One of the most conspicuous stages in the process of evolution of consciousness during the journey of life is the realisation and adoption thereby of the supreme values of loving-kindness and sympathetic understanding of fellow-beings. Hardy's novels, as Penelope Vigar says, "enlighten men and enlarge their sympathies by uncovering pretensions and uprooting impostures" and thus, pave "a way to nobler and better life". Hardy presents before us a class of humanistic characters who attain to the stage of higher consciousness where self is abnegated for the sake of larger and greater human values of love and sympathy. In his novels, Hardy seems to view that the welfare of mankind depends on an enlightened altruism. He has a scientific outlook and holds that life on this earth is the only life of which one can be assured. The higher aim, therefore, is to do everything possible for the less fortunate and for the general good of mankind for this purpose.

Hardy's protagonists adopt a religion of humanity informed with Christian compassion and renunciation, based on the human need for the harmonious co-existence of man. With the rise of higher consciousness in the protagonists, they

1 Penelope Vigar, *Thomas Hardy: Illusion and Reality*, p.15.
get a better understanding of the human predicament in the gratuitous universe; they strive hard to mitigate the sorrows and suffering of their fellow beings by mutual tolerance, co-operation and large-heartedness. They come to learn the lesson of self-annulment "by experiencing the pains of others" in themselves and thus, realise the primacy of love. For them, self-sacrifice becomes a sort of self-preservation. Hardy, determined to ameliorate the individual human situation in society, displays the replacement of 'self' with selflessness, egoism with altruism and hatred and intolerance with kind-consideration and mutual dependency as the protagonists move forward after passing through the baptismal experiences. They come to realise that their fellow-beings should not suffer due to their reckless, myopic and egoistic actions. Thus, they come to adopt the sound social ethics of human responsibility of redeeming the aches and afflictions of suffering humanity.

Far from the Madding Crowd can best be described as a manifestation of Hardy's concept of humanism -- living for others. This novel is, in the words of Ian Gregor, "the story of the humbling of a spirited, vain and self-willed woman". In the beginning of the novel, Bathsheba's perspective is too egoistic, haughty and self-willed. Slowly

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and gradually, she learns and acquires the awareness that exertion of ego or desire brings on chastisement and suffering. She emerges by degrees from egoism to the awareness of human predicament and finally, reaches the stage of an altruist with calm serenity and stoic resignation. The crushing experiences of life make her evolve from egoism, pride and wilfulness to humility, nobility and open-heartedness; suffering replaces the perturbed consciousness of rebellious and reckless Bathsheba of girlhood by calm, serene and submissive Mrs. Oak. John Halperin maintains that "Bathsheba develops through misfortunes and suffering from a vain, egoistic girl into a wise sympathetic woman".

Bathsheba's whole career is the egoist's progress from self assertion to self-renunciation. Our first impression of Bathsheba is that of a light-hearted, coquettish and proud girl, but, in no way, devoid of the milk of human kindness. Meticulously and painfully, she drags Gabriel out of his cottage when accidently she finds it on fire having no water, she throws the pail of milk over him in order to bring him to consciousness and thus, becomes his saviour. This incident symbolizes that a bond of the milk of human kindness has been sealed between them on an unconsciousness level. The perfect harmony and emotional

compatibility that we discern at the end of the novel is only the extension of this, at first, unconscious reciprocity.

Bathsheba at Norcombe Hill is a vain and gloriously girl who observes herself in the looking glass as "a fair product of nature in the feminine kind". Gabriel discovers at the first sight that "she has her faults", and the most serious fault is that of "vanity". Immediately, Bathsheba is established as a proud, haughty and emotionally as self-indulgent as any town woman can be. Though Gabriel Oak is superior to her in social-standing, her vain and proud soul cannot accept such a humble rustic as her companion. She says:

I want somebody to tame me; I am too independent, and you would never be able to, I know ... I am better educated than you.

She is too egoistic and self-assertive to accept this submissive and humble farmer yet his pathetically passionate appeal of love moves her heart to say:

It seems dreadfully wrong not to have you when you feel so much.

It shows that she feels the aches of other's heart. She feels "distressed and is in a "moral dilemma" on having rejected his proposal of marriage. We discern "a freak of tenderness" under her haughty and "egoistic temperament". Her egoism is heightened all the more when she inherits the property at Weatherbury after the death of her

5 FFMC, p.5. 7 FFMC, p. 35. 10 John Halprine, Egoism & Self-Discovery in Victorian Fiction, p. 216.
6 FFMC, p.7. 8 FFMC, p. 35.
bachelor-uncle. Her tenderness of disposition is suppressed under her authoritative command. She is overconfident and dishonest, she dismisses the bailiff and resolves to be her own bailiff, thinking that she can manage everything herself.

Conscious of her extremely beautiful and bewitching personality, Bathsheba expects everyone to praise her beauty. When she finds that Farmer Boldwood least bothers about her charming face and that his eyes are not fixed on her at Corn Exchange or in the church, her ego is badly-hurt. In a fit of folly and pique, she proposes to Boldwood through a valentine. This act of sadistic pleasure precipitates in Boldwood, otherwise grave and reserved, a lasting and mounting passion to which she has no impulse to respond to. She is happy to see that she has succeeded in setting his passions aflame; a mere trick has erupted the placidity of Boldwood who, stung by the pangs of love, comes straight in right earnest to court Bathsheba. At this stage, she, a curious mixture of sexual pride, vanity and impulsiveness, "hate(s) to be thought of man's property." She encourages Boldwood though she declares in a coquettish manner that she does not love him at all. Boldwood is all the more excited by her blow hot blow cold manner.

Finding Boldwood's placidity greatly disturbed, She trembles at the thought of her "responsibility" in sending

11 FFMC, p. 32.
12 FFMC, p. 32.
him so morbidly and desperately in love with her. She is filled with remorse and repentance. She open-heartedly admits her mistake and accuses herself for her errant behaviour. Though her pride is satisfied, her conscience is hurt to see Boldwood in a whirlpool of passions and emotion. She is yet too proud to confess it in a humble way. Her mind is filled with "a disquiet" and she conscientiously feels that "it would be ungenerous not to marry Boldwood and that she could not do it to save her life" as she does not at all love him. She realises her utter foolishness and cruelty in arousing the passion of this "confirmed bachelor" when Oak reprimands her and criticises her wanton behaviour, Bathsheba's vanity and ego are hurt by his plain-speaking. An egoist like Bathsheba can never tolerate her workman to criticise her behaviour so harshly and openly. She rebuffs Oak and dismisses him immediately saying:

Don't let me see your face anymore.

Every incident in Bathsheba's life cuts short the chain of her ego and vainglory by one link. The realisation of her hardness to Oak dawns on her the very next day when she finds her sheep writhing under pain and dying. She recognises that her public work and private-conduct are inter-woven with each other and there is no separating them. At first, Bathsheba, in a harsh and straight-forward manner

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13 FFMC, p. 150.  
14 FFMC, p. 150.  
15 FFMC, p. 145.  
16 FFMC, p. 155.
manner declines to recall Oak whom she has dismissed, so much so that she can not tolerate the mere mention of his name. At the same instant, a sheep jumps into the air, falls heavily and lies still on the ground dead. She is greatly touched by the spectacle of this tragic death. She can well imagine the intensity of these weak creatures's pain by their writhing. The condition of the blasted sheep changes from bad to worse and no solution seems to be in view to save them from their imminent death. Bathsheba feels herself quite helpless in the face of this great disaster. She can, no longer, tolerate their terrible pain. Finally, she gives up her pride asking her men to call Oak, but Oak refuses to come unless Bathsheba herself asks him to come. At this point, Bathsheba's eyes are filled with tears of remorse and helplessness. Hardy beautifully describes her psychosis and predicament:

Bathsheba turned aside, her eyes full of tears.

The strait she was in through pride and shrewisnness, could not be disguised longer. She burst out crying bitterly; they all saw it; and she attempted no further concealment. 17

Bathsheba feels the pain of the lowering of her youthful pride and humbling of her vanity. Oak has drived her to do what she would not do. She feels that it is a "wicked cruelty" 18 that she is put in such a humiliating situation by the circumstances. Being "the head of an

17 FFMC, p. 16.
18 FFMC, p. 16.
establishment", it is really "not very dignified"\textsuperscript{19} to feel sorry for her decision. Her anger and pride collapse like a wall of sand. After sacking him in a moment of pique consistent with her haughty nature, she has to repent for it. She writes a note "between sobs of convalescence which follow a fit of crying as a ground swell follows a storm",\textsuperscript{20} and closes it with a pathetic appeal:

\begin{quote}
Do not desert me, Gabriel.\textsuperscript{21}
\end{quote}

Thus, she is made to revise her "haughty command"\textsuperscript{22} by the strong urge of pity for and sympathy with the helpless and meek sheep. When Gabriel comes, she expresses her gratitude to him and addresses him with a "tenderly-shaped reproach"\textsuperscript{23}:

\begin{quote}
Oh, Gabriel, how could you serve me so unkindly.\textsuperscript{24}
\end{quote}

By now Bathsheba has realised that Gabriel is indispensable to her, he is a sincere and devoted friend to her. So, she asks him tenderly and almost appealingly:

\begin{quote}
Gabriel, will you stay on with me?\textsuperscript{25}
\end{quote}

Bathsheba's vanity and pride are humbled a little as she gets the first lesson in her progress from egoism to altruism. She marches forward toward wider sympathy and humility, accelerated by this spectacle of pain and death. She moves a step ahead from the abstract to the concrete in her career. It is the tragedy of sheep for which she has to

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{19} FFMC, P- 16.  \\
\textsuperscript{20} FFMC, p. 16.  \\
\textsuperscript{21} FFMC, P- 16.  \\
\textsuperscript{22} FFMC, p. 16.  \\
\textsuperscript{23} FFMC, P- 16.  \\
\textsuperscript{24} FFMC, P- 16.  \\
\textsuperscript{25} FFMC, 163.
\end{footnotes}
renounce her so dearly loved pride and vanity. She recognises a real friend in Oak whose opinion now onward she regards. When Oak sees her involved in a new affair with Troy, pained and distressed, he asks her not to trust him and keep away from him "to keep herself well honoured among the folk and in common generosity to honourable men".

