The second stage in the process of evolution of consciousness in man is the inevitable suffering as a consequence of man's myopic and egoistic deeds. He undergoes untold agonies and unmerited spasm of anguish as a result of his own wrong doings as well as the wrong deeds of others. Hardy stresses the inexorable workings of consequences which involve the innocent along with the guilty and thus, have far-reaching implications. However, Hardy presents suffering to be meaningful in human terms in as much as man learns to live through suffering and is enabled to bear the aches of others after undergoing tragic predicaments in his own life. Suffering, thus, becomes a vital and energising part of his life. Hardy has a deeply-felt belief in the positive value of suffering. Trials and troubles are to strengthen the soul so much so that man emerges stronger wiser, more compassionate and more sympathetic to his fellow sufferers out of the white heat of suffering. In Hardy, suffering thus, is inseparably interwoven with knowledge.

Far From the Madding Crowd is one of the remarkable studies in respect of the inexorable workings of consequences. Hardy has perfectly delineated the inevitable process of cause and effect through the character of Bathsheba, who is subjected to considerable physical and
mental suffering, which eventually leads to her purification and sublimation. Bathsheba is an extremely myopic, highly proud and self-indulgent girl in the beginning. Her short-sightedness and vanity become her tragic flaws which invite unmeasurable sorrows and afflictions for her as well as for others connected with her in one way or the other. Her coquettish vanity sows the seeds of suffering by indulging in the reckless prank of sending valentine to Farmer Boldwood, little dreaming that the stable appearance of the middle-aged man is only a balance of great extreme. As a result of her heedless tricks and subsequent unreflecting encouragement, Boldwood becomes helplessly infatuated with her alluring face. He takes this valentine to be seriously meant. The force of his submerged feelings is suddenly released with the intensity of an emotional violence that disturbs his equilibrium. He is so excited and inflamed by this suddenly awakened passion of love that he appears to be "the disembodiment soul of feeling wandering without its carcass." However, the intensity of his infatuation is so great that Bathsheba is "frightened as well as agitated at his vehemence". Though her ego is satisfied to see Boldwood's eyes "following her everywhere", but, at the same time, she is horrified at the consciousness of "having broken into ... dignified stronghold". Immediately

1 FFMC, p.145.  
2 FFMC, p.147  
3 FFMC, p.148.  
4 FFMC, p.135.
a terrible conflict overpowers her. Hardy writes in this concern:

This was a triumph; and had it come naturally such a triumph would have been sweeter ... But it had been brought about by misdirected ingenuity, and she valued it only as she valued an artificial flower or a wax fruit.5

Thus an act of Bathsheba's childish folly sends Boldwood into the whirlpool of agonies and invites massive troubles for her own life. Unwittingly, she precipitates in Boldwood a lasting passion and mounting emotions to which she has no impulse to respond, and before which she can only temporize and equivocate. Nevertheless her heart is filled with a "disquiet".6 She is pained at heart to see that "what was fancied to be the rumble of wheels is the reverberation of thunder."7 Her conscience pricks her for recklessly playing with the emotions of a solemn and dignified man. Bathsheba has to face the indignant Chastisement for her levity at the hands of Gabriel Oak. She faces much humiliation and degradation in the eyes of his folkmen due to her fl\^natious behaviour.

Bathsheba's mind becomes a hotbed of conflicts and dilemmas from now onwards. On the one hand, she "ought in honesty to accept the consequences "8 and marry Boldwood, but on the other hand, she finds it impossible for she does not

5 FFMC, p. 135. 7 FFMC, P. 145.
6 FFMC, p. 150. 8 FFMC, p. 150.
love him. Thus torn between her conscience and impulses, Bathsheba becomes worry-stricken and restless. Her temerity and ego lend her in more troubles regarding her farm-affairs.

Piqued at Gabriel's plain and harsh speaking against her "unworthiness"9 to Boldwood, she dismisses him. The very next day, she realises the folly of her rash decision when she sees the spectacle of death and suffering. Her sheep get blasted and they writhe under pain; death is imminent if they are not cured. Bathsheba is told that only Gabriel can save them from the clutches of pain and subsequent death. Nevertheless, she finds it humiliating to ask for help from the person whom she has dismissed. Finally the tenderness of her heart and a deep concern awakened in her by the tragic spectacle of the seething sheep take hold of her. She renounces her ego and pride and sends for Gabriel with a humble note of request. Bathsheba suffers the pains of undergoing the humbling of her proud spirit so much so that she bursts into "small convulsive sobs ... which follow a fit of crying".10 She is made to realise the foolishness of her imperiousness to Oak whom she finds indispensable to her. She realises among tears that her self-swness is false.

Bathsheba's erring nature involves her in a more serious peril and she gets entrapped in the snare of

9 FFMC, p.154.

10 FFMC, p.161.
glitter, gallantry and flattery cast by swanky and rakish Troy. Being inexperienced and immature, she gets her skirt entangled in Troy's spur and in turn, she is dazzled and bewitched by his coaxing flattery and dare devilry. She becomes as mad in love with Troy, as Boldwood is in love with her. When Boldwood comes to know about this affair, he is infuriated beyond limits. Bathsheba tries to dismiss him by confessing her folly as a "childish game of an idle minute", but this confession does not extinguish the fire of love burning in his heart; it is rather inflamed by Troy's rivalry. Boldwood threatens to take revenge upon Troy for snatching his prize. This threat distracts Bathsheba's heart and terrifies her. Hardy pertinently comments that "the most tragic woman is cowed by a tragic man". She is shocked and stunned to see "such astounding wells of feverish feeling" in Boldwood. She is over-powered by a morbid dread of consequences and starts off to Bath to warn Troy against the suspected danger.

Bathsheba faces the worst sort of crisis when Gabriel Oak, along with other folkmen, chases her thinking that she is some gipsy woman who has stolen Bathsheba's horse. In her agonised state she appears to be "a picture full of misery". She is filled with a "stimulating

11 FFMC, p. 237.
12 FFMC, p. 241.
13 FFMC, p. 242.
14 FFMC, p. 252.
turbulence beside which caution vainly prayed for a hearing. Instigated by sexual jealousy Troy arouses in her heart, she marries him there and then.

Bathsheba's reckless and hasty marriage with Troy brings a long chain of troubles and tribulations which tame and chastise her proud soul. She is altered and modified a lot by the tragic and disenchanting experiences after marriage. Troy proves to be a rake, just the reverse of what Bathsheba has taken him to be. His irresponsible and drunken behaviour makes her think, again and again "if she had never stooped to folly of this kind". On the night of Harvest Super, Bathsheba faces intolerable humiliation when Troy indulges in drunken revelry. It is after drinking the bitter water of suffering that she discovers in Oak a sincere and confident friend before whom she can unlock her troubled heart. Hardy aptly comments on her schooling through suffering:

Bathsheba had begun to know what suffering was.

The glory and enchantment that have previously shrouded Troy's triviality vanish giving place to a new recognition that he is a good-for-nothing fellow. Bathsheba feels as

15 FFMC, p. 253.
16 FFMC, p. 323.
17 FFMC, p. 325.
helpless as "a caged leopard" in the bond of matrimony. Troy's ambiguous behaviour makes her suspect his fidelity and finally "perplexed with antecedent thought" Bathsheba gets the ocular proof of Troy's infidelity. Fanny's death completes the process of her disillusionment. She has to undergo much torments of incertitude, suspicion and jealousy regarding the story of Fanny's death in child-birth. Unable to bear this suspense, she opens Fanny's coffin and finds her with a baby. For Bathsheba, no dread is as dreadful as the "conclusive proof of her husband's infidelity". Bathsheba is so afflicted and agonised at heart that the author says:

Her tears fell fast beside the unconscious pair in the coffin: tears of a complicated origin, of a nature indescribable, almost indefinable except as other then those of simple sorrow.

Bathsheba reels helplessly under the untold agonies and pangs of sexual jealousy so much so that "there arose from Bathsheba's lips a long, low cry of measureless despair and indignation, such a wail of anguish as had never been heard within those old inhabited wall." Under the paroxysm of pain and anguish, Bathsheba appears to be the weakest of the weaker sex. Bathsheba is so startled and paralysed by this unmerited blow of agony that Troy "could hardly believe her to be his proud wife Bathsheba."

Distracted and remorseful Troy declares in unequivocal terms that morally he belongs to Fanny. After this smashing blow, Bathsheba can endure no more and runs away from home. She reaches a thicket of withering...
Bathsheba wakes up in the morning and experiences a sort of regeneration in her, she is awakened to a new realisation that there is no running away from the consequences of one's commitments. She realises that there are other obligations also to be fulfilled beside her own gratifications. She tells Liddy that she has decided to stay with Troy even if she is "cut to pieces." She realises that her evasiveness and aversion to pain and suffering is a great moral failure. She is awakened to the fact that neither renunciation nor insensibility offers any escape from suffering. Thus out of suffering, she evolves out to be an apostle of stoic endurance and resignation. Continual suffering which has produced in her a feeling of inurement, and pride, jealousy and temerity, and she emerges out to be a sympathetic, considerate and humble woman who knows what suffering is. She wakes from the gloom of her despair and affliction "with a freshened existence and a cooler brain." After the completion of her disillusionment of romantic dreams of Troy, the ferns are now yellowed and the previous fresh and dazzling fantasy is gone for ever. She experiences a sort of baptism through suffering and can now see in the day light. All the nobleness of her heart comes out when she sheds tears and sprinkles flowers on Amoy's grave as a homage to the
co-suffer. Thus her sexual jealousy is substituted by tender sympathy and loving-kindness, generated in her by the harrowing experiences of her troubled life. She is so altered after these experiences that even Boldwood recognises this change in her and exclaims:

The severe schooling she had been subjected to have made Bathsheba much more considerate than had formally been of the feelings of others. 27

A new "substratum of good feeling" 28 takes the place of ego, pride, jealousy, vanity and self-smugness. Troy gets a monument built on Fanny's grave as a symbol of sentimental open acknowledgement of His love and reverence for Fanny, and an open negation of Bathsheba's love. Though hurt and wounded Bathsheba learns to bear to this insult.

After Troy's mysterious disappearance from the farm, Bathsheba suddenly comes to know about his death by drowning. This renewed stroke of agony shocks her to unconsciousness. Boldwood comes to her rescue and gives her assistance to reach home. Bathsheba is smitten with remorse for her earlier offences and injustice to Boldwood when she finds him still sincere and devoted to her. She conscientiously feels that she owes all possible amends to this man whom she has once wronged. Seeing Bathsheba soft and kind to him, Boldwood renews his love suit. She is agrieved and troubled 29 to

27 FFMC, p. 391.  29 FFMC, p. 418.
28 FFMC, p. 391.
find herself in a dilemma. Finally she gives Boldwood a promise to marry him after seven years if Troy does not appear. However, she is washed out of her depth by the strength and violence of Boldwood's emotional appeals. He arranges Christmas party to announce his engagement with her. Boldwood's vehement appeals to wear the engagement ring fairly beat her "into non-resistence"\(^{30}\) and she cries with a helpless whisper. A more severe blow is meted to her when Troy appears all of a sudden. She sinks down on the stairs unable to comprehend whether it is "a terrible illusion"\(^{31}\) or a solid reality. The sudden appearance of Troy sends her in a "mental gutta serena" so much so that "her mind was for the minute totally deprived of light"\(^{32}\) Troy manhandles Bathsheba and she gives out a woeful Cry. Boldwood, out of frustration and despair, shoots Troy dead and gives himself to law. Bathsheba is stunned to see Troy's body change into a corpse within a second. She displays rare moral courage so much so that the surgeon is compelled to remarks that she has "the nerve of a stoic".\(^{33}\) H.C. Duffin pertinently comments:

"Time and again she draws strength from affliction."\(^{34}\)

Persistent suffering has made her bold and courageous. She blossoms under the impact of trials and tribulations of life. Very soon her courage betrays her and she falls into "a

\(^{30}\) FFMC, p. 443. \(^{31}\) FFMC, p. 445. \(^{32}\) FFMC, p. 446. \(^{33}\) FFMC, p. 452. \(^{34}\) H.C. Duffin, The Tragic Novels of Thomas Hardy, p.14.
series of fainting fits". Liddy hears her mistress "moaning in whisper through the dull slow hours of that wretched night".

