke, 1925).

In the end both Jude and Sue choose to be 'crucified' but the hanging scene is a ghastly epitome of suffering in a city of uncharity, and bigotry. When, after the loss of her children, she decides that the flesh, the curse of Adam⁵, should be mortified, and that she must leave Jude, he declares; "let the veil of our temple be rent in two from this hour!" For Jude the whole 'Creation groans' with pain: 'charity' or compassion is snuffed out by society and the Church. Established conventions reassert themselves. Jude wishes he had never been born, and welcomes death, but there will be no peace in this world for Sue, however much she abases herself before 'the holy cross.' In no other novel by Hardy is the theme so important. And his theme here may be stated briefly as follows: man is becoming aware that his life is governed by old ideas and old institutions and he desires to break out of these obsolete forms (D'Agnillo, Renz 1993). This modern spirit causes him to question old beliefs and institutions and to seek new ones, to give up what is known and tried for the unknown and new, and hence to experience loneliness and frustration as he searches on his own. Specifically in the novel, Hardy depicts characters who raise questions about such things as religious beliefs, social classes, the conventions of marriage, and elite educational institutions and who feel in the absence of the old certainties that the universe may be governed by a mysterious, possibly a malign power⁶.

The most noteworthy thing about Hardy's use of point of view is that it is conventional for his time. He uses a shifting third person point of view which is usually centered in Jude but sometimes is moved to one of the other main characters. Historically, then, Hardy makes no use of the development of point of view as a technique carried out by his contemporary Henry James.

Though in this novel Hardy makes less significant use of his Wessex landscape, as well as its customs, superstitions, humour, and human types, than he does in other novels, it is of some importance. Almost all the characters are deeply rooted in and responsive to place, as shown, for example, in Jude's sense of all that has happened on the ridge-track near the Brown House outside Marygreen. Characters like Drusilla Fawley or Mrs. Edlin are very much a product of the area, the aunt with her references to family history, the widow with her comments about marriage. But Hardy's desire to work out his theme seems to override most of this local reference⁷.

The structure of the novel might be described as the reversals of belief in Jude and Sue and their changing marital relationships as they both go down to defeat. In the beginning Sue's view of things is secular and rationalist, expressed, for example, in her sympathy with ancient rather than medieval culture, her scorn of conventional religious belief, her buying of pagan statuary and her reading of Gibbon (D'Agnillo, Renzo 1995). Jude's beliefs are, at first, conventionally Christian, as his desire to be ordained, his reading of standard authors, and his love of medieval culture and architecture show. By the end of the novel Sue has reverted to

conventional beliefs, as evidenced by her concern for the sanctity of marriage and her desire to perform penances for her sins. On the other hand, Jude no longer professes his old beliefs and finds himself, as he says in his speech to the street crowd in Christminster, in "a chaos of principles."⁸

This change in beliefs is closely paralleled by their marital relationships. At first, they are separated by marriage to other people as they are apart in belief. As Jude's ideas change, they are legally freed by divorce, and they come to live together and to be "married," in fact, if not in name. When Sue returns to conventional Christian beliefs, they separate and remarry their first spouses.

Jude's death as a failure in Christminster and Sue's forcing herself to go to Phillotson's bed are striking signs of their defeat in life. This defeat is mirrored as well in Phillotson, who at Marygreen has fallen to the bottom professionally and who requires Sue to swear loyalty to him on a New Testament, and to a lesser extent in Arabella, who though she loses Jude does not lose her vitality (Deacon & Terry, 1966).

In these changes and defeat Hardy has embodied the theme of his novel: Jude and Sue have been caught up in the modern spirit⁹, have struggled to break free of the old ways, and have suffered and failed. It is this that justifies Hardy's description of the novel, in his preface to it, as a tragedy of unfulfilled aims.