Boldwood. Bathsheba patiently listens to his criticism of her behaviour and that of Troy. She does not get infuriated as she used to do a few days back, though she tells him:

Your lecture I will not hear. I am mistress here.

Her statement establishes Bathsheba as a woman still dominated by "pride and vanity" though a little bit subdued, humbled and schooled. Gabriel becomes her guardian angel and "an instrument of salvation." By and by, she learns to trust his "opinion of herself more than her own."

Bathsheba's vanity is the root of many of her ills. Her false pride and haughty temperament don't let her accept the well established and sincere Boldwood; it rather throws her into the path of the rafish Troy as she wants to be dominated by a sexually aggressive man. She is a bold and adventurous girl anxious for thrill and excitement which a devil-may-care Troy, adventurer with some Mephistophelian overtones, can provide. In fact, she wants to queen over a man and at the same time, to be dominated by him completely.

26 FFMC, p. 224. 29 FFMC, p. 162.
28 FFMC, p. 119.
Troy fascinates her with "his panache and a sort of demon-lover quality" which, as Desmond Hawkins says aptly, "promised to satisfy her need to be mastered". Thus, Troy establishes complete mastery over her. It is Troy's command that rules the farm henceforth.

Soon egoistic Bathsheba has to pay the price for her surrender to the gratification of being mastered. In no time, her pride is lowed and her youthful spirit and ego are subdued when Troy shows her his true colours. Her heart is broken when she finds that Troy does not bother about her feelings and emotions. To her annoyance, he squanders away his inherited wealth in horse race and drinking. She is quickly disillusioned of her romanticism when he throws her mistakes in her face, and thus, humiliates her. Hardy tells us that "her pride was indeed brought low by despairing discoveries of her spoilation by marriage with a less pure nature than her own". On the night of harvest supper and their wedding celebration, she is shocked to see his irresponsible and erotic behaviour. He threatens his workmen with dismissal if they don't stay there to drink more with him. She tries to make him realise the inappropriateness of his behaviour, but he refuses to listen to what she says. She feels helplessly indignant when she finds her menfolk in stupor in the barn and her unprotected ricks left at the mercy of the rising storm. In such a situation it is Oak who works breathlessly to save

31 Desmond Hawkins, Thomas Hardy: Novelist and Poet, p. 3.
32 FFMC, p. 322.
her property from destruction. Sick and desperate at heart, she arrives to meet Oak half way through his heroic efforts to save the ricks. They thatch and bind together and become one united force of action and feeling against the horror of the social and cosmic world.

It is now that distracted Bathsheba opens up her wounded heart before Oak and relates to him the sorry state she is in after her marriage. She is united with Oak by the principle of labour and common-bond of suffering. She realises that the true qualities of Oak are too precious to be ignored. It is under Oak's mentorship that she "learns the principle of regarding the otherness of the other".33

His selfless devotion to her makes her say:

Gabriel, you are kinder than I deserve. I will stay and help you yet. 34

She is impressed by two outstanding traits of Oak's character -- compassion and endurance. She perceives the positive redemptive effect of suffering35 and realises that suffering has made her more compassionate, selfless and sensitive. It is the essential ethics of toil and selfless love that binds them together. It is this recognition of altruism in Oak's character that makes Bathsheba's rebirth possible.

Gradually, Bathsheba's indomitable spirit is tamed and her pride subdued. Referring to her changed state of

33 J.I.M. Stewart, Thomas Hardy, p. 139.
34 FFMC, p. 296.
35 Michael Millgate, Thomas Hardy: His Career As a Novelist, p. 208.
mind, Hardy comments:

Until she had met Troy, Bathsheba had been proud of her position as a woman, it had been a glory to her to know that 'her lips had been untouched by no man's on earth ... that her waist had never been encircled by a lover's arm. She hated herself now. 36

In fact, Bathsheba's proud soul reproaches her for "renouncing the simplicity of a maiden existence to become the humbler half of an indifferent matrimonial whole". 37 She feels this marriage to be a "degradation" on her part. When she hears about Fanny Robin's death, she pities and sympathises with her. She asks her men to bring her dead body to her farm, for she was her uncle's servant for a long time. She, among tears, declares that it is her duty to give Fanny a respectable burial. To her dismay and surprise, she feels further humiliated when she comes to know that Fanny died in giving birth to Troy's child. She is distracted to know that her sincere and pure love has chosen such an infidel and fickle man as its object, and that that man has also been claimed by Fanny, her maid servant. She is completely over-powered by a sexual jealousy when Troy kisses the dead Fanny in her presence. Her vanity, pride and dignity all vanish away, giving place to a feminine weakness and impulsiveness. At this time, she appears to be so humble, weak and helpless that Troy is bewildered to see her and cannot believe her "to be his proud wife Bathsheba". 39

36 FFMC, p. 322. 38 FFMC, p. 323.
37 FFMC, p. 323. 39 FFMC, p. 352.
She is disenchanted by Troy's devotion and sincere love for Fanny so much so that "a low cry of measureless despair and indignation" comes out of her heart. Troy, subdued by the grief of Fanny's death, disowns Bathsheba and declares that Fanny, not Bathsheba, is his wife. He declares:

You are nothing to me ... nothing ... A ceremony before a priest doesn't make a marriage, I am not morally yours. 41

Bathsheba realises that her union with Troy is undone. She leaves her home in a fit of indignation and humiliation and happens to spend that night among the fermsecluded from the world outside. The sun rays at dawn bring a new transformation in her. The egoistic Bathsheba is replaced by a humble, calm and serene lady who has passed through affliction and agonies. Troy's setting up of a monument in "Beloved Memory of Fanny Robin" does not much affect her now as she has passed from self to selflessness. She does not envy Fanny, she rather pities her and sympathises with her in her tragedy. When she goes to the graveyard, she "collected the flowers and began planting them with sympathetic manipulation." She has evolved a selfless concern and wider sympathies for the co-sufferer, for, she now knows what suffering is. She develops a more personal regard for Oak who is her moral support as well as man of affairs. She attains to the state of a stoic, for assertion of ego has brought on suffering and chastisement.

41 FFMC, p. 353. 43 FFMC, p. 349.
she blossoms under the impact of suffering and becomes acquainted with human predicament in this world of cruelty, pain, storm, fire and rain. The undaunted spirit of rebellion is replaced by a calm mood of self-abnegation and submission. Bathsheba now does not attach much importance to either religion or non-human nature but places plain humanity above everything else. Among ferns when she sees Liddy, her heart bounds with gratitude to feel that she is not "completely deserted". Her pride and vanity, having been shattered, she feels a vacuum in her heart; she feels the need of love and sympathy to fill this void. It is her yearning for sympathy and tenderness that moves her toward recovery.

Purged of her egoism, Bathsheba returns to the farm and decides that she will not renounce Troy "though this may include the trifling items of insults, beating and starvation". She adopts the broader attitude of calm resignation and passive submission. She is so altered that "her original vigorous pride of youth has sickened". The girl who used to see mirror even before going to bed in order to set her night cap, now takes "no further interest in herself as a splendid woman" and becomes so indifferent that she does not think about her probable fate. Hardy aptly comments on her altered state of mind:

44 FFMC, p. 349. 46 FFMC, p. 382.
45 FFMC, p. 359. 47 FFMC, p. 383.
She was not a woman who could hope on without good materials for the process differing thus from the less far-sighted and energetic though more petted ones of the sex, with whom hope goes on as a sort of clockwork which the merest food and shelter are sufficient to wind up, and perceiving clearly that her mistake had been a fatal one. 48

The news of Troy's sudden and unexpected death turns her unconscious. This time Boldwood comes to her help and gives her support. When she realises that Boldwood is still devoted and passionately in love with her, her heart is filled with contrition and penitence. A tender feeling of sympathy wells up in her heart. She is over-powered by a strong sense of wrong done to Boldwood out of her childish folly. She feels grateful to him for his persistent devotion and unflinching love. She is haunted by a guilt-complex which compels her to think that she should make some reparation for the wrong done to him in the past. A feeling almost like "tenderness" surges up in Bathsheba's heart. Over-whelmed by remorse, she confesses to Boldwood:

My treatment of you was thoughtless, inexcusable, wicked, I shall eternally regret it. If there had been anything I could have done to make amends, I would most gladly have done it ... there was nothing on earth I so longed to do as to repair the error. 49

She agrees to Boldwood's renewed proposal sheerly out of sympathy with his distracted and distressed state of mind.