Now Bathsheba confines herself to her room only avoiding all sorts of communication even with her personal maid. Infact "emotional convulsions seemed to have become the common-place of her history". Bathsheba has not yet come out of her agony and anguish when more worries are added to her affliction by Oak's declaration that he will be leaving England for Callifornia. Bathsheba realises that she will be left all alone in this wide world to face the consequences of her myopic egoistic deeds. She digs out memories from her past life and realises that she has been very ungrateful and harsh to Oak inspite of the fact that he has stood by her through thick and thin. Her heart sinks within her at the thought of losing the only trust-worthy and dependent friend in this world. In her affliction she reassesses and revises her opinions and finally determines to seal this bond of friendship permanently. She recognises a silent mutual understanding and emotional compatibility between the two. Purged of all defects of ego, pride and prejudice she recognises a real friend and life-partner in Oak. With intermingled feelings of affection, love and admiration, she gets united with him forever. They are seen in perfect harmony embodying the principle of comradeship, the product of experience endured side by side. Suffering performs its purgatory function in the case of Bathsheba.

36 FFMC, p. 452.
The Return of the Native enfolds the concept of retribution through the spiritual odyssey of Clym. Suffering, in fact, becomes, what Millgate says, "a pre-condition of Clym's regeneration" from a myopic, egoistic self to an awakened, self-sacrificing and noble saint who has risen above the praise or condemnation of the world. We discern the inexorable working of consequences which involve the innocent along with the guilty in the process of inevitable suffering.

Clym belongs to the class of mythical heroes who undertake to enlighten the ignorant people groping in the darkness, and thus, to alleviate the suffering or groaning mankind. Well established in the diamond business as a manager of a big concern, he gets disillusioned with the life of glamour and glitter as he becomes versed in deeper knowledge of the modern philosophy of positivism and humanitarianism. He is filled with a melioristic zeal and comes to think that he cannot enjoy the delicacies and luxuries of life in the face of such a miserable condition when "half the world is going to ruin for want of somebody to buckle to and teach them how to breast the misery they are born to". He sets on his path of spreading the light of knowledge with a concentrated devotion. But the path he adopts ignorantly is not at all, smooth. He faces much

38 Michael Millgate, Thomas Hardy: His Career As a Novelist, p.142.
39 RN, p.162.
opposition and antagonism from all — his mother, Eustacia and the people of Edyon. Hardy, in his authorial comment, makes it clear that Clym's idealism will cost him much:

In consequence of this relatively advanced position, Yeobright might have been called unfortunate. The rural world was not ripe for him; to be completely to the unward in aspirations is fatal to fame.40

It is Clym's access of love for his fellowmen which makes him "at once to be the first unit sacrificed".41 On his noble path, the best of Clym's intentions come across against some frustrating circumstances. When he reveals his plans of improving "the grimness of the general human situation" which has caused his ambition "to halt a while" 42 before his mother, Mrs. Yeobright, she feels sorry for his idealistic fantasies and calls this step "a self-sacrifice".43 And it is, undoubtedly, a self-sacrifice. She has spun colourful dreams of luxury and splendour. Thus, from the very beginning his humanistic ideals stand in opposition to her mother's dreams of worldly achievements. This opposition results in disappointment, conflict and struggle between their antagonistic tendencies. His mother intends to co-operate him in his mission of opening a school for the poor. But his infatuation with Eustacia's bewitching and maddening beauty and his decision to marry her even when she

40 RN, p. 196.
41 RN, p. 196.
42 RH, p. 211.
43 RN, p. 215.
makes it obvious that she hates heath and wants to escape from his jail, make his mother oppose him severely and relentlessly. She misunderstands the whole issue and thinks that he is planning to settle down on heath" to justify this folly which has seized him. She knows full well that Clym is inviting a volley of sorrows by choosing a "lazy and dissatisfied" woman as the partner of the life devoted to the cause of humanity. In order to save him from the "impending sorrow", his mother resists his wish to marry Eustacia ruthlessly. Being myopic and illusionary at this stage, he does not understand the true spirit behind his mother's opposition. Hence, he undergoes much agony and anguish due to his mother's antagonism to Eustacia, so frank and relentless, at a time when his own fascinated love for her is in a state of excitement. He finds himself in a strange "strait" torn between his love for Eustacia and a deep devotion to his mother. He spends many days in a torturous uneasiness and soul-breaking anguish.

Among tears, rebukes and hot words, Clym gets alienated from his mother. Finally when he breaks away from her, he is so perturbed and vexed that it takes him hours to normalise his imbalanced state of mind. This tragic but almost inevitable separation brings him in a stupefaction and mental inertia. He drinks the cup of bitter alienation because he

44 RN, p. 216. 47 RN, p. 223.
45 RN, p. 216.
46 RN, p. 223.
does not want "to give new pain to his mother by some word, look or deed". At this time, he has no clear-cut social position and he is bound to be isolated from other people because he is too far ahead of them.

Clym and Eustacia marry each under an illusion. Eustacia, a pure pagan but Clym a pure idealist and intellectual, so their union is sure to be a failure. That is why, once the initial sexual excitement is over, their minds and feeling are more than ever back on their single tracks. Thus, their apparent harmony vanishes very soon, giving place to grudges, discontent and indifference to the feelings of each other; their primary incompatibility is increased by the reversal of Clym's fortune. As this hasty and reckless marriage is bound to be fraught with tragic possibilities, very soon Clym begins to repent his hasty action. Hardy Writes:

Now that he had reached a cooler moment he would have preferred a less hasty marriage.

Knowing well that he has acted in haste, he does nothing to mend things and refuses to withdraw the card he has played rashly even though there is time to do so.

Clym reaps as he sows. Very soon, the consequences of his reckless actions start tightening their noose, pushing him into a tight corner with little room for manoeuvring.

48 RN, p.232.
49 RN, p.260.
Clym regrets over the loss of the precious period in their passionate indulgence of voluptuousness. Now, in order to make up the lost time, he overworks himself. Meanwhile, Eustacia has an angry confrontation with Clym's mother and declares among tears that it is beyond her tolerance to live on heath any more, which makes Clym undergo much heartache and anguish. But the effect of her persistence is only to "chain himself more closely than ever to his books, so as to be sooner enabled to appeal to substantial results". Thus, this over work tells upon his eyes and suddenly, he discovers that his eyes are suffering from "acute inflammation induced by ... night studies, continued inspite of a cold". Clym feels the stroke of many hammers together on his heart; he is grieved and sad to learn that he will have to suspend his study-work for a long time.

Suffering comes to Clym as a consequence of his own follies and fantasies as Mrs. Yeobright sees with her keen insight and prophetic observations:

Their troubles are of their own making.

Troubles and tribulations are his own making and in no way a bolt from the blue. Clym goes on enhancing his troubles by his procrastination and impracticability. Notwithstanding his rash marriage and his loss of eye-sight, he could still

50 RN, p.269.
51 RN, p.270.
52 RN, p.293.
have retrieved his error by calling on her estranged mother and thereby, bringing about a reconciliation with her. But he takes no initiative to mend his relations with her, who, later on, persuaded by Venn pays them a friendly visit to bridge up the gap caused by their angry separation. Her pilgrimage of reconciliation ends in her death, because she is shocked to take Lustacia's action of looking out of window but not opening the door as a deliberate and hateful denial in which Clym is equally implicated. Before her death, Clym reaches the spot where she is lying unconscious, obviously on his way to pay her a friendly visit. He sees her mother's body lying unconscious, bitten by an adder, on the heath. Only a son's heart can gauge the depth of Clym's mental-suffering at this sight. Clym leaves no stone unturned to save her mother from the clutches of the tragic death, but she sustains to her fatigue, emotional shock and the poison of snake-bite. He is completely overpowered by a guilt complex and self-accusation. The last words of his dying mother that she is "a broken-hearted woman cast off by her son" fill his heart with remorse and contrition. His sense of guilt is increased all the more and eats into his very being. He writhes under acute and indescribable mental pain. Weighed down by an unbearable burden of guilt he says:

53 RN, p.308.
I cannot help feeling that I did my best to kill her ... my conduct to her was too hideous ... I made no advances, ... I never went near her house. 54

He laments and repents his delay in visiting her. The very intensity of soul torment induces in Clym a mental prostration, an emotional catalepsy and a state of comatose. He withdraws from the surrounding almost completely for a while.

Clym is haunted by the mystery of his mother's death when he comes out of his mental prostration. The razor-edge of anguish awakens him to an action and he sets on to find out the mystery until he succeeds in destroying his own and Eustacia's happiness. To his utter dismay and distress, he comes to know that Eustacia turned her out as she was entertaining Wildeve at that time. Clym cannot endure this shock as he never expects such a cruelty and unscrupulousness from his wife. He is extremely distracted to know that his wife behaved so villainously at a time when his mother was "learning to love" 55, and thus thwarted her best efforts to get friendly. His emotions about her mother become more extreme and more shattering than anything he experiences in relation to Eustacia. That becomes the cause of his frenzied rage and emotional break-down. He cannot endure this traumatic and exasperating experience and pounces on Eustacia like a wild

54 RN, p. 328.
55 RN, p. 347.
cat, losing all reason, logic and compassion:

You have held my happiness in the hollow of your hand, and like a devil you have dashed it down.56

His grief was beyond description as a grand and golden opportunity of "beginning a forgiving and honest course" was lost due to Eustacia's stubbornness and hard-heartedness. He snubs Eustacia so cruelly that she does not try to "clear the cobwebs of ignorance and misinterpretations from Clym's mind whom she calls "a wildman" who has run "his head into the mire". Consequently, among misunderstanding, sorrow and distrust, she leaves Clym alone to suffer.

After their separation for long, Clym writes to Eustacia, asking her to join him and feeling sorry for his previous cruelty to her, but to his utter frustration and disnay, he comes to know that she has committed suicide by jumping into the black pool after finding herself unable to become Wildeve's mistress. At this stage Clym's agony is pure alloy of misery and grief of the deepest and the noblest type. His pain and suffering reach their climactic intensity in the death of Eustacia for which he holds himself responsible. Her death brings to him a perfect self-knowledge that is borne out of his tragic experiences. The culmination of inward suffering leads him to the stage of shrivelling up or redemption of character.

56 RN, p.344. 57 RN, p.347. 58 RN, p.345.
He ruminates woefully that he has committed that sin for which "no man or law can punish"\(^59\) him.