The symbolism in the novel helps to work out the theme. Such a symbol as the repeated allusion to Samson and Delilah reinforces the way Jude's emotional life undermines the realization of his ambitions. Two symbols of major importance are Christminster and the character of Little Father Time (Draper, Jo 1994). They are useful to discuss since the first is an instance (if a successful symbol and the second an unsuccessful one).

Jude's idea of Christminster permeates not only his thinking but the whole novel. From his first view of it on the horizon to his hearing the sounds of the holiday there coming in his window as he lies on his deathbed. Christminster represents to him all that is desirable in life. It is by this ideal that he measures everything. He encounters evidence in abundance that it is not in fact what he thinks it. His imagination. But he will not take heed. It finally represents to him literally all that he has left in life. Of course, other characters as well are affected by Jude's idea of the place. It is a successful symbol because it is capable of representing what it is supposed to and it does not call attention to itself as a literary device (Ellman, & O'Clair, 1988).

Little father time however is a different matter. The boy's appearance. His persistent gloom. His oracular tone. His inability ever to respond to anything as a child - all of these call attention to the fact that he is supposed to represent something. And Hardy makes the child carry more meaning than he is naturally able to. He is presented by Hardy to represent Fate. The use of irony is of course commonplace in fiction. And a number of effective instances of it in Hardy's novels are to be found. In some of the instances the reader but not the character recognizes the irony; in others, both the reader and the character are aware of it. An example of the first is Jude's occupational choice of ecclesiastical stonework in medieval Gothic style¹⁰ in a time when medievalism in architecture is dying out or the way Arabella alienates Jude by the deception she has used to get him to marry her the first time. An example of the second is Jude's dying in Christminster, the city that has symbolized all his hopes, or the way Arabella's calling on Jude in Aldbrickham in order to reawaken his interest in her helps bring about Sue's giving herself to him (Gatrell, Simon 1988).

Irony is particularly appropriate in a novel of tragic intent, in which events do not work out the way the characters expect. Certainly it is appropriate in a novel which has the kind of theme this one does. Struggling to break free of the old, the characters experience the old sufferings and failure nonetheless. Critics have often noted the faults in Hardy's style, and perhaps this is to be expected in a writer who was largely self-educated. Such writers can express themselves in striking and original ways, but their lack of formal education sometimes causes them to fall into awkwardness and excess. Shakespeare was, by Hardy's style might be pointed out, but one will serve to illustrate what is meant. Phillotson says to Arabella when they meet many years after she has been a student of his. He comments that he is unable to recognize her because she is now fat and slim during her school days. It is inconceivable that anyone would talk in this way, not even the schoolmaster Phillotson. In Hardy's defence it should be said, however, that there are passages in the novel in which his style serves him quite well¹¹.

In the novel Hardy uses a great many quotations from his reading: at the head of each part, in the narrative, and in the conversations and thoughts of the characters. Many of these are from either the Bible or Shakespeare, but they range over the whole of English literature as well. His practice here is typical of what he did in other novels.

Jude the Obscure is a disturbing rather than a moving novel, though one or two of its scenes reach the highest pitch of dramatic expression in Hardy. Its tragic effect is weakened because situations or the turn of events often suggest contrivance rather than probability. Hardy spoke of Jude as his 'poor puppet,' and there is sufficient truth in the expression to explain why the novel does not create a powerful sense of tragic inevitability comparable to that of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. The tragedy of 'unfulfilled aims' and rejection is extensively developed, but it might have been more impressive had Hardy been more exclusive. He was attempting a new kind of novel, moving towards the drama of inner conflict, and deliberately economizing in scenic effects. Background features show an increasing tendency towards the symbolical. Artistic patterns, realism, and personal 'impressions' do not cohere at all points, however; and *Jude the Obscure*¹² is too elaborately conceived and too inclusive to be wholly satisfying as a work of art.