In this connection, she tells Oak:

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48 FFMC, p. 383.
49 FFMC, p. 415.
50 FFMC, p. 418.
Thus, her mind is occupied by the injustice she once did to Boldwood, and which she cannot "get off:...: conscience" unless she pays for the damage, if it honestly lies in her power, "without any consideration of her own future at all". Her consciousness has so evolved by now that she accepts before Oak that she has been a "rake". On Christmas day, Bathsheba agrees to get engaged to Boldwood though she "stamped passionately on the floor" apparently and "fairly beaten into non-resistance." Her altruistic efforts to be just to Boldwood are thwarted by Troy who, in turn, is shot dead by Boldwood. Bathsheba comes forward and takes Troy's dead body to her farm without any emotions and exclamation.

All the time Bathsheba is haunted by the guilt complex that it is her foolishness and vanity that has destroyed Troy physically and Boldwood mentally. Her lack of sympathy and fellow-feeling in the beginning was due to her non-acquaintance with suffering. Now when she has undergone a long process of pains, pangs and suffering, she can penetrate deep into the feelings of others. She experiences a baptism, regeneration and an awareness of the feelings of others. She is awakened into a new state of consciousness.

51 FFMC, p. 418. 54 FFMC, p. 420.
52 FFMC, p. 419. 55 FFMC, p. 443.
53 FFMC, p. 409.
where she is filled with a bitter regret and wider sympathy. Finally, she is tamed i.e. reduced from a state of wilderness to that of one humble and calm. Like a spirited animal broken to harness, she submits to Troy's wills to Boldwood's claim upon her balky conscience and is ready to submit to Oak's unflinching and selfless devotion. By and by, she acquires self-renunciation and acknowledges the concept of social obligation. She becomes almost an apostle of stoic-resignation. Changed by disaster and responsibility, she shows astounding endurance so much so that she seems to be "made of the stuff of which great men's mothers are made". Her progress toward wider sympathy and selfless love is unchallenged. Peter J. Casagrande rightly evaluates Bathsheba's career as a development from "impulsive folly to goodness".

When Gabriel Oak informs Bathsheba that he will be leaving her farm very soon, she is totally and utterly wrecked. She feels herself quite helpless without Oak on whom she depends so completely for advice, support and business. In a pathetic Cry she asks:

And what shall I do without You?

She now seems to be ready for the penultimate steps in her transformation from egoism, crippling wilfulness and vanity to altruism and submission. Her early offences are atoned for

56 FFMC, p. 449.
58 FFMC, p. 463.
by the indescribable suffering and diminished by her deeply felt contrition. Her sincere penitence and remorse conscript her into moral growth. At this point, Bathsheba is reminded of her previous rude and thankless behaviour toward Oak who has stood by her through thick and thin as if her own shadow.

Bathsheba can, no longer, tolerate the thought of being despised and deserted by the one "who had believed in her and argued on her side when all the rest of the world was against her". She will be all alone in this wide world to "fight her battles alone". Overpowered by strong sense of gregariousness, she renounces her womanly delicacy and hesitation and goes to Oak's cottage in order to seal their friendship permanently. In fact, she realises her utter dependence on Oak and also recognises the silent emotional compatibility that has been sealed unconsciously between the two suffering souls. After renouncing her egoistic self, she in Hardy's views, becomes a fit companion for Oak:

There was that substantial affection, that love which many waters cannot quench, nor the floods drown. 

Like Oak, she becomes a useful part of society; from a vain, proud, and impulsive girl, she evolves to be a "subdued female" "chastened" and "anxious for the protective strength

59 FFMC, p. 463.
60 FFMC, p. 463.
61 FFMC, p. 469.
of a Gabriel Oak". Richard Carpenter beautifully sums up Bathsheba's evolution in the following words:

Bathsheba is finally subdued to a mature and knowledgeable adult who cannot now burst forth in a fine blaze of fury, nor can she blush so furiously with love or at her own temerity. In this way, a kind of moral levelling takes place and she attains to the discovery of herself, which resembles an expansion of one's own being. Her consciousness evolves entailing transcendence of egoism to self-realisation. Hardy sees human relationship in terms of duty. Eventually, Bathsheba is united with Oak by a common bond of duty and toil.

In The Return of the Native, the principle of resignation of self at the call of altruism is evidently manifest through Clym's character and conduct. When we met Clym for the first time, he is swayed by his humanistic zeal and idealistic tendency to mitigate the sorrows and sufferings of groaning humanity by teaching them "how to breast the misery they are born to". He has already decided to adopt the ethics of living for others beyond the mere satisfaction of self. He has made the cult of social obligation as the basis of his life. In a conversation with his mother, Clym reveals his motives:

62 Dale Kramer, Thomas Hardy: Forms of Tragedy, p. 31
63 Richard Carpenter, Thomas Hardy, p. 87.
64 RN, p. 199.
I hate that business of mine, and I want to do some worthy thing before I die. As a school master I think to do it, a school master to the poor and ignorant, to teach them what no body else will. 65

Clym's soul, like St. Paul's, is outraged by the spectacle of "the whole creation groaning and travailing in Pain".66 His heart reels under the pain of others and in such a position he can, no longer, continue "the most "effeminate" business of "trafficking in glittering splendours with wealthy women and tilted libertines".67 Revealing his dilemma, Clym tells his mother:

I cannot enjoy delicacies; good things are wasted upon me. Well, I ought to turn that defect to advantage, and by being able to do without what people require I can spend what such things cost upon anybody else. 68

Feeling quite restless, he comes back from Paris with a determination to do "some worthy thing",69 not so much by a word of precept as by setting first before his fellow an example of ideal life.

Though Clym has a willing heart ready to involve itself with the sorrows and sufferings of others, he is not free from the grosser instincts of anger, ego and rashness. He has not succeeded in subduing the egoistic tendencies inherited from his mother. In the beginning, Clym is obstinate and rigid. He always has his own way even in the face of great opposition. His objective world is mixed with

his subjectivity like a breath with mist; hence, he has no power to distinguish what comes from himself from what is objectively there. Surrounded by a halo cast out from his subjectivity, he remains wrapped in his illusions and dreams of idealistic pursuit. He is unbending and ruthless, shearing his way through living hearts to truth and right. His treatment of his mother reveals his essential egoistic nature. When his mother tries to unveil the reality of Eustacia, he feels hurt and silences his mother saying that he is wise enough to decide his matter himself. Notwithstanding his love for his mother, the rigidity of temperament does not allow him to bow before his mother's wish. When she calls Eustacia a worthless "husy'', his ego is hurt and his face reddens with anger. He replies to his mother in harsh and commanding tone:

I won't hear it. I may be led to answer you in a way which we shall both regret. 71

His mother's sharp observation and keen insight can peep into the haughty spirit of Clym and she tells him that he is guided by an "obstinate wrong-headedness". 72

Hurt and wounded to the soul by his mother's harsh words, Clym resolves to leave the house, breaking the birth-cord that holds his heart with her. Though she tries to soften him by an emotional appeal, he is blindly guided by a

70 RN, p. 216. 72 RN, p. 226.
71 RN, p. 216.
a cold reason and abstract idealism which dry up the spirit of maternal love and care. He fails to realise his duty and obligation to his widowed old mother who has sacrificed her whole life for his sake. His desertion of his mother is extremely callous and inhuman. In fact, he is a man who yields little allegiance to emotion, and much to the nobler spirit sort. In spite of his mother's opposition, he marries Eustacia which severes his relations with his mother. Though he departs "in great misery" which takes several hours to come to normal level, he does not say a soft word to his mother which might have prevented the completion of this emotional breach. Mrs. Yeobright is perhaps right in evaluating Clym's behaviour at this moment:

It is a steady opposition and persistence in going wrong that he has shown. 74

He does not, even once, think of his desperate old mother whom he has left in anger. He could still have retrieved his error by calling on his estranged mother who is so kind that a single friendly visit to her would have brought about their reconciliation, but his wounded ego and temperamental procrastination hinder him from making an effort in this direction. It appears as if he has become quite indifferent to and unconcerned with her till it is too late.

73 RN, p. 233.
74 RN, p. 235.
Clym undergoes a tremendous change after getting disillusioned with Eustacia's bewitching beauty. He asks Eustacia that something must be done to lessen the gap between them. His heart is filled with filial love and sympathy for his old mother. He says mournfully:

'It is a wrong in me to allow this sort of thing to go on ... She is getting old and her life is lonely, and I am her only son.' 75

Thinking better and on sympathetic plane about his mother, he sets out on a friendly visit to her the same evening when she is turned out by Eustacia unwittingly. He finds his mother lying unconscious and dying on the heath. His heart is smitten with pain and anguish to see his mother in such a condition. He forgets all malice that has separated them. Hardy gives a beautiful description of Clym's reconciliation with his mother instantly:

'His breath went, as it were, out of his body and the cry of anguish which could have escaped him died upon his lips ... it seems as if he and his mother were as when he was a child with her many years ago on this heath at hours similar to the present.' 76

He lifts his mother in his arms to take her to home. In spite of his best efforts he could not save his mother. His heart sinks with sorrow, and he blames himself for this tragedy. He raves about his mother wildly. The dying words of his

75 RN, p. 294.
76 RN, p. 313.
mother that "she was a broken-hearted woman and cast" off by her son" fall upon his heart like the blows of a hammer. He is so broken and smitten with remorse that he appears as "pale, haggard" and remains "wide awoken tossing to one side and to the other", his eyes lit by hot light as if "the fire in their pupils were burning up with their substance". He is over-powered by a guilt complex and curses himself for his hard-heartedness:

My conduct to her was too hideous ... I made advances. If I had only shown myself willing to make it up with her sooner, we had been friends, and then if she had died, it would not be so hard to bear. But I never went near her house ... that is what troubles me.