Gradually Clym regains his equanimity and repose and emerges wiser and saner out of these soul-breaking experiences. He becomes a perfect "stoic in the face of mishaps".\(^60\) After undergoing the baptismal experiences, he realises the futility of revolt and adopts the unaggressive wisdom as a means for the realisation of harmony. Purified by the white heat of agony and anguish, he evolves out to be a pure humanitarian and altruist who serves his community without caring for fame or following.

The Mayor of Casterbridge brings to the fore the concept of the inexorable workings of the consequences and the force of irrevokable retribution. This doctrine is linked with the fact that the cause is but another name for the effect. The protagonist Henchard, rooted in an unconscious life-process more deterministic than his own try to mould the process according to his whims and eccentricities, personal aspirations and will. Consequently he has to face much defeat, destruction, disappointment and frustration. In this way, he becomes aware of his limitations and folly of his self-assertion. His endeavours

\(^{59}\) R\(\text{R}\), p. 449.

\(^{60}\) R\(\text{R}\), p. 293.
to stamp a human personal design on cosmic indifference brings suffering which, in turn, makes him wiser, nobler and stronger. Suffering, in Hardy, is therefore a pioneer of a more compassionate cosmic awareness. In this novel, as in any other, everything centres round the problem of conduct and the trouble starts when Henchard, misled by the myopic, egocentric and aggressive self, transgresses the moral and social law by making the most intimate relationship a subject to the cash nexus. He sells his wife for five guineas to the highest bidder. With this crime against humanity, the whole grim machinery of retribution, energised by the impartial laws of life, is set into a violent motion and doles out crushing agonies to the offender. Henchard suffers untold agonies when he is awakened to the ghastliness of his crime.

Henchard's mental and physical suffering is indescribable. Irving Howe aptly says that Henchard's "intended stroke of liberation proves to be a seal of enslavement". With his wrong move under inebriation, Henchard becomes the slave of evil consequences which produce innumerable effects in endless succession, involving Susan, Elizabeth and Newson in its circle. They have nothing to do with the perpetration of this deed, but the pains and suffering arising from this deed descend on Henchard as well as on these innocent persons. The evil

61 Irving Howe, Thomas Hardy, p.22.
consequences of this violent action are spread all around. Henchard's suffering starts with this drunken frenzy. In the morning, when he is sober and recollects the whole incident, he is filled with shame and contrition. Immediately a sense of sympathy and deep concern wells up in his heart for Elizabeth and Susan. He mourns their loss:

She's gone ... be sure she is ... gone .... and little Elizabeth.

His sinful act subdues Henchard with gloominess and repentance which makes him lost "in silent thoughts". The agony and anguish of his reckless action compel him to assess and re-assess himself. On reconsideration of his act, he realises that it is really cruel of him to put Susan, a meek and docile wife, to such humiliation and shame. In a mood of repentance, he confesses that "it was of his own making, and he ought to bear it". With his guilt-ridden conscience, he enters the Church "to register an oath". Overpowered by penance and contrition Henchard kneels "upon the foot-pace" and takes a solemn oath to avoid drinking for twenty one years. The severity of his oath reveals the intensity of his suffering.

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62 MC, p. 47.
63 MC, p. 48.
64 MC, p. 49.
65 NC, p. 49.
After undergoing the pains and pangs of separation, Henchard realises the significance of his wife and daughter whom he previously considered to be a burden on him. He leaves no stone unturned to search for them. But "a certain shyness of revealing his conduct" prevented him from making "investigation with the loud hue and cry such a pursuit demanded to render it effectual". Henchard carries this search for months, but to no avail. These futile painful efforts certainly lift him somewhat above animal-selfishness and aggression. He is continuously haunted by his guilt. He keeps his oath strictly and does not touch wine even after getting power and position. This suffering has the desired effect of making him repent conscientiously. This incident renders him capable of genuine contrition. His callous impersonality, very much evident at the Weydon fair, is awakened to active sympathy for the innocent wife and daughter so much so that when Susan and Elizabeth return to him after the gap of twenty-years, he accepts them with open arms. He sacrifices his lady-love to atone for the wrongs done to Susan. Henchard tries to be as kind and courteous to her as he can possibly be. His filial love is awakened by young charming Elizabeth Jane whom he thinks to be his own daughter.

After Susan's death Henchard feels an emotional void in his life. He has already been alienated from Farfrae by his

66 MC, p. 51.
reckless and jealous behaviour. So, he thinks of establishing an emotional link with Elizabeth by telling her that he himself, not Newson, is her real father. In order to establish what he thinks to be his genuine relation with Elizabeth, he fabricates a story of getting separated from Susan and Elizabeth. In a moment of self-introspection, Henchard confesses before Elizabeth that he "was a drinking man once" and used Susan "roughly" but he promises her to "be kinder" to her than Newson was. Amidst loneliness and frustration, emptiness and alienation Henchard sees the only glimmer of hope in renewing his relations with Elizabeth. Before he could reveal his history, he undergoes much conflict and struggle in his mind "vibrating between the wish to reveal himself to her and the policy of leaving well alone" until finally he reveals himself to her as best as he can. After confession, Henchard breaks down emotionally, and feels relieved. He is so swayed by emotions that he appears "moving like a great tree in a wind". He is lost in "reposeful thought" and is glad to think that Elizabeth is his at last.

However, the joy of this victory is evanescent. Henchard is in for further sorrows, suffering, defeats and reversals. He receives the rudest shock of his life when he reads Susan's letter, stating the true parentage of

67 MC, p. 175.
69 MC, p. 175.
70 MC, p. 176.
Elizabeth. He is paralysed mentally so much so that for nearly a couple of hours he remains "unnerved and purposeless". He finds himself "like one who had half-fainted and could neither recover nor complete the swoon". This blasting disclosure "angered him like an impish trick from a fellow-creature". His career becomes completely a tissue of ironies and his destiny, a crescendo of tragic reversals, each one of which brings its own bitter recognition in its turn. His flash of joy is overpowered by a feat of anguish. He sees that letter "as if it were a window-pane through which he saw for miles". He is reminded of his own offence against Elizabeth and Susan. He is so much overwhelmed by affliction that he seems "to compress his frame as if to bear better".

This indescribable disappointment invades Henchard just as he is preparing for the supreme happiness by claiming his paternal right. His remarriage with Susan was chiefly for the sake of Elizabeth whom he took to be his own daughter, the baby girl who was in Susan's arms at the time of her sale. Now when this tragic disclosure has come as a stunning fact", the fruition of the whole scheme was such dust and ashes as this". Thus, the intensity of soul-torment induces a phase of mental prostration replaced by a fierce sense of betrayal. His love and concern for Elizabeth is reversed into hatred and indifference. He adopts an Aeschylean attitude of

71 MC, p. 178. 74 MC, p. 177.
72 MC, p. 180. 75 MC, p. 177.
73 MC, p. 179 76 MC, p. 181.
defiance in the face of this acute suffering. Henchard's pain and suffering reach their climactic intensity when he feels that a malignant fate is joining hands with hostile people in tormenting him. He becomes all the more intolerant and defiant in his behaviour. Farfrae becomes popular among the people due to his calm and calculated behaviour. Henchard sees it from a wrong premise and misconceives that Farfrae has robbed him of his popularity and position. As a matter of fact, his uncompromising rigidity of behaviour, aggressiveness and indomitable ego have estranged him from people in general and Farfrae in particular. He goes on committing mistake after mistakes. His primitive nature operating in his instinctive impulses brings about his bankruptcy. He is destroyed financially in the same move which he starts to grind Farfrae into the dust and to wash him out of business world. With the decline of his fortune, his harshness, revengefulness and cruelty become all the more patent and apparent. The sharpness of his disappointment and anxiety increases. His frustrated wrath is vented with increasing vehemence and with more obvious moral culpability on persons who appear to deserve it less and who suffer from it more intensely.

Henchard's public disgrace and bankruptcy come like a retribution. The furmity woman appears in the petty session to reveal his immoral conduct at Weydon Prior. She humiliates Henchard in the public by declaring that "he is no
better than" the furmity woman" and hence has no right to sit there in judgement upon" her. Henchard does not strike the counter blow; he rather rises higher to this occasion and confesses openly that he is actually no better than this offender, the furmity woman. This confession declares his downfall from the "ridge of prosperity and honour" and from that moment, he begins to descend "rapidly on the other side". In this way, public disgrace and humiliation awaken a moral courage and a true confession in Henchard which pave the way for further evolution of higher consciousness in him, and make him aware of the inescapability of his past deeds.

In Henchard's case, suffering proves to be the greatest mentor which teaches him self-control and discipline. He is purged of the gross instincts and animal-passions; he experiences a failure of nerve and resolve and also the intimation of sympathy with the woman's position. He is modified and changed. He has been alienated from Elizabeth due to his extremely harsh and critical behaviour. He has been callous to Lucetta, whom he threatens continually to expose her past love-relationship with him at Jersey and thus to wreck her marital bliss. When Lucetta appears before him quite pale, anxiety-ridden and sick, he is "stammered with unconcealed compunction". Thus he has compunctious visitings of nature which fill his heart with the milk of

77 MC, p. 266.
78 MC, p. 285.
79 MC, p. 323.
human kindness. At Lucetta's pathetic appeals for mercy he is "disarmed". Her appeals rouse a "feeling of supercilious pity for womankind in general", which is "intensified" by this suppliant appearing here as "the double" of Susan. He feels ashamed and to have "lost all zest and zeal to humiliate Lucetta there and then". He becomes somewhat gentle and kind to her. He realises that he has been too harsh and selfish in his behaviour with her. Lucetta's figure "so strongly revived in his soul the memory of another ill-used woman, Susan, who had stood there and then in bygone days . . . that his breast smote him for having attempted reprisals on one of a sex so weak". He feelingly promises her to send every scrap of her letters.

Henchard acts with the sincerest of his intentions. It is another thing that he happens to appoint the wrong person for this confidential and most secretive task. It is merely out of his folly and lack of foresight. As a result, Henchard, Lucetta, Farfrea and Elizabeth have to undergo boundless sorrow and grief in due course. In fact, the placidity of the whole town of Casterbridge is disturbed. The intensity of Henchard's suffering is next to none. He suffers a severe blow to his public-image. He conscientiously owns the whole responsibility. With this, he enters the whirlpool of suffering. A sense of

80 MC, p. 323 82 MC, p. 323.
81 MC, p. 323. 83 MC, p. 323.
self-degradation and self-accusation hangs heavy on him. When he comes out of this whirlpool, he experiences a sort of re-birth. He casts his ego and anger aside and goes out to bring Farfrae back home so that Lucetta may be saved, but the story of Lucetta's miscarriage is mistrusted by Fartfae who takes it to be "the frothy utterances of recklessness". He misunderstands his requests to go back home as a new trick to kill him. Farfrae takes Henchard's "villainy to be more creditable than his story". Henchard presents himself in the most humiliating manner running spasmodically after Farfrae, begging him to come back. He is "bowed down with despair at the thought that he has become the image of unscrupulous villainy" in the eyes of his former friend. Henchard cries pathetically:

But I am not what you think ... believe me Farfrae I have come entirely on your own and your wife's account.

His heart-moving appeals make no effect on Farfrae. Hence, he undergoes untold agonies and anguish and faces much humiliation and degradation which disillusion and perplex him completely.