The role of fate is very dominant in the novels of *Tess of the D 'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*. The main causes for the tragedy in the novel is due to the flaw in the characters and also the conventions in society. The poverty of Jude and Phillotson which was largely responsible for their frustration of their intellectual ambitions can be attributed to social imbalances and social inequalities. When Jude wanted to study the grammar-books nobody came to show light because nobody does. A similar suggestion of the existence of a hostile Fate is made, when Sue, in her frenzy of grief over the deaths of her children says:

There is something external to us which says, 'You shan't! First it said, 'You shan't learn!' Then it said, 'You shan't labour!' Now it says, 'You shan't love!' ¹³

The role of Little Father Time can also be attributed to the working of a hostile fate. The very birth of such an abnormal child shows the working of some supernatural power which is inimical to human happiness. Having an 'octogenarian face' he even thinks like an octogenarian. It is a very surprising thing that a boy of his age should already be aware of the vast amount of suffering in the world and should think that laughter is irrelevant to human life. Sue's decision to go back to Phillotson is due to the death of all her children and this is caused by Father Time. This is an unnatural phenomenon and this leads to one of the most pessimistic statements in the novel. Jude¹⁴ informed Sue that the doctor told him that such boys are springing up who are unknown in the last generation. This statement shows that Fate is working to extinguish in human beings the very desire to live. No utterance of Hardy is more depressing and despairing than this, not even his remark in his novel *Tess of the D 'Urbervilles* regarding the antagonism of the President of the Immortals (Gibson, James 1996).

The weaknesses of Jude namely for wine and woman is responsible for his own fate. He forgets his studies when he was under the spell of Arabella Donn and this marriage proves to be an utter failure. Later he falls in love with his cousin Sue Bridehead. Sue gets married to another man but Jude continues to be in the grip of his passion for her. Jude's craving for woman's flesh disrupts his intellectual pursuit. The character of Sue is undoubtedly responsible for the ultimate catastrophe in the novel. The role of social conventions and religious beliefs were neglected by Sue and Jude for which they had to pay a very heavy price. The role of Phillotson appears to be very strange and he is a victim of fate due to his own mistakes. For permitting Sue to go and live with her lover, while she is still in a religious sense Phillotson's wife, Phillotson loses his job, faces social censure and ostracism, endures poverty and unemployment, and becomes almost an outcast. And, of course in his case all this suffering is due to the callousness of society and its tyrannical imposition of a code of conduct upon its members¹⁵.

Hardy deals more with thought than with instinct, and more with the town than with the country. It does contain a few rural scenes, the most striking of which is the one where the instinctive Arabella proves much more skillful at the task of slaughtering a pig than the oversensitive Jude. Man is not always kind to

animals (Gittings, Robert 1978). Sometimes he tortures and destroys them. In the same novel, the image of a rabbit screaming in a steel trap is used to symbolize marriage.

Nature has its darker side, and Hardy makes the sense of the hostility of Nature quite explicit in his novels. In *Jude the Obscure*, which is the darkest of Hardy's novels, Nature is almost uniformly hostile, being represented by stuck pigs, worms, stoned birds, rattles, and dying rabbits. However, while Hardy rejects the idea of Nature as the great comforter and the notion of Nature as 'the cool flowery lap of earth' yet, his attitudes are not always consistent. If one keeps in mind all his novels, nature is sometimes benevolent to human beings, sometimes hostile, and sometimes indifferent.

The village environment of Marygreen is depicted by Hardy as very depressing. It is clear that no sensitive person could endure life in Marygreen. Nature is much grimmer than in his earlier novels. Jude's job is scaring birds in a ploughed field and when he lets himself show sympathy for them the owner Farmer Troutham gives him a thrashing. His parents are dead, and he is a dependent in his great-aunt's home. There are no village traditions to which he can attach himself, for the old landmarks have been pulled down and he knows next to nothing about his ancestors who are buried in the dilapidated graveyard. Jude's alienation has gone so far that the only light on the bleak horizon appears to be Christminster, the university city.