Distracted and afflicted, Clym realises his mistake and accepts that it is an error which cannot be rectified now. He realises that he "sinned against her". He is perturbed at and tortured by the thought that his mother died on the burning heath"like an animal kicked out, no body to help her till it was too late". Her tragic death awakeness him from a "stupefying sleep" of egoism and haughtiness. He is extremely distracted to know that his wife sent his mother away due to her abhorence for her at the time when "she was learning to love" them and brought about her tragic death. Thus, Clym becomes friendly and is reconciled to his mother when she is on her death bed.

77 RN, p. 323. 80 RN, p. 329. 83 RN, p. 347.
78 RN, p. 321. 81 RN, p. 331.
79 RN, p. 328. 82 RN, p. 336.
Clym's relation with Eustacia get strained after his mother's death. He becomes too harsh and his manners too "ghastly" to her when he discovers the mystery of his mother's death. He gets hardened toward her so much so that Hardy says", the egoist inside the benevolent idealist bursts out fully when Clym, sure of grave misdeed by Eustacia, attacks her with the crude fervour of a prosecuting attorney". All his fury comes to be directed toward her with all its vehemence and cruelty. He declares strongly that "all murderers get the torment they deserve". He is so mortified by the grief that he rebukes and rebuffs her relentlessly "scourging (her) to the bone". After the terrible shock of his mother's death, his equipoise is lost. In lamenting the dead, he neglects his duty toward the living. Under the sway of instincts and sentiments, he becomes a little bit too cruel and merciless to give her an opportunity to clear away the cobwebs of misunderstanding and misinterpretations. It is his too much high-handedness and Eustacia's too much strong paganism that become the cause of her suicide. After Eustacia's death Clym becomes submissive. He realises that he himself is responsible for her death as well as for the death of his mother. He suffers much but his suffering does not go waste. He is purged of his grosser instincts of pride anger and haughtiness after passing through the white heat of suffering. His resilient
spirit regains his lost composure and he reconciles to the
changed nature of his lonely existence. He emerges out a
true altruist from his purificatory tribulations. Now he is
able to follow his long thought-out mission with a fixity of
purpose and to fulfil his duty towards Thomasin without any
failure. He does not expect anything in return and does not
interfere in her affairs. He pursues his long-cherished dream
of becoming a new-kind of teacher, preaching by precept and
practice his ethical ideas for the sake of which he has
renounced his worldly accomplishments. In the
beginning, though he was guided by his altruistic purposes, he
was not a perfect stoic, nevertheless the balance
tilted in favour of a stoical tranquility. He experiences
a regeneration which becomes the spring board of his determined
meliorism and humanitarianism.

The significance of the great realisation of duty is
sought to be crystalised through Clym's love for work through
which he communicates with reality as also with society.
Even the worst circumstances of his life do not alienate
him from work. He is always engaged in some meaningful
activity which only satisfies his soul. When his feeble
vision disallows him to pursue his study-work, he turns to
furze-cutting, the humblest of the work, so as to save
himself from the boredom of idleness without stressing his
eyes. The work of furze-cutting, though humble and indecent,
is comforting to him as he loves heath and its humble folkmen.
He rejoices being one with them. He has reached a point of wise indifference where he can be happy in the monotonous and unambitious humble task of fruze-cutting. Hardy clearly shows that Clym is "cheerfully disposed and calm" when he is completely engrossed in his work and feels "depressed in spirit" when idle and vacant. He does not hesitate in adopting this "honest occupation" as he comes to see it. Eustacia is completely shocked to see that Clym can sing even under such humiliating circumstances. He does not see his work of a furze cutter to be a "social failure". He acquired such a deep equanimity of spirit that he does not feel miserable even when he becomes almost blind by overstudying.

Finally, we see Clym as one who is more of a thinker among mankind and who has attained to philosophical detachment and calm resignation. He represents affirmation of life through renunciation of self and submission of passion. He rejoices at the liberty permitted within the walls without ever thinking of breaking them. He is content with what positive good his situation yields and does not allow his aspirations to wander beyond the limits which the human condition has imposed upon him. The strain of prolonged thought process has told upon his face and he accepts that "mental luminousness must be fed with the coil of life".

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88 RN, p. 273.  
90 RN, p. 275.  
99 RN p, 272.  
91 RN, p. 162.
He has already sublimated his worldly ambitions to higher aims. Now he puts his heart in the missionary work of raising the intellectual quality of life among the heath-dwellers without making them pass through the intermediate stage of social ambition and worldly advance. He advocates self-abnegation and submission to extra-personal forces. He adopts Comtean secular religion of a humanist. He is spontaneously and voluntarily actuated by a larger appreciation of human duty. His self shrinks and vision expands endowing him with a peculiar moral earnestness. He acquires that serene comprehensiveness which makes him completely indifferent and nonchalant to the praise or condemnation of him by people. He does not bother about what people say or think; no thought of fame or fellows ever minimizes the greatness of his stoical spirit or the value of his practical path of ethical living.

The Mayor of Casterbridge is one of those masterpieces of Hardy which "demonstrate the incomplete evolutionary state of man", who is, according to Jeannette King, struggling hard to achieve completion.\(^{92}\) Henchard, can be adjudged as the most egoistic character of Hardy. He is driven by a passionate desire for possession. He has a domineering personality which turns all relationship into a desire for possession. The very first chapter of the

\(^{92}\) Jeannette King, *Tragedy in the Victorian Novels*, p.41
novel establishes that he is dominated by a dogged cynicism and egoistic impulses. Henchard shows no concern for his wife and child whom he takes to be an unnecessary burden on him. That he evinces no love for his wife is evident from the "dogged cynical indifference" and the atmosphere of state familiarity that mark their relationship. Her repeated mild requests for search of a lodging appear to him no more than "bird-like chirpling" to which he pays a deaf ear. After getting drunk, his aggressive, violent and egoistic nature becomes all the more violent and vehement and he appears to be cruelty personified. Without caring for the sentiments of his wife, he insults her in public and finally, auctions her. One of the women in the furmity-tent exclaims:

Ah ! What a cruelty is the poor soul married to !

In fact he exercises a property right over his wife and child. That is why he argues loudly:

I don't see why man who have got wives and don't want should not get rid of 'em as these gipsy fellos do their old horses.

It is this cruel, autocratic and utterly callous temperament, not rum, that often makes him so uncivil and discourteous. Susan is quite used to his cruelty, as is evident from her words:

Mike, I've lived with thee a couple of years, and had nothing but temper.
His face shows no sign of concern for his wife and child throughout the bargain he makes at furnity-tent.

Henchard appears to be awakened from his stupor when Susan throws her wedding ring in his face. In the morning, the recollection of the whole incident of wife selling fills his heart with remorse and contrition. Here begins, for the first time, the process of self-realisation and repentance. Henchard becomes worried about the meek and docile lady whom he left at the mercy of chance forces. This sympathy has its rise in the thought that Susan made no resistance and stoically accepted his deal. Even now, he does not accept the whole responsibility of this heinous crime and says that "she was not queer if (he) was". Though he determines to find out Susan and the child, and is ready "to put up with the shame as best as he could"; his egoistic and domineering self does not own the whole blame at once. Later on when he is sober, calmer and repentant, he accepts that "it was of his own making and he ought to bear it". Thus, this incident sows the seeds of sympathy and tender feeling in Henchard's heart so much so that he takes a vow of abstinence for twenty-one years. Irving Howe pertinently comments that "from this deed, there follows whatever suffering and consciousness Henchard can reach". For the first time, he becomes aware of the beastliness of his

99 MC, p. 49.  
100 MC, p. 49.  
101 MC, p. 49.  
102 Irving Howe, Thomas Hardy, p. 86.
nature. He repents truly and this repentance opens up the gates of objective sympathy which surges up in his heart in the course of time. After a long futile search for Susan, Henchard realises that he has been too much wrapped in his own whims and eccentricities.

When we meet Henchard after a time-gap of twenty years, we trace no marked difference in his egoistic-self. It has rather ben aggravated by power and position he has won by now. Though the tragic experiences of life have told upon his body and he is "stiffened" and disciplined, he is marked by no moral change in his attitude. Rosemary Sumner beautifully sums up Henchard's position in these words:

The likelihood of conflict is increased since his former large scale emotions, now exaggerated, will require even more powerful control.

Henchard gives no say to others and no heart to others' difficulties, as is evident from his cold attitude towards grumbling people. He is still marked by "the temper, which artificially intensified, had banished a wife nearly a score of years before".

His personality is marked by the "the conjectures of a temperament which would have no pity for weakness". The blind selfishness of business ethics makes him unsympathetic and indifferent to the interest of others. But the same hard-hearted, egoistic and aggressive Henchard gets the first

103 MC, p.69.
104 Rosemary Sumner, Thomas Hardy: Psychological Novelist, P.60.
105 MC, p.73.
106 me, p.73.
Jane whom he takes to be his own daughter, returns with Susan, Henchard is all love and affection for her so much so that Elizabeth is seen more in his company then in her mother's. He has become "very fond of her". It shows that Henchard does not lack filial love, and he keeps a soft heart under hard exterior, but here too, his ego and aggressive temperament mar the cordiality in their relationship. To spoil Farfrae's happiness, he becomes rude and insensitive to Elizabeth too. He tells her to keep away from him and thus, breaks her heart. Susan's death releases his animalish tendencies. When he comes to know about Elizabeth's true parentage, his attitude of love and care is reversed completely. He becomes absolutely callous, intolerant and indifferent to Elizabeth for no fault of hers. It appears as if his hurt-ego wants to punish the daughter for her mother's fault as he feels cheated and betrayed by Susan. He becomes so violent and intolerant to her that her simple, rustic ways now appear to be bringing shame on him, as goes the narrative:

Such was Henchard's haughty spirit that the simple thrifty deed was regarded as little less than a social catastrophe by him.