Suffering caused by disillusionment and perplexion makes Henchard better able to penetrate the obfuscating gloom that has shrouded and obscured his faculties, rendering him incapable of understanding the softer feelings of others.

84 MC, p. 361.  
85 MC, p. 364.  
86 MC, p. 363.  
87 MC, p. 363.
The razor-edge of anguish awakens a lively and meaningful response in his heart that had become stone to all other feelings under the sway of selfishness, ego and vanity. He, now, no longer harbours any ill-will or malice against Lucetta or Farfrae. He is worried on account of Lucetta's serious illness. He feels so much concerned with Lucetta that he cannot sleep during the night and makes repeated inquiries about her health. The buffets of life make him feel the pains and pangs of other. Gradually, he learns the lesson of mutual tolerance, love and sympathy. He realises the inadequacy of his self-sufficiency and smugness and thus, grows capable of adapting himself to his reversed position. He abnegates his egoistic self and acquires the stature of a humanist. He now cares no more for his whims and eccentricities.

Henchard's hopes of life are, now, pin-pointed on the loving-care of Elizabeth, who nurses him during his illness. She forgives Henchard for his past cruelties and harshness to her. This largeness of heart and selflessness of Elizabeth bring about a tremendous change in Henchard. The effect of Elizabeth's mere presence works miracle. Henchard recovers rapidly. His attitude to life in general and Elizabeth in particular, is modified to the extent that "things now seemed to wear a new colour in his eyes". He experiences a sort of regeneration. He resolves to atone for his past follies.

88 MC, p.297.
and vices by proving himself a gentle father of a loving daughter and a better human being. When Elizabeth, tired and exhausted with night's sitting up beside Lucetta, comes to Henchard's cottage, he feels obliged to her and prepares breakfast for her with almost "housewifely care", and shows a fatherly affection so much so that she is amazed at his changed behaviour. John Paterson approximates Henchard's career at this juncture that he is "forced like Oedipus and Faust, and left to rediscover in suffering and sorrow the actuality of the moral power that he had so recklessly flouted". Henchard undergoes a humbling yet educative and ennobling, apprenticeship in human sensitivity.

Now Henchard tries strenuously to rebuild himself. At this juncture, he gets yet another crushing and shattering blow. Newson appears in Casterbridge to claim his daughter Elizabeth. Henchard is so baffled at the unexpected ironic reversal that in a flash of moment he tells "mad lies like a child", quite heedless of consequences. He dismisses Newson with a lie that Elizabeth has also died. This lie comes so spontaneously and suddenly from his mouth that Henchard himself is "amazed at what he had done". He is filled with disgust and self-contempt at the thought of cheating such a simple-minded and generous fellow as Newson.

90 MC, p. 372.
91 MC, p. 372.
Henchard is sure that Newson will reappear with the knowledge of his lie. His trick will be exposed and he will degrade himself in the eyes of Elizabeth who will detest and abhor him as a vile, debased villainous fellow. Henchard is tormented and pricked by the pangs of suspicion and conflict in his mind. He feels the loss of Elizabeth, the most precious treasure of his ruined life. He wants to seize and seal the happiness of being called father, but he realises the futility of his wishful thinking. In this way, Henchard's life becomes a saga of tears and troubles.

With the appearance of Newson, Henchard's love for Elizabeth increases all the more jealously strong. His consciousness is awakened to the extent of making him realise that he is sure to lose Elizabeth sooner or later; facts can't be hidden by lies. Henchard is filled with suicidal despair. When he goes to commit suicide, he sees his effigy floating in the river. This effigy is, in fact, the symbolic shell of a discarded-self, egoistic and selfish. It marks the completion of his renovation, casting off of the egoistic attitude, the old garments of pride and prejudice and the facades of authority and dominance. He gives up the tattered and defiant garments of his primal days to put on clean linen of love and sacrifice. His awareness is awakened by such blow and kicks of life and it endows upon him wisdom which makes him confess:
It is my own fault.\textsuperscript{92} The baffles of life have taught calm resignation and passive acceptance of life as it comes to be. He realises that he himself has alienated everyone from him. With this realisation, his anger and rebellious spirit are replaced by a stoic-endurance. The thought of his lie being exposed still haunts him and torments him. For the sake of Elizabeth, Henchard has "fettered his pride sufficiently" and "wore the garments of humility"\textsuperscript{93} by accepting the small seed and root business. Had he not had Elizabeth with him, he would never have accepted this favour from a person whom he once treated so severely and cruelly. Henchard is so completely broken by the harrowing experiences of life that the sympathy of Elizabeth seems almost "necessary to his very existence".\textsuperscript{94} He now holds the same Elizabeth "to his life's extremity",\textsuperscript{95} the presence of whom he once could not tolerate. He has undergone such a tremendous change that he now "weigh(s) an consider(s)"\textsuperscript{96} the meaning of what people say, while "a blunt setting of question would formerly had been his first instinct".\textsuperscript{97} Dedicating himself to the love and protection of Elizabeth Jane, he is "humanly reborn".\textsuperscript{98}

\textsuperscript{92} MC, p. 374. \hspace{1cm} 96 MC, p. 382.
\textsuperscript{93} MC, p. 381. \hspace{1cm} 97 MC, p. 385.
\textsuperscript{94} MC, p. 381. \hspace{1cm} 98 Elaine Showalter, 'The Unmanning of the Mayor of Casterbridge', Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Thomas Hardy ed. Dale Kramer, p.112.
At last Newson comes to expose Henchard's lie. Henchard can not summon up enough courage to face Elizabeth scolding eyes. So, before Newson reverses their relationship, he bids Elizabeth farewell and beseeches her not to forget him:

... Think of me sometimes in your future life and don't let my sins, when you know them all, cause to quite forget that though I loved late I loved'ee well. 99

Henchard accepts this self-imposed exile as a punishment for all his vices and blunders. His journey in this mood of submissive resignation shows that he has attained that higher consciousness which makes one capable of genuine contrition. In a moment of self-recognition and complete resignation, he exclaims:

My punishment is not greater than I can bear. 100

Thus, the tragic experiences of life baptise him and he emerges purified through the fire of suffering. R.H. Hutton judiciously evaluates Henchard's career and says that Hardy displays "a curious dash of stoicism in a nature so eager for sympathy and of fortitude in one so moody and gigantic." 101

Even in defeat, Henchard attains what Farfrae cannot in victory. F.R. Southerington pertinently says that Henchard "deserves admiration, because through his own criminal and

99 MC, p. 394.
100 MC, p. 361.
irresponsible actions he moves through a range of qualities from, on the one hand, a choleric enenity or irresponsible perversity to, on the other hand, a self-castigating contrition.

In Henchard's progress from moral chaos to the complete understanding of the higher values of life, he may be said to parallel the progress of man from insentience to sentience, from a savage to a civilized state. In Henchard's progress toward self-awareness and the awareness of life, enroute suffering, Hardy shows the presentiments of the struggle of entire human species to master a destiny which demands the subjection of powerful instinctive impulses. After undergoing a huge amount of suffering, Henchard realises that tranquillity can be achieved but only by the recognition that man belongs to a social organism from which all disruptive elements must be excluded. With this awakening, Henchard removes his harmful presence from the society of Casterbridge. Dale Kramer is absolutely right when he says that "throughout his decline, Henchard becomes progressively more aware of, and more tolerant of other's wishes". Henchard's growing awareness reaches its perfection in his last journey from Casterbridge to the Heath where he goes to die. Henchard returns to Casterbridge to offer Elizabeth a marriage-gift with the hope of being reconciled to her if he forgives him. However, he receives reproaches and rebukes instead of forgiveness, yet he does

103 Dale Kramer *Thomas Hardy: The Forms of Tragedy*, p. 74.
not feel ill. He knows that he himself has shattered the fine flower of all the rest, Elizabeth's trust in him.

Henchard accepts her rebukes without any grudge. He is rather pained to see Elizabeth disturbed on his account. He implores her:

Don't Ye distress yourself on my account ... I'll never trouble'ee again, Elizabeth-Jane no, not to my dying day. 105

Henchard's will and testament expresses his desire for self-effacement which, in terms of the rhythm of sacrifice, is pure altruism. He lives through the harrowing experiences with conscious and clear-eyed endurance. Henchard who was stunned into dismay at the first blow of sorrow, now, realises the inevitability of it. After undergoing the worst from of Nemesis -- the inward suffering -- Henchard attains the wisdom of life. He can now see far into the realities of life. Despite his boundless capacity for suffering, Henchard's heart cannot bear the unimpaired intensity of pain and anguish any longer. So, he leaves the world and goes all alone to die, but before his death, he comes out of the cobwebs of vanity, pride and prejudice which made him wage a struggle for consideration 106 throughout his life. The process of the tragic taming of the heroic will, and bending and breaking of his savage defiance is complete.

104 Trevor Johnson, Thomas Hardy, p. 115.
The final vision that Henchard attains is a statement of Hardy's faith in the wisdom and compassion man can derive from tragic suffering. In this way, during the struggleful course of life, Henchard rises, paradoxically, from the status of a volcanic stuff to the nobility of an altruist.

Hardy displays great care in the ramifications of his plot to show how cause and effect are linked on an extensive and complex-scale and how our sorrows are the fruits of our own erring conduct. Hardy alludes to the "intangible cause" and demonstrates the linking of events which lead us to tragic predicaments. In *The Woodlanders*, as in other novels, Hardy portrays that "man is a part of the natural world and that each of his acts, as it has innumerable antecedents, will be fruitful of immeasurable consequents, for the web of the world is ever weaving". It is our ignorance of antecedents and consequents in such a net-work that leads to untold unhappiness and misery. The doctrine of cause and effect and consequent suffering is carried out in *The Woodlanders* with a mastery over it. Dale Kramer comments on the ceaseless suffering of all characters in the novel:

> The despair in *The Woodlanders* permeates all human relationships and possibility of learning from experience can be thought of as continuance of the tone of Henchard's enlightened last will and testament. 108

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107 *Life*, p.
The novel can best be seen as a web of strands linked to each other by cause and effect.

Grace comes out to be the worst sufferer, and in her case, the promotive functioning of the irrevocable law of retribution and realisation comes to be highlighted. Grace has some specific and ingrained goodness of heart. She is innocent, trusting and tractable, and the seeds of her suffering and regeneration lay dormant in these very positive virtues of her character. She has confused ambitions and hazy aspiration, and is quite ill-attuned to the workings of the practical world of sordid realities. Her impracticability and divided consciousness drag her into the mire of indescribable agony and anguish.

From the very beginning, Grace becomes a victim of her father's social ambition. He considers her to be an inanimate vehicle for the fulfilment of his ambition and aspirations of social advancement by higher education. Unwittingly her father plays with her tender sentiments by adjusting and readjusting her according to his own whims and fancies. That Grace has to suffer a lot at the boarding school due to her low social-standard is evident from her emotional out-burst:

I have never got any happiness outside Hintock that I know of, and I have suffered many a heartache at being sent away. 109

Her painful words reveal the depth of her suffering which she never voiced before due to the submissiveness of her nature. Her touching out-burst makes Melbury, her father, realise that the "attainments whose completion had been a labour of years, and a severe tax upon his purse" are not valued by Grace's essential simplicity and inherent rusticity that long for the life of a Marty South among the woods. She bemoans the loss of her identity as a "woodland girl" which creates a sense of "ontological insecurity" in her. This super-imposed identity almost inevitably has a disorienting effect on her.