In *Jude the Obscure* the rustics act as choruses but when compared to other novels the role of the rustics is largely minimised because the action of the novel takes place mostly in the towns and cities. Aunt Drusilla offers melodramatic warnings, the Widow Edlin acts as comic relief, unable to understand the delicacy of conscience that prevents two people in love from marrying, and the enigmatic Gillingham offers a Plain Man's Guide to the strange actions of the figures in the central triangle. Physician Vilbert circles the action like a malevolent planet, always on hand with evil advice and a parody of Jude in his parade of learning. Tinker Taylor and Mr. Donn show the impossibility of Jude's ever sinking back into the class from which he has freed himself by thinking and reading. Jude is seen throughout as viewed in a multiple mirror, first this side and then that of his personality emphasized, caricatured or softened, while the characters who illustrate Jude's traits remain sturdily independent and a gathering of social types from Victorian England¹⁶.

The plot is a story of a young man of humble birth who wants to go to University. Because Christminster rejects Jude he is disgusted. The story of Jude and his ambition to be a scholar is in fact the sub-plot of the novel. Jude's challenging inspiration invokes ethical and human standards which make the University seem hopelessly inadequate as a cultural agent. The sustained criticism and exposure of Christminster in the novel implies the availability of cultural and moral standpoints which are generally believed to be compromised in *Jude the Obscure*. Most critical accounts of the novel proceed from the assumption that it is a negative footnote to Hardy's Wessex fiction. In its treatment of the University the novel evokes the typical Hardy values. The narrative structure too, has the same features of ironic juxtaposition, unequivocal moral commentary and a guiding authorial voice which characterised the earlier fictions. The changed scenario with its discrete individualities in *Jude the Obscure* is of course a far cry from Wessex, but it is seen and estimated from a point of view sufficiently alive to Wessex as a moral referent. Jude's love for his cousin Sue, its partial fulfilment and his eventual loss of her is the main. The twin plots involving Christminster and Sue are aspects of Jude's constant search for the ideal. Christminster is actually for Jude four centuries of gloom, bigotry and decay. Jude foolishly loves Sue and is betrayed by her due to her instability of nature. The theme of the novel is the inevitability of Jude's defeat, given the forces at war in his personality and his worship of false gods (Davis, William 1993).

The plot of the novel *Jude the Obscure* is linear; it begins with the boyhood of Jude and continues chronologically until his death, dwelling on the most significant events of his adult life. Those incidents are Jude's tenderheartedness, his vulnerability to women, and his readiness to pursue ideals. Jude and his son are both abandoned by a heartless parent, Jude like his mother attempts suicide by drowning. Arabella twice forces Jude to marry her, Sue and Jude go to one another in their disgrace. Sue hides from her husband in a cupboard, and it is in a cupboard that she finds her children dead. All these episodes are coincidences. The plot of *Jude the Obscure* is carefully balanced in the manner of an hour glass. In that Sue and Jude exchange their

intellectual positions in the course of the action. Jude begins as a devout if rather naive Christian, and dies cursing an unmoved God; Sue begins as a fashionable agnostic, and ends devoting herself to an imaginary God of Wrath who she believes had destroyed her children to bring about her repentance. Sue's retreat into fanaticism shows her vanity which is pathetic and her refusal to admit that she cannot control her life; Jude, on the other hand, has been 'educated' by his terrible sufferings and has emerged with a stronger sense of his own identity.

The conflict in *Jude the Obscure* occurs due to changes in the social structure and traditions between the old and the new. The changed atmosphere does not mean a loss of faith in the cultural assumptions inherent in the society. Hardy always saw traditional rural society in a dialectical opposition to the new urban and industrial milieu. Here in *Jude the Obscure* rural society is almost non-existent, but its disappearance does not imply a breach in the novelist's sensibility. Jude is a tragic vision of deracination and of the loss of traditional values and mores. Wherever there is any disorientation or moral impasse in Hardy's world it is imputed confidently to a perversion or denial of the communal verities and rhythms of life, whatever that perversion or denial may be due to. The dwindling away of the visible forms of the communal order primes the cultural memory to a new pitch of imaginative action. Hardy by bringing his characters into contact with modern ideas and new forms of life is only exposing the inadequacy of those ideas and forms for a humanly satisfying existence, and this leads greatly to conflict.