He shows "a positive distaste for the girl" whom he has loved with the deep affection of a father before the discovery of her parentage. Elizabeth becomes a helpless victim of his

110 MC, p. 134.
111 MC, p. 189.
112 MC, p. 189.
depends on her almost like a child on his mother. He learns the lesson of mutual tolerance and becomes capable of adapting himself to the changed circumstances. Amidst the gloom of defeat and despair, he has undergone such a tremendous change that he now desires "affection from anything that was good and pure".116 Hardy tells us about Henchard's changed attitude to Elizabeth:

She was not his own, yet for the first time, he had a faint dream that he might get to like her as his own ... if she would only continue to love him.117

Elizabeth becomes the invaluable treasure of his life he wants to secure at every cost -- even at the cost of his honour. When Newson comes to claim Elizabeth, he recklessly tells "mad lies like a child".118 In fact he loves her "to his life's extremity".119 But for her, Henchard would not have expected any favour from Farfrae. It is for her sake that he wears the garments of humility by accepting employment under Farfrae. Now he accepts everything calmly and patiently as he has "schooled himself to accept her will".120 He draws a picture of himself living "like a fangless lion about the back room of a house in which his step-daughter was mistress". What he expects is a life "tenderly smiled on

116 MC, p. 365.
117 MC, p. 365.
118 MC, p. 372.
119 MC, p. 381.
120 MC, p. 385.
by Elizabeth, and good naturedly tolerated by her husband". To remain in her company he is ready to tolerate even "snubbing and masterful tongue scourings" from Farfrae.

When Newson reappears in Casterbridge, Henchard is transfixed, paralysed, shocked and confused. He decides to leave Casterbridge as he will not be able to face Elizabeth when his lie is exposed. He is overpowered by suicidal despair at the thought of losing Elizabeth, whose sympathy seems necessary to his very existence. In his anguish, he thinks of Elizabeth only. He reflects:

If I had only got her with me ... if I only had ... Hard work would be nothing to me then! 123

Even as a hay-trusser, he keeps asking people, coming from Casterbridge, about Elizabeth. On her wedding day, he goes to Casterbridge to bless her and to seek forgiveness from her. Even after receiving reproaches and rebukes, he begs for love:

Do you save a little room for me. 124

Against Elizabeth's arrainments, he makes no appeal. In fact he has "ceased to value himself and does not care to lessen his sufferings by strenuous appeal or elaborate argument". 125

Thus, we see that the proud, egoistic, aggressive and self-smug Henchard attains to the stage of a humanist who

123 MC, p. 395.
lives for the sake of Elizabeth and dies for her sake. He removes his harmful presence from Casterbridge lest it may poison Elizabeth's happiness. When he is awakened to the higher values we find that his self is replaced by selflessness and his ego is replaced by humility, patience and submission.

Again in Henchard's relations with Farfrae, we trace a similar marked change from egoism to altruism. Though Henchard loves him with a "tigerish affection". He wants Farfrae to be with him most of the time, sharing his meals, his secrets and privacies with him. At this stage, Henchard's affection for Farfrae is not that of a kind gentleman. In fact, he is so egoistic that he wants "some human object for pouring out his heat upon -- be it emotive or be it choleric". His sinful heart feels an emotional void which he wants to fill by pouring out his secret on someone weak and inferior to him. This effort makes Farfrae his confident and pet. He pours out the bowl of his affection profusely on him, having no inhibitions and reservations. We must keep in mind that all this he does only to satisfy his ego. On the first occasion when his ego is hurt, he withdraws his affection replacing it with jealousy, hatred and revenge. He is madly driven by a revengeful spirit so much so that he plans to "grind him into the ground".

126 MC, p. 137.
127 MC, p. 176.
128 MC, p. 244.
bankruptcy, the forces of death and destruction overpower Henchard. He is so egoistic and self-conceited that he wants some sort of recognition even after his down fall. His domineering, possessive and violently impulsive self can't tolerate humble position. Robert C. Schweik pertinently says that "what begins in Henchard's impulsive desire for a tussle at fair buying and selling develops into his more desperate, planned and culpably savage effort to destroy Farfrae's career." When the Royal Personage visits the town, he tries to "reassert his legitimate authority and rebuild his diminished stature by invading the welcoming ceremonies for the Royal Personage." To establish his superiority and to get recognition, egoistic Henchard, "clad in the frettered and weather-beaten garments of by-gone years" stands out to the occasion and makes himself as prominent and distinctive as Farfrae who wears the official gold. He waves his homemade Union Jack and thus, challenges Farfrae's authority. When Farfrae asks him to come down the stage, he is inflamed and feels insulted. His ego is hurt. He determines to take revenge on Farfrae for this public insult. This feeling for revenge changes into murderous assault. But at the eleventh hour, he is checked by a sense of defiant reproach in

130 Elaine Showalter "The unmaning of the Mayor of Casterbridge" Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Thomas Hardy, ed. Dale Kramer, p. 111.
Farfrae's eyes. He shudders at the thought of committing murder. With this, the anti-climax of his baser feelings starts and his conscience is awakened which remained cramped, so far, under his volcanic egoistic, domineering self. He takes a "full measure of shame and reproach"¹³² so much so that he remains lying on the sacks in a crouching attitude, recollecting the days of his warm-hearted friendship with Farfrae. He cannot help expressing his emotions:

0 Farfrae ... that's not true, God is my witness that no man ever loved another as did I at one time ... though I came here to kill 'ee, I can not harm, ee". ¹³³

He is overpowered by "a sense of degradation"¹³⁴ and becomes a "self-accusing soul"¹³⁵ With this incident, his antagonism to Farfare is gone. His hostility and revengeful spirits are spent up. In a moment of self introspection and realisation, he confesses genuinely:

I ... sometimes think I've wronged ee'. ¹³⁶

Thus, Henchard's attitude toward Farfrae changes from one of hostility, hatred and revenge to that of softness and tolerance. Lucetta suffers a miscarriage. At this, he, "in a state of anxiety and contrition",¹³⁷ goes to Farfrae to bring him back. When Farfrae does not believe his words, he bows down with shame and a sense of degradation at the

realisation that he has become "the image of unscrupulous villainy."\textsuperscript{138}

There is nothing more noble in any of the Wessex novels than Henchard's desperate, unrelenting and futile efforts to bring Farfrae back to his dying wife. He learns the lesson of self renunciation and self-abnegation. By now, he has taken the lesson in altruism. He has continually been fighting against his indomitable egoistic impulses and self centredness for a long time. He succeeds in overpowering his baser instincts of hatred, jealousy, revenge and wrath. He learns to rise above these animal passions. In the end, he comes out to be a self-sacrificing and submissive humanist.

Hardy's conviction is that the full development of human personality involves the rise of social sensibilities as its culminating point when man recognises his duty to his fellow-beings and the great moral positive of sympathy becomes his guiding canon. He has demonstrated this conviction through the character of Grace Melbury in his novel \textit{The Woodlanders}. Grace, the submissive but self regarding heroine of \textit{The Woodlanders}, comes to recognise that personal good is contingent upon the preservation of social values during the course of the evolution of consciousness in her.

In the beginning Grace in an ambitious, snobbish and self-seeking girl who blows hot and cold with Giles at the

\textsuperscript{138} \textit{NC}, p. 363.
command of her father. Though she feels quite uncomfortable in bearing the family's hope for social advancement, her innocent romanticising of her lady at the Great House exposes her own social pretensions and vanities. She is so vain and dreamy at this stage that she feels quite uplifted and privileged when Mrs. Charmond gives her an appointment. This visit makes her "conjure up" many visions of glorious future. Ironically, she seems to support unconsciously her father's decision to her marriage with Giles, for she is affected by the veneer of cultivation and civilization she has attained among her classmates. Though she likes simple and unassuming manners of Giles, the idea of living a luxurious life among fashionable people is no less attractive. She shares her father's vanity, his pre-occupation with honour and his craving for social position. She has a sort of "fastidiousness" about her. She is disconcerted and discontented with the simple Hintock ways, and before some natural adjustment can take place, she is affected by signs of favour shown to her by Mrs. Charmond.

Notwithstanding her egoism, vanities and affectations, Grace has a very humanistic attitude. Hardy tells us that there is always "something so sympathetic, so responsive" in her that the tenderness of her inner being comes immediately to surface. When she comes to know about

140 WL, p. 259.
141 WL, p. 62.
the dilemma of Grammer Oliver, a maid servant in her house, she is filled with sympathy for her, and gets ready to pay a visit to the doctor, so that she may "ease" her "mind". The sorrow of Grammer "weighs heavy on her mind". She is all pity and sympathy for the poor servant who has to undergo such soul-tormenting pain under this fiendish contract. She calls Fitzpiers "merciless, a remorseless Jehovah of the sciences" and an unscrupulous person to have exploited the poverty of this simple soul.