As Grace is forced in the matter of education, likewise, she is made a toy in the matter of matrimony. Without ever asking Grace to give her own opinions and feelings, Melbury makes a plan to marry her to Giles as a penance to the "terrible wrong done to Gile's father and to get rid of "a weight on (his) conscience". Grace well knows her father's plan and sees Giles as her would-be life partner, but her father, a man of wayward impulses and nebulous consciousness, drifts like a wave in a stormy ocean. He brings unhappiness upon himself, his daughter and Giles by aspiring vicariously through Grace to a socially prestigious but morally corrupt world of Fitzpiers and Mrs. Charmond. He becomes highly ambitious, and the idea to rise socially by marrying Grace in some noble family becomes almost an

obsession in his mind. Grace is too tractable to resist and even if she resists, the resistance is so mild that it is easily overcome by vehement arguments of her father. Consequently, Grace has to undergo a lot of mental suffering. She is pricked by her conscience and many times she bursts into tears under the heavy weight of guilty-conscience and many times she bursts into tears under the heavy weight of guilty-conscience:

I am promised to him, father; and I cannot help thinking that in honour I ought to marry him whenever I do marry. 113

In fact, Grace experiences herself to be in a great dilemma. Her education has taken her out of the Hintock ways; mentally she is superior to the people of Hintock but she belongs to that class, dangling between two worlds -- the world of Giles and the world of Fitzpiers, she belongs to none. Her dilemma arises out of the sharp difference between these two worlds - between social distinction with corruption and penury with moral rectitude. Even her myopic father can see that Grace is "in mid-air between two storeys of Society." 114 Her predicament is that she combines "modern nerves with primitive feelings" 115 in her and tries to belong to both the world -- 'the traditional, isolated world of Hintock and the mobile, cultivated world of education and

113 WL, p. 80.
114 WL, p. 235.
115 WL, p. 276.
refinement outside Hintock. Her exaltation at having developed an acquaintance with the aristocratic Mrs. Charmond further reinforces her choice of splendid life, but at the same time, she is torn by the pangs of conflict and confesses before Giles:

I love dear old Hintock, and the people in it fifty times better than all the continent. 116

It is this dichotomy in Grace and her inability to reconcile her opposing tendencies that become the cause of her hazy perception that, ultimately, brings sorrows and suffering for this gentle decile and submissive girl.

Working on the concept of interdependence of the lives and work of all the members in a community, Hardy displays how one character suffers due to the wrong of others. This interdependence in society becomes "a great web of human-doing" in which there are no "lonely courses" that form "a detached design" but are "a part of the pattern in the great web". 117 It is this inter-dependence because of which one wrong action brings consequences that sweep the whole community. Melbury's ambition not only ruins the life of Grace but also pushes Giles and himself into the mire of

untold agony and anguish. It is Melbury who "sows in Grace heart cravings for social position". In a confused, perplexed and non-plussed state, she finds herself engaged to "the handsome coercive, irresistible Fitzpiers". Soon after their engagement, her "girlish sensibilities" and tender feelings are hurt by his "irreverent views of marriage". A premonition of a tragic future endows upon her mind a "helpless immobility". She is stung by pangs of suspicion and jealousy when she sees Suke Damson coming out of his house in the early hours of dawn. She is troubled almost to the verge of despair. But Fitzpiers coaxes her again by narrating a concocted story of tooth-ache which makes Suke visit him. Grace is so gentle and docile that she feels guilty for mistrusting his fidelity.

Soon after marriage, the process of disillusionment and suffering begins. Grace's life becomes a pool of sorrow and suffering. The discovery of Fitzpiers's illicit relations with Mrs. Charmond and Suke Damson comes as a shattering-shock to Grace. Fitzpiers, whose intellect and superficial refinement once captivated Grace's heart, is now despised and hated by her. She undergoes indescribably agony during this period. The thought of Fitzpiers loving Suke Damson, Mrs. Charmond and her simultaneously "sickened

118. WL, p. 87.
119. WL, p. 155.
120. WL, p. 159.
121. WL, p. 159.
her heart". She finds herself bewildered and at a loss to understand "such double and treble-barrelled hearts".\textsuperscript{122} She watches helplessly with jaundiced eyes her husband going to meet Mrs. Charmond at Sheston on the mare presented to her by her faithful lover Giles.

Grace, undoubtedly, suffers much, but she acquires strength and spirit from her afflictions. She feels herself to be stronger and of "tougher fibre".\textsuperscript{123} Agony and anguish that have become the permanent part of her daily life make her assess and reassess her past decisions. While peeping into her own heart, she finds that "her early interest in Giles Winterborne" has been "revitalized into growth by her widening perceptions".\textsuperscript{124} A close scrutiny of her own inner being reveals that "his homeliness no longer offended her acquired tastes" and she discovers a "never ceasing pity in her soul for Giles ... whom she had wronged".\textsuperscript{125} Out of the white heat of suffering, Grace comes out to acquire her own personality, her own opinions and judgement. When Melbury asks her to go to Mrs. Charmond to appeal her to release her husband from her bondage, Grace is hurt and declines to go there to beg for mercy saying:

I don't wish to be more humiliated. If I have anything to bear I can bear it in silence. \textsuperscript{126}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{122} WL, p. 197.
\item \textsuperscript{123} WL, p. 197.
\item \textsuperscript{124} WL, p. 206.
\item \textsuperscript{125} WL, p. 206.
\item \textsuperscript{126} WL, p. 208.
\end{itemize}
Grace shows an undaunted spirit in the face of suffering. In fact, she is regenerated into the initiation of a better human being; she is chastised and emboldened by her unmerited suffering. The traumatic and tragic experiences of married life prove a blessing in disguise in as much as they make her courageous and independent. She refuses to be a toy in the hands of her reckless father. She has been tossing about in troubled water of married life and sailing precariously through the floods of passions and confused aspirations without being equipped to steer towards a premeditated direction. But now, after drinking the saline water of tears, she submits herself to circumstances as revolt against them appears to be futile. Her acceptance of the sordid realities of life indicates the thoroughness of the development of her personality. Now she is bold enough to stand up to her father and criticise his treatment with her. She gains strength out of her affliction. Now she can therefore, confront trials and tribulations with magnanimity.

After Fitzpiers's elopement with Mrs. Charmond, Grace becomes almost hysterical and undergoes long fits of depression. Her father gives her a hope that she will again be a free woman as divorce is possible under new law. This renewed hope cheers up her depressed and sorrowful spirit. Giles comes to notice a remarkable positive change in Grace's attitude under this probation of suffering. She
tells Giles when he calls her a "proud damsel".

Affliction has taken all that out of me.
Perhaps I am too far the other way now. 127

The trials and tribulations of life has left her as only "a frail phantom of her former self". 128 Here once again Myopic Melbury's "over-strained-mind" conjures up "an extravagant dream" and rouses hopes in the tender hearts of Grace and Giles with his "childish enthusiasm", 129 but she is benumbed and stultified by the powerful stroke of tragic revelation that divorce is an impossibility. Grace is so paralysed mentally that she adopts a "pensive intramural existence of the self-constituted nun". 130

Fitzpiers' re-entry disturbs the whole web of human lives in Hintock. Grace is bewildered to learn that Fitzpiers is coming to reclaim her as his wife. She gets nervous and the feverish nervousness of hers, the result of tumultuous events of her life, alarms the whole household. Hardy says:

In the darkness of the apartment to which she flew...from a corner a quick breathing was audible from this impressionable creature ... doomed ... to be numbered again the distressed, and to take her scourgings to their exquisite extremity. 131

Unable to face Fitzpiers, she leaves the house and goes out

129 WT, p. 257.
in the woods where she takes shelter in Giles' hut. She appears to be "a perfectly defenceless creature conditioned by such harsh circumstances". Giles vacates his hut for her and himself sleeps outside in rain and storm. Grace is tortured by pangs of conflicts, her conscience pricks her for depriving Giles of his own hut in such inclement weather, but her timid conventionality and narrow morality prohibits her from sharing the hut with him. Under the heavy weight of guilt, Grace breaks down:

O Giles — I yearn to let you in, but — you know what is in my mind because you know me so well.

When Giles does not appear for two days, Grace is filled with a strange apprehension. She conjures up dreadful and horrid visions of Giles dying outside in rain and storm and is overwhelmed by an intolerable sense of self-accusation for selfishly and unscrupulously expelling "the entertainer from his own house". After undergoing torments of mental conflicts for long, she finally renounces her feminine "shame-facedness" and conventionality and cries out to call Giles inside the hut:

O Giles, — come to me dearest. I don't mind what they say, or what they think of us any more.

Hearing low mutterings in the bushes in response to her cry, she comes out with a lantern in her hands. To her sorrow,

132 WL, p. 281.
133 WL, p. 286.
134 WL, p. 287.
135 WL, p. 276.
136 WL, p. 287.
she finds Giles lying unconscious in wet clothes. She bursts into tears over her own responsibility for this tragic predicament of a self-sacrificing loving soul:

O my Giles, what have I done to you. 137

Giles' tragic end distracts her and makes her writhe in agony, a fact to which Hardy himself testifies:

Grace was wild with sorrow — bitter with all that had befallen her ... with the cruelties that had attacked her ... with life ... with Heaven. 138

Her heart and mind are completely shaken by this tragic death. Now, she is left only a bundle of nerves.

The harrowing experiences of life make Grace stronger, wiser and more practical. After having a dip into the bitter water of sorrow and suffering, she comes out to be "a new woman — a creature of more ideas and dignity, and above all, more assurance than the original Grace had ben capable of". 139 Previously she was only an emblem of her father, simply an echo of his mind and ambition, without any individual identity. But now she comes to develop her own ideas. Her deep-seated belief in her father's "sound judgement and knowledge" 140 is completely shaken. She emerges submissive stoical and with a personality of her own out of the "Valley of Humiliation". 141 Gradually cool sanity supersedes the heat of passion. Grace begins to look Fitzpiers as tolerable in his absence. When Grace receives a

138 WL, p. 297. 141 WL, p. 252
139 WL, p. 261.
letter from Fitzpiers asking for her forgiveness for his past follies and frailties, she realises that now Fitzpiers is a changed man. Moreover, by now she has come to recognise that an unbreakable bond unites her with her husband and it is her social duty to join him. When she reads the marriage-service in the prayer book, she is "horrified and appalled at her recent off handedness".\textsuperscript{142} She is bewildered at the thought — "how far a person's conscience might be bound by vows made without, at the time, a full recognition of their force" and "whether God really joins them together".\textsuperscript{143} Grace, a girl "of strong devotional sentiment"\textsuperscript{144} is instigated by this revelations to join her husband. When on appointed day, she sees Fitzpiers "writhing and rocking himself over the sorry accessories of her",\textsuperscript{145} she realises that "a man who could suffer as(he) was suffering must have a tender regard for" her. Thus, through genuine tears of common sorrow and suffering, they are united again.