Jude's disenchantment with Marygreen leads him to an obsession with Christminster. Hardy treats Jude sympathetically. The simple emerging from all this is that there is no substitute for Wessex as a moral and cultural symbol. Jude and Sue are misguided people and their ever dependence on self-generated intellectual ideals are the negatives of the novel and this is due to their alienation of Wessex¹⁷.

The novel is concerned in many of its key situations with cultural change and uprooting, it is also undeniably a metaphysical statement about the inevitability of frustration and pain in human life. He begins his life with rook-scaring childhood, he was defrauded by his noblest intentions from time to time in the city life and finally meets his tragic end.

Jude was warned by his aunt not to marry Sue his cousin because she is town bred. This shows the antipathy of the rural people towards people brought up in an urban atmosphere. She said:

But anything more than a relation's good wishes it is stark madness for 'ee to give her. If she's townish and wanton it med bring 'ee to ruin.¹⁸

This prophecy unfortunately becomes true in the life of Jude. It is quite obvious that Hardy did not like the highly materialistic culture of the urban life. The social conventions in the novel and the maladjustment of Jude and Sue brings them into conflict with society and they had to pay a heavy price for it. Finally Sue after the death of her children refuses to stay with Jude and goes to her husband Richard Phillotson leaving Jude alone to die in a depressed and pensive mood with Arabella who neglects Jude and lives with Dr. Vilbert. Thus the novel ended in a tragic tone with the death of Jude a man of unfulfilled aims and ambitions in life, due to non-adjustment with society's values, customs and traditions (Gossin, Pamela 2007).

Jude Fawley is the surname which is identical with the name of the Berkshire village where several of Hardy's ancestors had lived, the 'Marygreen' of the novel. Of special interest is the fact that Jude's first surname was 'Head,' the name of Hardy's paternal grandmother, who lived there when she was a girl.

The childhood of Jude starts with a tragedy since he was handicapped from the beginning. His parents quarrelled and parted when he was a baby. His mother drowned herself and his father then left for South West. Jude was sent from Mollstock to live with his great-aunt Drusilla Fawley at Marygreen, a gaunt woman with little evidence of sweetness or disposition, though she had pity for the boy. Jude first learned that he was in a world which had no place for charity from Farmer Troutham who had given him a good thrashing when Jude pitied the crows eating in the farm of Troutham. His next disillusionment came when having faithfully performed his duty of their bargain, he found that the quack-doctor Vilbert had forgotten to purchase the grammar books he needed for study.¹⁹

When he wrote to Phillotson for some second-hand copies he received old Latin grammar books which are out-dated and soiled. This incident made Jude miserable and he wished that he had never been born. He understood the shabby trick played on him and he studied every moment to fulfil his admission at Christminster, as his schoolmaster Mr. Phillotson had done. He studied Latin and Greek by his own unaided efforts, stealing every moment he could for study, even when driving along the roads and lanes to deliver bread. Jude studied while driving the horse carriage and was once admonished by a policeman. Since then due to lack of time he could not pursue his intellectual quest. He believed that he could work as a stone-mason while pursuing his studies at Christminster, and this reason he became apprenticed to a stone-mason at Wilfordston. It was while dreaming of Christminster and of his coming a Bishop that he first encountered Arabella Donn, and found that he was overpowered by something stronger than reason and will. His seduction, being guileless and tenderhearted, he was soon tricked into marriage, though he knew that Arabella was not worth a great deal as a specimen of womankind. Jude was tempted and finally left his studies and his ambition to go to Christminster. His fate and bad days started the moment he came into contact with Arabella. This shows the weakness of Jude's character and that he lacked the firm determination. Jude thought that loving a woman is better than loving to be a graduate:

It was better to love a woman than to be a graduate, or a parson; ay, or a pope! After the marriage he realized his mistake of marrying Arabella since he understood her real wicked nature. He wished to commit suicide but fortunately Arabella left him. But because of this marriage Jude felt as if he was "caught in a gin which would cripple him, if not her also, for the rest of a lifetime?"²⁰ He thought he could 'battle with his evil star' and try Christminster. Jude went to Christminster and worked as a stonemason, fell in love with his cousin Sue Bridehead, and sought advice from various colleges. He loved the city and praised it:

Beautiful city! so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene! Her ineffable charm keeps ever calling us to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection'(Heffernan, James 2005).

As he had not the time to study for a scholarship and was unable to pay for his education, he received discouraging replies from various institutions. Hardy's attack is not on Christminster but on the society responsible for keeping the doors of its universities virtually closed to poor scholars. Jude's two Arch Enemies were his weakness for the fair sex and his indulgence in strong liquor. He sought refuge in the latter, and reasoned that he had been guilty of self-seeking, a form of social unrest, the 'artificial product of civilization,' which had no foundation in the noble instincts. In fact Sue became a school teacher with the help of Phillotson and Jude wanted to marry her. Meanwhile Jude's aunt Drusilla was unwell and when she came to know that Jude wanted to marry Sue she scolded him because she hated Sue and spoke ill about her. Jude left the cottage of his aunt with a heavy heart. Jude therefore now chose a humbler aim, to enter the Church as a licentiate and aspire for no more than a curacy. What better place to pursue his studies than a cathedral city such as Melchester, where Sue was now at a training college! He convinced himself that he could learn to love her' as a friend and kinsman.²¹

Jude frustrated with the attitude of intellectuals and urban life started drinking and was dismissed from his job but was looked after well by Sue. Since his high hopes on city life were shattered he went back to Marygreen. Mr. Highridge, a Clergyman understood the agony of Jude and offered him a job in the church and asked him to stop drinking. He went back to Sue since she invited him, but he was angry when he came to know that Sue wanted to marry Phillotson. Meanwhile Jude met Arabella and she told him that she got married in Australia to a boy Mr. Cooclanan which gave a shock to Jude.

The death of Jude's aunt Drusilla made Jude and Sue come together and they both discussed about their unhappy marriages. She told Jude that marriage with Phillotson was very unhappy. The lovers were united and Jude burnt all the theological books. He saw her at Shaston and Marygreen, and finding 'the human was more powerful in him than the Divine,' burnt all his religious books. Sue's marriage proved a failure. Both heard "the cry of a rabbit caught in a gin," and it symbolized the situation of each. Strange that his first

aspiration towards academical proficiency had been checked by a woman, and that his second aspiration - towards apostleship - had also been checked by a woman. He said disappointedly:

· .. that the women are to blame; or is it the artificial system of things, under which the normal sex-impulses are turned into devilish domestic gins and syringes to noose and hold back those who want to progress?

The two lovers lived together at Aldbrickham and elsewhere. Sue deferring marriage even after both have secured divorce, because she was afraid that an 'iron contract' would extinguish tenderness. It was the fear that Jude would be drawn back to Arabella that led to its consummation. Two children were born. They lived together without marriage. People were scandalized at their relationship, and the result was that Jude found very hard to obtain work or keep, and had to look for it in different parts of Wessex. Sue was so kind to Jude and was very much worried about his deteriorating health. Jude thanked her very much for her kindness towards him. Jude and Sue were denied lodgings due to status and more children. They were asked to vacate even the room which they procured with utmost difficulty. All these troubles had a deep impact on the mind of Little Father Time and they all committed suicide by hanging. He wrote: "Done because we are too many." The death of her children seemed like retribution to Sue and in her agony she felt she had to submit to the Church and refused for a legalised marriage with Jude. After Sue left Jude he again sullied drinking unable to bear her loss and fell a prey to Arabella. She finally managed to marry him and Jude was duped for the second time. His constant drinking deteriorated his health and he finally met his end.