Grace, undoubtedly, rejects the suit of Giles in preference to flashy, sophisticated and superficially fascinating Fitzpiers of ancient lineage, yet she is pricked by her conscience all the time. She is haunted by a sense of injustice to Giles, but she lacks the courage to revolt against her father and moreover, her consciousness is not yet fully evolved. Consequently, she cannot comprehend the gravity of the marital issue. She has, no doubt, somewhere in the bottom of her heart "an old simple indigenous feeling favourable" to Giles though it has become "overlaid with implanted tastes". It is her timorousness which makes her an easy prey to illusions and persuasions, but at the same time she cannot help expressing the call of her conscience:

I am promised to him, father; and I can't help thinking that in honour I ought to marry him, whenever I do marry.

142 WL, p. 118.
143 WL, p. 118.
144 WL, p. 80.
145 WL, p. 80.
Hardy makes it clear that she begins to "feel troubled" as she wishes "to denote" her life unambitiously to Giles. When Melbury makes her promise him not to meet Giles, she "sighs" and Hardy tells us that it was "a sigh of sympathy for Giles, complicated by a sense of the intractability of circumstances." 147

After her marriage with Fitzpiers, Grace becomes all the more gentle and kind-hearted. The sorrowful experiences of married life widen her perception and she comes to perceive what is "great and little in life." 148 With this awakening, her early interest in Giles becomes "revitalised into growth" 149 She becomes liberal with Giles after experiencing the hollowness of artificial life of splendour and luxury. The superciliousness of manners acquired by her fashionable school-education almost disappears, giving place to a humble tolerance and kind-consideration for the simple, rustic people of Hintock in general and Giles in particular. She is so altered and humbled that Hardy Comments:

His (Giles's) homeliness no longer offended her acquired tastes; his comparative want of so-called culture did not now jar on her intellect, her country-dress even pleased her eyes; his exterior roughness fascinated her. Having discovered by marriage how much that was humanly not great could co-exist with attainments of an exceptional order, there was a revulsion in her sentiment from all that she had formally ... clung to in this kind. 50

She resigns herself completely to the circumstances, but

147 WL, p. 88. 150 WL, p. 206.
148 WL, p. 205.
still she maintains her self-pride and dignity. When Melbury asks her to go to Mrs. Charmond to appeal to her not to spoil her marriage, Grace declines the proposal plainly saying:

I don't wish to be more humiliated. 151

She refuses to be saved from "a pack of woes" 152 by the mercy of such an unscrupulous lady. Out of pique, she declares boldly:

Let her do her worst; I don't care. 153

Through trial and tribulations, Grace comes out with courage and self-confidence which she was previously lacking in completely. She becomes broad-minded and liberal. When she confronts Mrs. Charmond, she does not feel jealous of her for stealing her love. She displays a rare equanimity and proves herself to be made of "tougher fibre." 154 Seeing Mrs. Charmond writhing with pain and agony, a deep sympathy for the co-sufferer wells up in her heart. She pities her saying:

Before I came, I had been despising you for wanton cruelty; now I only pity your weaknesses for its misplaced affection. 155

She realises that Mrs. Charmond is in a worse situation than she herself is in and requires not rebukes but

151 WL, p. 208
152 WL, p. 208.
153 WL, p. 208.
154 WL, p. 224.
155 WL, p. 224.
sympathy for "tragedy lies on (her) side of the situation no 
less than (her) and more", because what troubles her makes  
Mrs. Charmond anguished and something which "only disappoints her" has the effect of "despair"^156 on her.  

Grace's large-heartedness can be discerned at its best when Suke Damson and Mrs. Charmond assemble in her house to inquire about Fitzpiers's health –- both grief-stricken and weary. She neither blames nor rebuffs them. Instead, she receives them tenderly. Recognising their equal right on Fitzpiers, she says:

Wives all, let's enter together.^157

She prays to God to save Fitzpiers not for herself but for "Common humanity".^158 This exquisite example of large-heartedness in case of sharing a husband is something rare. In fact, this generosity is indicative of her willingness to involve her life with the suffering of others.  

It is owing to this involvement that she becomes capable of objective sympathy, as it is evident from Hardy's comments:

A tenderness spread over Grace like a dew...The tears which his possibly critical situation could not bring to her eyes surged over at the contemplation of these fellow-women whose relations with him were as close as her own without its conventionality.^159

When Melbury tells her about his bitter quarrel with Fitzierns, she gets infuriated. She becomes worried not about her

husband but about the person on whose life depends the happiness of two other women. She scolds her father for behaving so callously at a time when he is wounded and needs help. When she comes to know that Fitzpiers has flown abroad along with Mrs. Charnond, she does not feel jealous. She maintains her serenity and placidity under such trying circumstances.

Grace still retains her "fastidiousness" and ambition to be one of the country-girls by putting off "the old Eve, the fastidious Miss or rather Madam --completely". 160 She longs to make up with Giles and tries to come closer to him. She blames herself for Giles' suffering. A tenderness and sympathy for all in general and Giles in particular has changed this "proud damsel...a dainty" 161 into a gentler and meak creature. In order to respect Giles's heart-felt desire to kiss her, she almost tempts him to do so when he becomes reluctant on hearing that she cannot be a free woman. Again and again, she abnegates her self for the concern and care of others. When she sees her father subdued with untold agony and anguish as he returns with the news that divorce is an impossibility, she forgets her own grief and consoles him with "a dignified sorrow" 162 in her tone:

Then let it be, and never mind, father. I can bear it. It is your trouble that grieves me most ... I don't mind at all what comes to me. 163

Slowly and gradually Grace's ego is completely submerged and subdued and is replaced by a large-hearted tenderness so much so that in the absence of Fitzpiers, she grows "to regard him with toleration and her relation to him with equanimity". Notwithstanding this change, she is not prepared mentally to accept Fitzpiers as her husband. So, when he comes to claim her, she runs away from home and disappears among the woods. Self sacrificing Giles offered her his cottage to spend the night and himself goes out in the rain. At this, she is touched to the bottom of her heart. She realises that she has caused unnecessary troubles to Giles. When locked in his hut, she is "stirred to action" by a "grateful sense of his kindness". She is worried about Giles whom she has rendered homeless. Her heart expresses a deep regret for doing so. Though a deep sense of propriety compels her to keep Giles out of the hut, she, within her heart, experiences a great upsurge of courage and concern for him. She asks him again and again:

Are you sure you have a snug place out there?

That she is deeply perturbed on account of Giles exposed to rough weather is evident from her worried questioning:

What I regret is my enforced treatment of you, dislodging you, excluding you from your own house.
She feels grateful and indebted to Giles for his selfless sacrifice. Her conscience pricks her for "so selfishly appropriating the cottage". The image of Giles dying outside in the rain makes her shiver in the bones. With a heaving bosom and sorrowful heart, she cries without any of the "shamefacedness:

Giles, Giles O come in ... come in where are you?...I have been wicked I have thought too much of myself ... Do you hear? I don't want to keep you out any longer ... I cannot bear that you should suffer so ... I want you here.

It is only when Giles assures her that he is quite safe and sound that she is relieved of her agony and anxieties. Next day, when Giles does not appear, she becomes worried on account of his health. When she hears "low mutterings", her heart throbs fast and she is overpowered by "horrid misgiving". She leaves aside the fear of being discovered, breaks the shackles of propriety which have, hitherto, "paralysed her wish", comes out with a lantern and searches Giles. Her soul is weighed heavily under the burden of self-accusation and "a dreadful enlightenment spread(s) through" her mind. She bursts out under the weight of new realisation:

Oh,...how selfishly correct I am always...too, too correct, can't be that cruel propriety is killing killing the dearest heart that ever woman clasped to her own.
Grace finds Giles lying unconscious in wet clothes when she goes out to look for him. At this, she is smitten with pains and pangs of anguish at the thought of her own responsibility for his tragic predicament. She is appalled at the thought of what she has done to one who has been so kind, careful and considerate to her throughout. Full of the milk of human kindness, she tries to support Giles with painful efforts to take him inside the hut. She claps her arms round him, "rearing him into a sitting posture, straining her strength to the uttermost". Almost with a motherly tenderness and concern, she removes his wet clothes and makes him lie on the bed. She does her best to bring him back to consciousness. A rare upsurge of pure love and sympathy makes her bow down beside him and "kiss" his hands, and his face, and his hair while "moaning in a low voice". Hardy tells us that Grace becomes an apostle of love and charity while attending on unconscious Giles doing "all that a tender nurse could do". She "administers whatever she can find" that she considers to be "in any way alleviating" his pain. Seeing the seriousness of Giles sickness, she decides to call in the doctor though it means her own exposure. She knows full well that going out is "fatal to her own concealment", but she realises the contingency of the situation in which medical assistance is almost inevitable if

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Giles is to be saved from the impending horror of death. Without any "faltering of spirit" she calls on Fitzpiers to attend on Giles. Grace "alleviating the pain of the dying man ... bending over him ... in silent tears" becomes almost an apostle of love and sympathy.

After Giles' death, Grace develops a sort of deep reverence and holy regard for him. She worships him almost like a God and pays her homage on his grave as if he were a saint or hermit. She sheds tears of repentance and sincere regret over his grave washing it with tears of genuine contrition. Grace's decision to stand by Giles through what may come is the outcome of altruism winning over egoism. Such sorrowful experiences of life sublimate Grace's ego into a selfless concern for aching humanity in general.