\textit{Tess of d'Urberville} a tale of tears written in tears, is perhaps the most touching novel of Nineteenth century. As in other novels, in this novel also, Hardy's preoccupation is with the evolution of human consciousness which has to pay a price for its development in the form of conflicts within itself and outside under the urgencies of

\textsuperscript{142} WL, p. 327.  
\textsuperscript{143} WL, p. 327.  
\textsuperscript{144} WL, p. 357.  
\textsuperscript{145} WL, p. 328.  
\textsuperscript{146} WL, p. 329.
life. The novel is, in the words of Irving Howe, "a pilgrim's progress, a journey in which each place of rest becomes a test for the soul". In fact, Tess is a record of the stages in terms of upward growth and comprehensive openness that include advancement from illusion to reality, from self to selflessness and from ignorance to knowledge enroute suffering. The plot of the novel enfolds this process of crystalization of blurred vision and enlightenment of myopic-self of the protagonist in terms of understanding and judgement.

Tess is a classical example of suffering caused by the inevitable working of consequences. Experiences of suffering physical and mental pain fall to her share due to her myopic self. Moreover, she is an exclusive type of personality, extremely sensitive, highly emotional, thoroughly simple, straight-forward and extraordinarily altruistic. Tess is tied to her parents and feels bound by great emotional ties with other children in the family. Right from the beginning, she is under great stress due to unfavourable family circumstances. She is born in a family where, owing to a complex set of circumstances, gloom has descended. Her parent's illusionary and irresponsible attitude adds fuel to the fire of adverse circumstances. Her

father's drunken behaviour and his vainglorious efforts to reclaim their lost glory and their former aristocratic ancestry make Tess's heart ache with excessive pain.

Tess is forced to take the load of bee-hives to Casterbridge market, starting at two O'Clock in the morning while her father sleeps off the effect of Mrs. Rolliver's strong ale. When she is startled out of her sleep, she sees a horrifying scene which makes her shiver to the bone. After the death of family horse Tess is filled with remorse and guilt. She holds herself responsible for the death of the horse which was the only source of income for the family. In Tess's case, Hardy's definition of tragedy as "gradually closing in of a situation that comes of ordinary human passions, prejudices and ambitions by reason of the characters taking no troubles to ward off the disastrous events produced by the said passions, prejudices and ambitions" proves to be true. In the first phase of her life, as in the last, Tess' altruistic impulses become the cause of her suffering.

It is her guilt complex that stirs Tess out of home to seek assistance and thus, eventually get involved in an endless chain of circumstances which dole out a lot of pain and suffering to her. Unwittingly, she is led into the fateful embraces of her seducer who is an embodiment of

148 Life, p. 220.
hedonism. Alec's amorous advances cause great mental suffering to Tess, who feels offended and irritated but at the same time, helpless. On the fateful day of her seduction, she is in a state of physical exhaustion and terrified by a sudden attack by Car Ditch on the way back to Trantridge. Her "confused surrender"\(^{149}\) comes about when she is half-asleep and is subdued by a sense of gratitude to Alec for helping her parents with a new horse. In a state of bewilderment and confusion as if dragged by "the blue narcotic haze",\(^{150}\) Tess is violated by Alec and a "coarse pattern is traced upon her feminine tissue, sensitive as gossamer and practically blank as snow as yet".\(^{151}\)

Soon Tess comes to discover that she is with Alec's child. With this discovery, she finds herself in the throes of endless suffering. Her conscience pricks her for being a part of the whorage. The idea of being the mother of Alec's child whom she does not love distracts her soul and destroys her peace of mind. She leaves the place to face disgrace and condemnation. On the way back to Marlott, the words of the stranger heighten her guilt complex. A horrible war is waged within her soul, making her think herself an adulteress. Tess burst into sobbing in the arms of her mother and tells her how she became a victim of the "adroit advantages he (Alec) took of her helplessness".\(^{152}\)

149  *Tess*, p. 90.  
150  *Tess*, p. 47.  
151  *Tess*, p. 90.  
152  *Tess*, p. 100.
questionings make her all the more sad and sorrowful. Describing her depressed and distracted self, Hardy writes:

...She saw before her a long and stony highway which she had to tread, without aid, and with little sympathy. Her depression was then terrible, and she could have hidden herself in a tomb.153

Tess has to suffer much social criticism and condemnation so much so that she grows sick at heart and leaves going out even to the church. Her sense of sin becomes so deep in her that even in the lap of nature, she feels herself "a figure of guilt intruding into the haunts of innocence".154 She adopts complete isolation and ostracism as an act of penance and penitence for her sin. She chastises herself severely by abandoning all sorts of recreation and amusement. Many long and lonely months of hard penance pass by before she gives birth to a baby. She undergoes the pains of being called an unwed mother. Hardy is perfectly right when he comments:

Most of the misery had been generated by her conventional aspect, and not by her innate sensations. 155

The sad and tragic experiences of these two years change simple Tess into a complex woman, awakened, wise and experienced. Each stone thrown at her to wound her sensibility becomes a tonic for her mental health. She becomes more firm and steadfast in her resolve to come out

153 Tess, p. 102.
154 Tess, p. 104.
155 Tess, p. 111.
triumphant out of the fire of suffering. She is worried and agonised on account of her child's illness. With every increase of child's breathing, the young mother's worry and mental tension reciprocally multiplies. Utterly helpless, she prays to God for mercy on her child. Among such confusion and distress, to her dismay, she realises that the baby has not been baptised and if it dies without that ceremony, there would be no salvation for him. She cannot bear the thought of her child dying unbaptised and thus thrown to the bottom of hell. When the Vicar refused to baptise the illegitimate child, she, in horror and bewilderment, wakes up all her brothers and sisters from their sleep and herself performs the ceremony with them gathered around as congregation. Before dawn, the child passes away, leaving sorrowful mother in utter loneliness. The death of the child breaks her virtually so much so that "in her misery, she rocks herself upon the bed". Agonised by her conventionality, she, in her imagination, sees her unbaptised, illegitimate child consigned to the nethermost corner of hell and "the arch-fiend tossing it with his three-pronged fork". In his authorial comments, Hardy refers to the agonised and perturbed state of this conventional mother:

156 *Tess*, p. 113.

157 *Tess*, p. 113.
Aggrieved and agitated Tess faces another problem—a Christian burial to her baby. In spite of her heart touching appeals, the hypocritical and merciless Vicar refuses to give a Christian burial to her child. Feeling quite helpless, she buries him in that corner of the Church-yard where bastards and unbaptised people are buried. The unsympathetic and indifferent attitude of the representative of God shocks her to the bone. She finds him, quite contrary to her expectations, hypocritical, completely devoid of the milk of human kindness, and far from the Christian principles of charity and loving-kindness. This shock makes her undergo a tremendous change. Her faith in the church is shattered fully and boldly and frankly, she condemns the Vicar:

I don't like you, and I'll never come to your Church no more. 159

This sorrowful phase of her life passes away, consequently leaving her maturer, wiser and more reflective. Though she is broken by the crushing burden of agonies and anguish she undergoes, she emerges stronger out of these trials and tribulations. Now she possesses "the soul of a woman whom the turbulent experiences of the last one year or two had

158 Tess, p. 113. 159 Tess, p. 117.
quite failed to demoralize". Even now she feels the pulse of hope warm within her and this new vigour makes her suffer further.

In the hope of a new happy life, Tess sets out for Telbothays Dairy Farm, but still a worse future awaits her there. Tess' misfortune is that she lives in a world where men have either sensual or spiritual feelings towards women, but not both at the same time. At Trantridge she becomes the victim of Alec's sexual brutality whereas at Talbothays she becomes a helpless victim of Angel's ethereal idealism and intellectual fastidiousness. Tess gets the worst of suffering at the hands of Angel whom she loves more than she loves her own life. For a long time, there wages a terrible war within her passions; she struggles against her love for Angel, but she is from head to toe in love with him. She cannot thwart her impulses as "every see-saw of her breath, every wave of her blood every pulse singing in her ears" compel her for "reckless inconsiderate acceptance of him". During her courtship, Tess faces a dilemma. She vacillates between to disclose or not to disclose her past history to Angel. She is always doubtful about her life with Angel if she agrees to marry him. Under the pangs of skepticism, Tess suffers the worst of agonies. Finally, she resolves to tell him and makes many un-successful efforts to reveal her past

160 Tess, p. 119.
161 Tess, p. 201.
162 Tess, p. 201.
to him. But every time she is discouraged by Angel till the fateful day of their wedding comes. Prompted and encouraged by Angel's confession of his "eight and forty hours dissipation with a stranger"163 Tess unlocks the story of her seduction and the birth and death of her child, considering it the most appropriate time to lighten her heart of the burden of her past life.

After disclosing the story of her seduction Tess' life takes another tragic turn. She, at once, finds herself engulfed in the greatest disaster of her life. Quite contrary to her expectations, Angel's attitude is changed into rigidity and harshness. In spite of his own sin of the same nature, Angel reacts to her confession with such priggish shock and virtuous horror that she is taken aback and stunned. She becomes the victim of the double standard of morality. Tess suffers much on account of Angel's imaginary nature as she has suffered on account of her parents' illusionary nature in her early life. Angel proves himself to be, as Duffin says,"a man like a statue of frozen air, pure spirit of intellect, a fiery essence ...who, at the first sound of whisper of sin, grows colder and harder than stone, merciless as winter skies, scarce human".164 Angel's ambivalent attitude and his obsession with physical purity become a uniquely important determinant of Tess's tragedy.

163 Tess, p. 256.
164 H.C. Duffin, Thomas Hardy, p.79.
Hardy aptly comments:

In considering what Tess was not, he overlooked what she was, and forgot that the defective can be more than the entire.165

Tess reaches the receiving end of the sting and the lash. Her face change from pink to white and then pale as if her whole frame were stiffening with the pain of the sting she has received from Angel's harsh rebuking. She feels a new terrified recoil under a lash never experienced before. Angel's reticence proves to be worse than Alec's seduction. His idealism leads him to dangerous sentimentalisation of Tess and in the process, he loses his humanity and becomes more callous and brutal than Alec does with his sensuality and animalism. Christopher Walbank pertinently touches the cause of the tragic plight of Tess when he says that she is a "natural girl who suffers at the hands of the unnatural".166 Rosalind Miles attributes Tess's suffering to Angel's fractured idealism and says that he is "the author of this emotional devastation" of Tess as he "plunges off into an ill-judged and hopeless enterprise in further pursuit of those half-baked intellectual convictions which too often seem but a rationalization of his imperfectly understood emotional needs".167 Tess's pains and sorrows of life are aggrevated by the follies and fallacies of Angel whereas they could have been sweetened by his large-heartedness,

165 Tess, p. 300.
166 Christopher Walbank, Thomas Hardy, p.154.
167 Rosalind Miles, "The women of Wessex", The novels of Thomas Hardy ed. Anne Smith, p.39.
loving-kindness, sanity and compassion, which he could, perhaps, have done with a little of Alec's unreflecting animality. Leaving Tess to unknown destiny, Angel parts from her giving her strict instructions to follow. Thus, once again, Tess's soul is put to test and trials which succeed only in making her more firm in her resolve and unflinching in her will to live.

The adverse circumstances and harrowing experiences bring a tragic recognition in Tess that there can be no escape from her past which follows her life like a ghost. Suffering proves to be a spiritual acquisition, a secular mentor which teaches her that one has to reap what one sows, and there can be no denying the consequences of one's commitments. A new consciousness that her miseries would be ever lasting arises in her. In fact, the moments of deception and loss become the strongest points from where her heroism begins. Though the crushing experiences have almost baffled her, very soon she regains her vigour and vitality and recovers from fits of depression.