Susanna Bridehead is the name of an amalgam. "Susanna" recalls "The History of Susanna in the Apocrypha: it was at one time the name for Tess. 'Bridehead.' by analogy with "maidenhead: suggests Sues marital squeamishness." "Head" was at first Jude Fawlcys surname, and derives from Hardy's grandmother who lived at Fawley or Marygreen. Whatever the reasons for Hardy's choice the name was familiar being that of a psi am-tunc associated with Dorset. Bridehead is at Little Bredy.

Hardy in his last two major novels namely *Tess of the D 'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* presents tragic protagonists who are wanderers and who were unable to find a community where they are accepted. Tess suffers due to no fault of hers but due to the fault of Alec. But whereas Jude suffers due to his weakness for wine and woman. The heroine Tess is depicted as a native of a rural village of Marlott and she experiences many of the elements of village life as presented by Hardy in his earlier novels. The decay and fragmentation of the peaceful rural life contribute to her merciless victimisation by Fate and she is discarded by everyone around her. Tess was forced out of her village life several times in order to fulfil the ambitions of her parents especially her mother, by the disgrace of being an unwed mother, and then an abandoned wife, and by her family's forced migration when they lose the lease of their cottage. Tess enjoys an idyllic interlude at a prosperous dairy farm, Talbothays but the trouble of her past entirely disrupts her entire future happy life and she was unable to respond to the attractions of Angel Clare. After Angel marries and abandons her, Tess undergoes many difficulties and ends up working on a rough, ugly farm Flintcomb-Ash, the setting for some of Hardy's harshest views of the cruelties of rural labour. There is a wide variety of background characters around Tess - people who are coarse, ignorant, immoral, or passive. Their roughness and insensitivity enable them to survive the hardships and corruptions of rural life, while Tess, 'a pure woman,' is destroyed in her youth when she is finally driven to murder her seducer and this final incident leads her to the tragic end (Leavis, 1996).

The last of Hardy's novel *Jude the Obscure* is more bitterly exposed and the restrictions and injustice imposed on the individual by society and by an indifferent universe is presented in the novel. Jude's relationship with Arabella reveal the coarse and bestial aspect of rural life, while his other experiences demonstrate the frustrations and rejections facing a poor man with intellectual ambitions and unconventional morals. The background characters are some miscellaneous voices reflecting the gossip and prejudice that follow Jude wherever he goes. Mrs. Edlin, the descendant of the rural housewives in the earlier novels, is the only loyal friend who assists Jude in times of *trouble* throughout the novel, but her ironic commentaries *placing* Jude's experiences in the context of traditional views of marriage do not relieve the hopelessness of his condition. Jude has no real roots in a rural past and no future in or out of Wessex (Lovesey, Oliver 1990).

Hardy's painfully realistic portrayal of his belief that Nature is indifferent to the laws constructed for the benefit of the society, at the expense of the few who have exceptional talent and insight, was rejected by his late Victorian readers, leading him to give up novel writing for the rest of his life (SEL1500-1900).

It is also observed that Hardy tried to show that the Victorian society is slowly and gradually transforming itself from an idealistic society to a materialistic and sophisticated society. A close observation of the earlier and later novels reveals this fact. Even the loss of moral and ethical values can be seen from his earlier and later novels. The pleasant rural scene is contrasted with the urban world of Jude, the last novel of Hardy. Hardy loves and reveres the rural world and not the mechanized and artificial one in most of his novels (Poole, Adrian 1981).

Finally one finds that Hardy has affectionate longing for the old rural community and perceptive criticism of its weaknesses. He felt the nostalgia for a similar life based on natural and permanent ties with nature, family and neighbours. But he realised that the pastoral community they idealized in his early novels was never perfect and that it could neither accommodate unconventional problems and exceptional individuals or survive the modern social changes. Thus there are disturbances in the rural world of Hardy whenever it is threatened by outside forces.

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