Grace is yet to be confirmed in her concern for humanity. She has not overcome her revulsion for Fitzpiers. When she finds Fitzpiers feel humiliated and distressed at her concern for Giles, she draws a sort of sadistic pleasure, and in order to feel triumphant and to rejoice over his discomfiture, she declares:

He's mine is everything to me. 180

178 WL, p. 292.
179 WL, p. 296.
180 WL, p. 297.
She allows Fitzpiers to draw "the extremest inference" from her staying with Giles for so long in the same hut. She feels "a thrill of pride" in misleading and thus, torturing Fitzpiers but soon, Grace realises her mistake, repents over it and asks Marty to tell her father the truth. Though she does not want to leave Giles' hut, she does so for the sake of her father's reputation and to save him from any sound of shame. Gradually and slowly, Grace's heart begins to melt for him. When she receives his letter, confessing that he has always "undervalued" her due to his "erring nature" and asking for her forgiveness, she becomes a bit humble and agrees to meet him. She finds Fitzpiers, changed a lot.

The most remarkable change comes in her when she becomes conscious of her social duty as a wife. In order to ascertain her duty, she consults the religious book and goes through the marriage service. She is "appalled at her recent off handedness" when she reads the "solemn promise she had made him at Hintock Chancel step". Such a revelation is a staggerer for a gentle woman of strong "devotional sentiment". She recognises her duty to Fitzpiers and determines to abide by it notwithstanding her personal feelings. When Fitzpiers shows great concern for her

181 WL, p. 298.
182 WL, p. 301.
183 WL, p. 311.
184 WL, p. 327.
thinking that she has been killed by man-trap, she accepts his "tender regard"\textsuperscript{185} for her and joins hands with him.

Through the sublimation of passions and abnegation of self, Grace learns to live gradually by the adoption of social norms and institutions. Grace's moral maturation reaches its full tide in her mental growth from egoism to altruism, from self-centredness to selflessness, and from social obstricisn to social harmony in her acceptance of Fitzpiers as her husband. In her social conformity, she gives Hardy, "an opportunity to do a first-sketch for Sue Bridehead".\textsuperscript{186} Grace accepts the path of duty and succumbs to those demands of society which are, in Hardy, always more powerful than individual urges. Her going back to Fitzpiers is the socialisation of her rebellious-self. The rise of social sensibility in her makes her accept the social institution of marriage, though it is clear that she will be doomed to an unhappy marriage with a fleshy, libertine who is sure to take some certain freedom of moral stance.

Tess of D'Urbervilles can best be described as a sermon on altruism, "a study in self-renunciation"\textsuperscript{187} and selflessness. It is a record of the journey of a self-sacrificing girl who undergoes killing pains and pangs, troubles and tribulations in order to fulfill her self-assigned duty of providing bread and butter to her destitute family. Tess, the heroine of this novel, is a born altruist. She is

\textsuperscript{185} WL, p. 329.
\textsuperscript{186} Ian Gregor, Thomas Hardy: The Great Web, p. 156.
\textsuperscript{187} Penelope Vigor, The Novels of Thomas Hardy, p. 112.
very conscientious, tender-hearted, kind and philanthropic. It is predominantly this spirit of self-abnegation in Tess that made the positivist Frederic Harrison write to Hardy in a letter:

To me it reads like a positive allegory or sermon. 188

Tess is highly duty-conscious and responsible from the very beginning. She helps her mother in house-hold affairs and in rearing up her so many brothers and sisters. Even at a quite immature age, she can feel the aches of her mother, who is always busy in washing and cooking. She is so sensitive and conscientious that she feels guilty for her merry-making on May Day while her mother is tiring herself by doing the ceaseless work at washing tub. When she sees her father dead-drunk and boasting about his aristocratic origin, she is deeply hurt and pained so much so that "her eyes grew moist and her glance dropped to the ground." While her father is lost in reveries of their prestigious origin, she is worried about how her father would carry out the assignment of taking the beehives the next early morning in such a state of intoxication. She, in fact, holds herself responsible for each and every petty thing around, realising that she is the eldest in the family. It is this ingrained goodness of heart and nobility of disposition that, in a way, compel her to

188 F.E. Hardy, *The Life of Thomas Hardy*, p. 267.
189 *Tess*, p. 22.
assume the responsibility of her irresponsible parents. When her mother tells her about the inability of her father to go to Casterbridge with the beehives, she appears more worried than her mother. Her heart sinks at the thought that if the beehives are not taken to the market, "the swarming will soon be over ..., and the call for them will be past, and they'll be thrown on (their) hands". She, at once, gets ready to do the task assigned. In fact, Tess has "enthusiasm for work, especially of an altruistic nature". She has an inborn willingness and a strong tendency to involve herself with the suffering of others. It is this involvement in the woes and worries of others that becomes almost the deciding factor in the development of her career. From the very beginning, she has realised the principle of duty which binds human-beings together in society.

Tess, no doubt, is conscientious, kind and helpful. Nevertheless, she is an egoistic girl. She has a sufficient degree of self-pride and wants to maintain her dignity even in the worst circumstances. Mrs. Durbeyfield asks her to seek help from one of the young fellows who danced with her on the May Day in taking the beehives to Casterbridge. She shows extreme reluctance and her ego is hurt at this idea of being obliged by others. In a painful but proud tone she replies:

"No -- I wouldn't have it for the world!"

190 Tess, p. 37.
191 Christopher Walbank, Thomas Hardy, p. 208.
192 Tess, p. 38.
Her self-pride does not allow her to invite the people to laugh at her by revealing the reason of her father's inability which, she feels, is something "to be ashamed of".\(^{193}\) She would better take the assignment by herself. It is this egoistic tendency in Tess which makes her disagree with her parents' plan of going to Trantridge to claim kinship with the d'Urbervilles in order to seek financial help from them. In fact, she is made of egoistical stuff and her proud soul would prefer to break than bend. It is this sense of "pride" which makes "the part of poor relation one of particular distaste to her".\(^{194}\) She requests her mother pathetically:

"I'd rather try to get work."\(^{195}\)

Again it is Tess' ego which forestalls her footsteps and does not let her go to Angel's parents to get their assistance in the hour of dire need. She considers it a humiliating act and something that will demean her in their eyes. She has the apprehension of being misunderstood and "despised" by them as "a mendicant"\(^ {196}\) and a schemer for money. Moreover, it goes against her dignity to present herself as "a deserted wife".\(^ {197}\) She undergoes indescribable pain and pangs of life, but does not seek anybody's help. It is only the spectacle of her destitute family that bows her spirit and she surrenders before Alec's amorous intentions. The altruistic impulses get hold of her proud soul, making her

\(^{193}\) Tess, p. 130.  
\(^{194}\) Tess, p. 45.  
\(^{195}\) Tess, p. 45.  
\(^{196}\) Tess, p. 310.  
\(^{197}\) Tess, p. 310.
realise that the alleviation of sorrow, suffering, pains, ills, affliction and anguish is the only goal worth-attaining on this earth inhabited by weltering and seething humanity.

Tess's career enfolds before us a history of the journey of an egoistic and self-proud girl, submitting to the highest principle of social obligation and duty. Altruistic tendencies are the most domineering aspect of her personality. When Irince, the only family-horse, is killed though by no fault of her own, she is overwhelmed by contrition and penitence. She is burdened with a guilt-complex that the horse is killed owing to her own negligence. This self-accusation makes her see herself in the light of a murderer and defaulter:

It's all my doing -- all mine.¹⁹⁸

Immediately, she becomes worried on account of the fact that the horse was the only source of the family's income. Now when it is dead, Tess's sensitive heart and heated imagination visualise "distress" and "penury" looming in the distance; she curses herself for dragging the family into "this quagmire".¹⁹⁹ Out of despair, she exclaims to herself:

What will mother and father live on now?²⁰⁰

Her conscience pricks her again and again for rendering the family penniless and jobless. It is crystal clear from the

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¹⁹⁸ Tess, p. 42.
¹⁹⁹ Tess, p. 44.
²⁰⁰ Tess, p. 42.
reading of the text that she renounced her ego and pride out of the "oppressive sense of the harm she had done" to the family and acquiesces in her mother's plan reluctantly, saying:

Well as I killed the horse, mother
I suppose I ought to do something.

As a matter of fact, Tess, whose "honest heart which is humanitarian to its centre", holds herself responsible for making arrangement to provide bread and butter for the family. It is Tess only "in the long family of waiters on Providence" who gets things done and copes with situations. She feels very solicitious about her father's health and is worried about her brothers and sisters whom she loves almost with maternal affection and care. She is "humanely beneficent" toward the family so much so that Hardy writes:

Every day seemed to throw upon her young shoulders more of the family burdens, and that Tess should be the representative of the Durbeyfields at the D'Urberville mansion came as a thing of course.

Though Tess's guilt-complex compels her to go to Trantridge, "in her own esteem", she sinks "so low" because she considers it quite a degrading and humiliating act. When Alec kisses her for the first time, she wipes the spot with her hankerchief as if to rub the kiss. This act of hers makes Alec comment:

201 Tess, p. 45. 203 Tess, p. 276 205 Tess, p. 47.
202 Tess, p. 45. 204 Tess, p. 46. 206 Tess, p. 47.
207 Tess, p. 67.
You are mighty sensitive for a cottage girl.\textsuperscript{208}

Her wounded-ego presses her to return home as she does not like the amorous advances of Alec, but the faces of her helpless family members haunt her mind compelling her to stay there inspite of her reluctance, aversion to that man and his libertine attitude. She is harassed and offended by his scoundrel-like behaviour, but it appears that she has set herself on a mission of earning bread and butter. For that, she is ready to undergo traumatic and harrowing experiences of life. Tess embraces altruistic impulses and renounces her pride and subdues her ego which stand in the way of carrying out her duties and self-assigned obligations. In fact, her broad line of thinking is that her going back will disconcert the whole scheme for the rehabilitation of her family. When Alec tells her about his gifts of horse, toys and clothes to her family members, she is subdued with an over-whelming sense of gratitude. She feels painfully obliged for this benevolence, wishing, at the same time, if he were not so kind to her. Alec exploits her excessive concern for her family members. While talking about sending assistance to her family, Alec is, in fact, "touching her in a weak place" intentionally, as he has "divined her chief anxiety"\textsuperscript{209} to be the welfare of her brothers and sisters. However, she is exploited by Alec throughout her life for this tragic flaw in her, otherwise, a proud and egoistic soul.