At Flintcomb Ash, Tess sinks into a dumb-passivity, totally pre-occupied with the immediate business. Life at Flintcomb Ash threatens to make her repudiate reflection in the grinding actuality of her hardships. In this "region of yellow grain and pale soil", Tess is transformed into a corpse working mechanically without ever thinking about it.

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168 *Tess*, p. 415.
She is appointed at the threshing machine which keeps up a despotic demand upon the endurance of her muscles and nerves. Physical exhaustion and mental torture by the employer are so intensified that she becomes acquainted with all sort of suffering man has ever undergone. Her suffering is so heightened that Tess is bewildered at the new spasm of pain and anguish. She decides to meet Angel's parents to seek their help. But ill-luck still dogs her foot-steps. She meets Angel's egregious brothers and Mercy Chant. She mistakenly estimates the Vicar by her sons. Hardy aptly calls this wrong judgement and "faminine loss of courage" as the "greatest misfortune of her life".169 She would definitely have won the sympathies of Mrs. and Mr. Clare, but she gives way to her misgivings.

A trap is waiting for Tess to be ensnared in on her way back to Flintcomb Ash. She is spotted by her early seducer Alec, who abandons his jolly idea of preaching and resumes the old jaunty slap-dash guise, fully intent on winning Tess back to him. He chases her persistently and offers to marry her. Tess is torn between her duty to Angel on the one hand, and the allurements and coaxing of Alec on the other hand. In her desperation, utter poverty and wretchedness, she waits for Angel to come to her rescue. She becomes terribly afraid of Alec's renewed amorous advances. Her appeals to Angel to save her from "What threatens her"170

bring no response. Harsh realities of life, her financial crisis and the eviction of her family from the old house make Tess rationalise that she has been badly treated by her husband though she does not deserve it. Along with her own suffering, she sees the wretchedness and starvation of her family. Douglas Brown touches the bottom of Tess's agonised heart and says that Tess is in such a suffocating state of mind that she is "unable to speak and unable to rest." The more she seeks to escape, the more she gets entangled and entrapped into the web of suffering which life has woven around her. She realises the inescapability of pains and pangs of existence. Her hope that the basic magnanimity of Angel's nature will bring him back to her proves futile. She is hard pressed by the horrid and critical situation of her evicted orphan family. Pain and sufferings reach their climactic intensity at Kingsbere Church where Tess, only conscious of the wretchedness of her family camped outside in the open, takes the greatest decision of her life. Despite her boundless capacity for suffering, her heart is now unable to bear the unimpaired intensity of pain and anguish caused by helplessness and poverty of her family. Alec offers them a security of life if Tess agrees to be his mistress. Finally her endurance and resistance is spent. She sacrifices her Ideal at the altar of Real. She is awakened

to a consciousness by her altruistic impulses that the alleviation of human suffering is the only attainable ultimate good this insignificant life can achieve.

Tess remains with Alec literally as "a kept woman". She ceases to be a human-being and becomes a robot; she experiences a divisiveness within herself — soul and body are separated. Her life becomes so mechanical that when Angel meets her at Sandbourne, he can not recognise her, and finds that his original Tess had spiritually ceased to recognise the body before him as hers — allowing it to drift, like a corpse upon the current, in a direction dissociated from its living will. Tess is torn by conflict in her mind. After a terrible war within her soul, she stabs Alec in a desperate effort to kill the situation. She knows that Alec is a wall in the way of her union with Angel and before she joins him, this wall is to be demolished. This desperate act shows the depth of Tess's love for Angel. After a brief reconciliation with Angel, "Tess's terrestrial journey ends at the scaffold" as Michael Millgate describes. Before death, Tess has achieved the perfect vision of life. She offers to be hanged as she does not want to overlive the newly gained fulfillment. She knows love to be transitory, so she wants to die when she is at the zenith of her happiness. Passing through the fire of

suffering throughout her life, Tess has become perfectly wise, practical and cognizant about the ways and means of this world. That is why she dies with a calm serenity, submissiveness and resignation. Though her life has been a saga of tears, a tale of troubles and trials, nevertheless she maintains her loving-kindness and altruism upto the very end of her life which reminds her of her sister Liza-Lu in whom she sees an extension of her own life.

The concept of Evolution of Consciousness through experiences enroute suffering finds ample illustration in Jude the Obscure, the final word on this theme by Hardy. Suffering proves to be a secular mentor and spiritual acquisition, imparting truth of life to myopic, egoistic and erring human beings. Jude, the protagonist, suffers untold agonies and anguish throughout his brief existence in this world. Suffering performs its purgatorial function in the case of Jude also. Having experienced the unabated anguish and unmerited grief, he comes out as one awakened, enlightened and mature human being sympathetic and large-hearted.

Living in a dreary, renovated North Wessex village with a cynical reluctant aunt as an orphan boy, Jude feels his existence as a burden on others. Aunt Drusilla's glances are "like slaps on the face". He is extremely sensitive.

175 JO, p. 17.
and highly reflective, and it is sure from the very beginning that the boy is born to "ache a good deal before the fall of curtain upon his unnecessary life". Even at the age of eleven, Jude's face wears "the fixity of a thoughtful child who has felt the pricks of life somewhat before his time".

To begin with, the merciless Farmer Troutham gives him a hard thrashing and beats him monstrously with the same clacker "swinging his slim frame round him at arm's length" when Judge lets the birds to eat the rooks. Tired of his punitive task, he leaves him with a warning never to be seen there again. The poor child is shaken to the depth of his soul for being disgraced in such a manner. Being sensitive, he is so afflicted that he is filled with a suicidal despair. With tearful eyes and sorrowful heart, he sees life "glaring, garish(ing) and rattling". He is much agonised to see that "nature's logic" is "to horrid"—"mercy towards one set of creatures (is) cruelty towards another" and this vague realisation "sickened his sense of harmony".

"Orphaned and rejected", his tender heart pines for the love of someone who can give him a balmy touch of loving hand. When he does not find solace in human beings, he pinpoints his hope on Christmister in which "the yearning of his

“heart” finds “something to anchor on, to cling to.” Unscrupulous and brute Dr. Vilbert exploits Jude's passion for learning. He agrees to give him his old grammar book and also to teach him the first lesson if he recommends his golden ointment, life-drops and female pills at every house in the village. For fifteen days, Jude runs about in the whole village recommending his medicines. He carries out his assignment enthusiastically and honestly "Walking miles hither and thither among the surrounding hamlets as the physicians agent in advance." With a throbbing heart ready to receive his expected gift from the doctor, he waits for hours, but when the doctor comes, his dreams are shattered into pieces. The doctor, with a view to exploit him further, says that he will give the grammar book only if he brings six-written orders for the purchase of medicines. But his wounded heart and dwindled hopes don't allow him to believe the deceiver. The agony of broken hopes and smashed expectations has taught him the lesson that he is not to take the world at face value. Hardy writes:

He was an unsophisticated boy, but the gift of sudden insight which is sometimes couched to children showed him all at once what shaddy humanity the quack was made. There was to be an intellectual light from this source. The leaves dropped from the imaginary crown of laurel; he turned to gate, leant against it, and cried bitterly.

Thus, Jude gets the first lesson of practical life with a painful realisation that the world is not so honest and simple.

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182 JO, p.30. 184 JO, p. 34. 183 JO, p. 30.
as he suppose it to be and things are likely to turn worse for him. This severe blow of treachery to his sensitive soul teaches him to be self-sufficient as far as possible.

The second blow comes to Jude in the form of buxom-bosomy Arabella who awakens him to the fourth dimension — sex. Guided by his emotions and instinct, he experiences a momentary flash of intelligence and a dumb-announcement of affinity pose between the two. The dominance of emotion over reason is, thus, conspicuously established and a terrible way is waged between his body and mind. In the clutches of powerful sexual impulses, he feels that "a compelling arm of extra-ordinary muscular power ... seized hold of him". He writhes in pain under its all absorbing influence. Finally, he marries Arabella under the impression that she is pregnant.

Then, the process of disillusionment starts followed by a bitter realisation that brings remorse, repentance and agony in its wake. Jude grieves over the catastrophic overthrow of his intellectual aspirations. He is shocked to the depth of his being to know that the coming-baby is a myth. He is crestfallen at the revelation that he was led to copulation only to be forced to marry under false pregnancy. He comes to realise painfully that he has been condemned to a life-long penalty for "the weaknesse of the moment". The

185 10, p. 49.
186 10, p. 73.
marriage bond with an incompatible and tricky companion seems to be "galling" his heart and mind "devilishly". 187 With a sorrowful heart, Jude reflects that something is wrong with our social system and that his temporary sexual impulses would not have been a fatal gin but for society's standards of morals by which these sexual impulses are concretised in the sacrament of marriage. His heart is filled with contrition and self-accusation at the thought that he has degraded himself by such a union. He experiences himself "caught in a gin which would cripple him ... for the rest of a life time". 188 Finally, he parts company with his wife in bitterness and coldness of heart when he comes to know that Arabella has auctioned his photograph also the first token of love, which he presented her with tenderest feelings and a loving heart. This action of hers murdered his sentiments for her. In this context, Hardy comments:

The utter death of every tender sentiment in his wife, as brought home to him by this mute and undesigned evidence of her sale of his portrait and gift, was the conclusive little stroke required to demolish all sentiments in him. 189

Jude determines to "battle with his evil star" 190 and resume his scholastic path. He goes to Christminster in order to achieve his intellectual ambitions. However, Jude realises that his coming to Christminster is simply a movement out of the fire into the frying pan. He faces the

187 JO, p. 73. 188 JO, p. 68. 189 JO, p. 78. 190 JO, p. 80.
worst lot there. All his expectations and hopes are dwindled
and dashed to the ground by the powerful stroke of sordid
reality. To his utter shock, he finds Christminster to have
changed its colours and contours for him. From the very
beginning, Jude is sure to suffer the failure of his
Christminster-dreams because:

His dreams were as gigantic as his surroundings
were small. 191

After drinking the bitter water of depression and
disappointment he realises that Christminster is not for him.
He writes letters to five selected heads of colleges only to
receive tardy, insipid and practical advice that he should
try to improve himself in his own profession without
bothering about intellect or learning. In a cold sweat of
terror, he sees his much aspired dream blown off to the wind
in a single kick.

Christminster leads Jude into the arms of Sue and
their meeting proves to be fatal to them as well as to all
those connected with them in one way or the other. Once
under the sway of Sue's irresistible intellectual and
physical charms, he becomes involved in a whirlpool of sorrow
and intense inward suffering. The very consciousness of her
"living presence stimulated him". 192 Once again he feels
hypnotised, as she exercises a baneful effect on his

191 JO, p. 27.
192 JO, p. 94.
personality. Now onwards, he is engaged in a deadly war between flesh and spirit. In fact, he is a noble intellectual in whom flesh is as much a part of him as intellect. He tries to keep himself away from Sue who is all spirit and no flesh, but he cannot resist the temptation. At Shaston, he realises and acknowledges that "human was more powerful in him than the divine".193

Jude finds in Sue an anchorage to his pining heart, but that anchorage is also snatched when she gets engaged to Phillotson. This revelation comes as crude and rude shock to his sensitive heart. He is driven almost mad with suffering and clenches his teeth in misery. Distressed by the wreck of one dream after another, he becomes "melancholy mad".194 Frustration of his intellectual aspiration has already come as a "hard slap after ten years of labour", but when he finds Sue snatched from him by Phillotson, he gets benumbed with grief and dismay. Mentally and emotionally, Jude passes through a hard time. He feels a void in his heart after "the objects of his intellect and emotion"196 have been rendered an impossibility. Intensely agonised by his "failures both in ambition and in love",197 Jude returns to Alfredson. He is so deeply distressed at this time that Hardy writes:

If he had been a woman he must have screamed under the nervous tension which he was now undergoing.198

193 JO, p. 212. 196 JO, p. 125.
194 JO, p. 131. 197 JO, p. 130.
195 JO, p. 123. 198 JO, p. 131.
Unable to bear the misery of his existence, Jude unlocks his heart before a clergyman and confesses all his weaknesses and vices. The clergyman gives him a new hope of entering the church "as a licentiate" only if he "avoids strong drink". Jude's heart throbs with new enthusiasm and vigour. But as he decides to go on this new path with single-minded devotion in order to achieve "the ecclesiastical and altruistic" aims, Sue's letter comes as an irresistible diversion. She pathetically writes to him telling how "lonely and miserable" and "utterly friendless" she is. Jude becomes impatient and cannot resist the temptation to see the suffering Sue whom he loves from the depth of his heart. He sets out for Melchester, thinking that it is the first practical lesson of his "most spiritual and self-sacrificing" mission to help the perturbed soul of Sue to get out of the mire of confusion and chaos. She proves to be "something of a riddle" to Jude. Perhaps Arabella does not harm him as much as Sue does. She plays with him in a blow hot, blow cold manner, which devastates his, emotional set up. Sue's marriage tears Jude's heart into pieces. In utter desperation and depression, he drinks recklessly and a series accident leads him to Arabella who is now in Christminster as a bar-maid. The next morning, his conscientious heart is remorseful for his sinful act of having sexual relation with Arabella who, later on, tells him that she has already married another man without seeking

199 JO, p. 132. 201 JO, p. 135. 203 JO, p. 139.
divorce from him. Jude fasts and prays to atone for this sin. Then comes the revelation that Sue is not happy with her nominal husband. Jude remains awake in anguish at the thought of his dear comrade suffering like this. Finally, he decides to stand by Sue through thick and thin, leaving aside all his theological and ecclesiastical ambition, though painfully.

Flinging off the bonds of rigid morality, Jude openly comes to Sue's rescue. In fact, the oppressive strength of his affection for Sue has become "an unceasing torture and pricking of heart" for him. He realises "with despondency" that he is a "man of too many passions to make a good clergyman". So, it is no use his engaging himself permanently in a deadly warfare between his passions and ecclesiastical ambitions because he is sure that the flesh is more powerful in him. From now onwards, he renounces his intellectual and ecclesiastical ambitions and becomes a helpless victim of Sue's unpredictable mood, "aberrant passions and unaccountable anti-paties". He acknowledges with a mournful realisation that he is an utter failure as a "propounder of accredited dogma". With a heavy heart aching with pain, he digs a pit in the garden and buries his ethical and theological books so that he may not have to act like an imposter or law-abiding religious teacher with all irreligiousness about him. He is relieved of much of his

204 JO, p. 183. 206 JO, p. 211 208 JO, p. 223. 205 JO, p. 199. 207 JO, p. 222
burden after doing so, for now he is "an ordinary sinner and not ... a whitted sepulchre".\textsuperscript{209}

Jude suffers and suffers unsurmountable blows to his sensitive and altruistic heart at the hands of Sue who is "incapable of real love".\textsuperscript{210} She makes his heart ache for her while her own heart does not ache for him. He asks Sue to solemnise their marriage in church but capricious Sue resists his attempt, saying that "iron-contract" will "extinguish the tenderness"\textsuperscript{211} and his love for her. She teases and tortures his heart because she has "so little animal passion" in her while Jude has too much to suppress easily. Tortured and agonished by his sexual-instincts, Jude confesses:

I have the germs of very human infirmity in me. ...
It is all very well to preach about self-control and the wickedness of coercing a woman.\textsuperscript{213}

This terrible war between flesh and spirit leaves Jude's feelings and emotions devastated and his personality is demolished. He finds himself in a gin, writhing helplessly in pain and knowing not how to come out of it or where to go. Throughout his brief life, he remains in one dilemma or the other. His feelings are stultified by Sue's indifferent and insensitive attitude toward the demands of his body. It is only when Arabella threatens to take Jude away from her that she, out of sexual jealousy establishes sexual relations with J

\begin{align*}
\text{\textsuperscript{209} JO, p. 223.} & \quad \text{\textsuperscript{212} JO, p. 264.} \\
\text{\textsuperscript{210} JO, p. 247} & \quad \text{\textsuperscript{213} JO, p. 271.} \\
\text{\textsuperscript{211} JO, p. 263.} &
\end{align*}
Jude and Sue have to face the hostility of the people because they don't recognise their relation without the marriage stamp. The clouds of ill-reputation, open scorn and severe criticism on moral grounds thicken around them. Jude is turned out of church-work owing to their independent ways of living. Slowly and gradually an oppressive atmosphere begins to "encircle their souls" and, as Hardy maintains throughout, "their temperaments are precisely of a kind to suffer from this atmosphere". Jude reflects amid his affliction that these are really hostile opinions that "makes the best intentioned people reckless who actually become immoral". He is denied work in the church, and settled-work in any Wessex town seems impossibility due to the hostile air. Ruefully, he recognises that they are foolish enough to live "in a fool's paradise of supposed unrecognition". He decides to auction their furniture, to leave this place and enter a nomadic life, but he is deeply hurt to see people less interested in auction and more interested in their personal history. Quite weary of people's hypocritical ways, he finds himself "sickened of ecclesiastical work" and resolves not to take any even if offered. His unconventionality and independent attitude become the cause of his social ostracism and harassment. By this time, his heart is filled completely with misery and bitterness.

214 JO, p. 304.  
215 JO, p. 309.  
216 JO, p. 312.  
217 JO, p. 312.
Jude suffers so intensely and deeply for no fault of his own that he undergoes a mental transformation. Under the traumatic experiences of life, he is so altered ideologically that "hardly a shred of the beliefs with which he had first gone up to Christminster is now remaining with him". The harrowing experiences of life have so humbled and tamed him by this time that he does not appear to be the same old proud, egoistic Jude who was quite confident of himself. Sue tells Arbella:

Perhaps my husband has altered a little since then. I am sure he is not proud now.

Though Jude's heart is filled with repulsion and hatred for ecclesiastical dogmas and conventions, the vision of Christminster as a place of learning still haunts him. That is why he sees this vision even in his cakes. It is because of this infatuation that he is bewitched to see the procession of young doctors and to hear the speeches in Latin so much so that the repeated pleadings of Sue to find out some lodging for the family fall on deaf ears. He remains so lost in the proceedings there that he postpones the search for lodging till it is too late to find a suitable place. Consequently, he has to stay separately in an inn. Then occurs the horrifying tragedy of the triple death of children by hanging. Jude is shaken to the depth of his being at this

218 JO, p. 316.
219 JO, p. 318.
harrowing and soul-killing tragedy. He faces a hard time consoling fragile, sorrow-striken Sue who is almost paralysed under the severity of anguish and agony. He experiences a strange fear lurking around him. He is thrown in an acute fit of sorrow, but tries to maintain his balance in order to console Sue who insists on seeing the babies for the last time and asks him to dig out the coffins from the grave. Smitten with pangs of affliction and anguish, he finds this trial too agonising to undergo. Somehow, he coaxes and induces tractable Sue to leave cemetery. She is "cowed into submission"\(^220\) She accepts Phillotson as her real husband. At this, Jude is perplexed and distracted to see Sue drifting toward the darkness of ignorance from the light of knowledge. Jude, "utterly stuftied"\(^221\) bursts out in sheer agony:

\[
\text{You have never, never loved me as I love you ...}
\text{Your heart does not burn in a flame You are upon}
\text{the whole a sort of fay, or spirite, not a woman.}^{222}
\]

He is taken aback at her strange incoherent state of mind and pathetically implores Sue not to leave him in the lurch:

\[
\text{O Sue, do not do an immoral thing for moral}
\text{reasons. Don't abandon me, Sue, to save your}
\text{own soul only.}^{223}
\]

Sue's miserable condition fills Jude with a bitter sense of self-accusation and contrition. Her grief makes him curse himself for seducing her:

\(^220\) \(JO, \text{p. 348.}\) \(^222\) \(JO, \text{p. 359.}\)
\(^221\) \(JO, \text{p. 358.}\) \(^223\) \(JO, \text{p. 360.}\)
My God ... I spoilt one of the highest and purest loves that ever existed between man and woman. 224

Under the sudden appalling, crash of misery, Jude is dumb-founded by grief to hear and see Sue's shrieks and eddies of remorse. Sue's "wrong-headedness" 225 and transformation from a modern emancipated woman into a "ritualistic eccelesiastic orthodox woman corrodes his heart with a heavy weight of guilt and remorse. When she leaves him to suffer alone, he is haunted by a depressing sense of loneliness.

Jude's intense suffering at Sue's hands doesn't go waste. He emerges out of the distressing experiences of life wiser, saner and more practical. Such experiences of his struggleful life bestow upon him the rare gift of insight and magnanimity. That is why the tragedy of children which devastated Sue emotionally and mentally, blurring her perception and faculties, "enlarged his own views of life, laws, customs and dogmas". 226 After having dips into the bitter water of life's travails, he sees with clear-eyed perception that he "ought to have lived in mental communion and no more" 227 with Sue. He recognises in a moment of illumination that they should have parted company as when they should have parted company as and when they could not marry conscientiously. Awakened, Jude perceives the truth

225 JO, p. 368. 227 JO, p. 350.
that "the world is not illuminated enough for such experiments as theirs". So, they have met the tragic fate of "pioneers".228

In utter frustration and agony, hopeless and friendless, Jude is driven to reckless drinking. Arabella, with an intention of making the best use of his desperate condition, entices and cajoles him into a wedlock when he was under severe inebriation. In her captivity Jude feels "stranded -- ill -- demoralised and damn bad".229 His senses are almost paralysed and numbed by agony and liquor. He catches inflammation of lungs and feels helpless and feeble. He is agonised at the thought that he has never hurt anyone in life even then people hurt him time and again. He resolves to meet Sue for the last times as he foresees his death approaching fast. Sick and ill, Jude undertakes five miles walk to Mary Green in rain so as to persuade Sue to return to him as still she is his wife and not Phillotson's. However, he perceives that Sue is lost in the mire of chaos of conventions and religion. He returns desolate and distressed, fully resolved not to see Sue who has "veered round to darkness," and has given herself completely in "enslavement to forms".230 His sagacious talk with Mrs. Edlin shows that his mental faculties are fully developed and he has attained to the stage of heightened consciousness.

228 J0, p. 359.
229 J0, p. 385.
230 J0, p. 407.
Finally, Jude coughs himself away to graveyard. Thus, Jude dies the death of an isolated, miserable and agonised fellow, but at the same time, he dies, awakened, enlightened and illuminated.