\textsuperscript{208} Tess, p. 67.  
\textsuperscript{209} Tess, p. 393.
Her heart always goes out to her brothers and sisters whom she loves with "an affection that (is) passionate". Their welfare becomes a haunting passion, almost an obsession with her.

After her desertion by Angel, Tess faces acute financial difficulties on account of unemployment. She undergoes untold agonies and anguish, but even amid her own afflictions and aches, she does not forget to ruminate about their tragic affairs at home. She finds herself in the predicaments of an ant on a burning log. At this tragic juncture when she herself is lost in the mire of troubles and tribulation, plague and wretchedness of her personal life, she gets a pathetic letter from her mother telling her about the sickness of her father and the financial crisis arising due to his inability to work, requesting her to send at least twenty pounds so that they may keep their body and soul together. Tess is smitten with anguish and agony at the thought of their destitute and niggard state. For a moment, she becomes oblivious of her own predicaments and suffering, and weeps bitterly over their crisis. Without a moment's thought, she sends them the required amount irrespective of the fact that she has only a meagre amount of money for her personal needs. In fact, with the evolution of higher consciousness in Tess, she moves forward from empirical to

210 Tess, p. 393.
social, from interests in concrete individual things to growing comprehension of the incorporation of the individual things to growing comprehension of the incorporation of the individual in the great social body whose interests are larger than her personal feelings. It is this element of selflessness and an ever-increasing altruistic tendency in her that Jean Brooks eulogises her thus:

Tess is supreme in her human love, passion, trust, forgiveness, pity, sensitivity, responsibility, endurance, dignity, integrity and spiritual light. 211

Tess is so kind and sensitive that the aches and sighs of others make her forgetful of her own bleeding wounds. Though she herself is deeply in love with Angel, the sighs of three love-lorn dairy maids fill her heart with compassion. To her, their heart-aches seem to be much more acute and painful than her own. Her heart rises in sympathy with them and she gets ready to sacrifice her claim instinctively. In tears of sympathy, she holds herself responsible for their predicaments. She curses herself for bringing about the banishment of her family, which faces drudgery and starvation. The misery of the eviction of family and pressing economic needs stir a bitter sense of Angel's unjust cruelty toward her. Never, even for once, does Tess feel distracted or baffled on account of her

personal suffering but the drudgery and starvation of the members of her family whom she has nursed with maternal affection and care are beyond her endurance. In this hour of the worst crisis Alec comes, like an angel of mercy, to their help. He offers to provide the destitute family with shelter, bread and butter and all other necessary requirements of life. Her egoistic heart aches and she feels humiliated, living thus, at the mercy of a man whom she knows to be a scoundrel. In utter poverty and wretchedness, she waits for Angel to come to her rescue, but to use.

Tess experiences a new emotional crisis which can be identified with voices which urge their contradictory claims. Her dilemma is quite evident from her pathetic appeals to Angel through her touching letters. She is torn between the voice of duty that compels her to surrender her love to the nefarious designs of Alec and the voice of conscience that presses her hard to remain true to Angel. The voice of love fills her heart with an upsurge of selfish and cruel thoughts, asking her to leave her destitute family to the cruel forces of chance. For a long time, a terrible war is waged in her heart between the voice of duty and the call of love. Tess hates Alec, but he promises a secure future for her family. The jaundiced and helpless faces of her brothers and sisters haunt her and remind her again and again that
there are other sorrows besides her own. The tearful eyes of
this orphan family pierce through her sensitive and tender
heart, telling her in striking terms that there are other
higher obligations to be fulfilled besides her personal
aspirations. Being a part of their own flesh and blood, she
cannot turn her back on them and leave them to starve
themselves to death. Finally, this passionate and vehement
tumult is subdued by the voice of duty getting the upper
hand. She realises, as always on such occasions, that her
personal gratification is meaningless if that costs the lives
of so many people. There is a higher duty toward humanity
which demands the preservation of the sacredness of life
through renunciation and sacrifice. The baptismal experiences
of life chasten her, bestowing upon her the realisation that
the highest virtue of life is to help and sustain human
beings in their misery. With this awareness, she obliterates
her self and embraces the highest principle of social
obligation. She dismisses her anger and aversion to Alec and
accepts to be his mistress. Those critics who see her
surrender to Alec as lack of fidelity and virtue in her
assume, without any justification, that abstract loyalty is
intrinsically more valuable even when it does greater harm
than good, reduces instead of increasing, the amount of
happiness in the world. No doubt, such critics misconstrue
Hardy's humanism. In fact, it is the same altruistic spirit
which makes Tess recognise that the three dairy maids are
"portions" of the same "Organism called Sex".\textsuperscript{212} It is this recognition of oneness with the suffering family that lends her "resignation a dignity".\textsuperscript{213} It is this identification of her self with the sorrows of others that fills her heart with agony to see the bleeding pheasants. Motivated by an altruistic impulse, she breaks the necks of all bleeding pheasants to put an end to their misery.

In fact, Tess's morality is other-centred and not self-centred. She suffers indescribable agony and aches, mortification and misery on account of her instinctual preference for altruistic deeds throughout her life. In her final self-abnegation and self-sacrifice, she becomes almost an apostle of mercy and selflessness. She reaches the highest state of consciousness where she acquires an awareness of sorrow pervading all sentient existence and discerns a common-bond of sympathy that unites all living-creatures together. This awareness lands her on a plane from where she can see that the religion of humanity and loving-kindness is to be founded on uncompromising and absolute regard for human responsibility is to be the sole guiding principle of life. With this realisation, she decides "to be their \textsuperscript{\textit{providence}}\textsuperscript{214}" in their misery and sorrow. Her nebulousness of mind is replaced by

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{212} \textit{Tess}, p. 171.
\item \textsuperscript{213} \textit{Tess}, p. 171.
\item \textsuperscript{214} \textit{Tess}, p. 401.
\end{itemize}
a lucidity of vision and clarity of perception. She perceives the futility of babble and bubbles of religious sentiments and realises that only suffering is discernible everywhere; so, something must be done to mitigate it as far as possible. If the preservation of her so-called fidelity had brought suffering to herself alone, she would have waited for Angel's forgiveness up to her last breath; but she cannot evade her duty and responsibility to her family for what Hardy describes, the "luxury of dumb and vacant fidelity" to one who has left them to the vagaries of chance forces. It is the humanist in her that leads her to sacrifice her body at the altar of duty. She is spiritually dead after this act and lives only for the sake of her family. It is this awakening of social sensibility and altruism in her that makes H.C. Duffin call her "the most sublime figure in Hardy ... with a nobility that elevates the whole conception of human nature".

The whole career of Jude in Jude the Obscure, can best be described as a lesson in renunciation. Starting his life as a myopic, prejudiced and self-indulgent person and merely a play-thing in the hands of instincts and emotions, Jude attains to the state of heightened consciousness where he learns to subjugate and submit his instincts and emotions

215 Tess, p. 262.
216 H.C. Duffin, The Tragic Novels of Thomas Hardy, p. 58.
to the wishes of others. Awakened and enlightened, Jude adopts, as Douglas Brown observes, "the profound sense of human responsibility"\(^{217}\) as the guiding ethics of his life. Having perceived the reality of practical life and the helplessness of man in the clutches of iron-conventions, blind dogmas and artificial and hollow creeds of life, he adopts the attitude of a stoic, a hermit who is quite resigned to what life offers him.

The humblest and the most ultra-sensitive of all Hardy's protagonist, Jude is an orphan who undergoes much hatred, neglect and suffering since the very hour of his birth. That is why he can feel the aches of others' hearts. He has the sensitiveness of Tess who will break the necks of wounded and bleeding pheasants to put an end to their suffering. It is his participation in the suffering to others that makes Rosemary Sumner conclude that Jude is "rather hypersensitive to the suffering of others".\(^{218}\) Even as a child of eleven, he is so conscientious and sensitive that he tries "to the best of his ability to make his presence tolerable to his maiden aunt"\(^{219}\) by assisting her in household affairs and by earning wages. He scares birds in the fields of Farmer Troutham, but kind and tender-hearted as he is, he hates this cruel business. His heart is filed with sympathy for "the birds thwarted desires". Hardy's comments in this regard deserve mention here:

\(^{217}\) Douglas Brown, *Thomas Hardy*, p. 21.
\(^{218}\) Rosemary Sumner, *Thomas Hardy: The Psychological Novelist*, p. 149.
\(^{219}\) *JO*, p. 37.
\(^{220}\) *JO*, p. 19.
They seemed, like himself, to be living in a world which did not want them. Why should he frighten them away? They took upon him more and more the aspect of gentle friends and pensioners ... the only friends he could claim as being in the least degree interested in him. 221

It is this fellow-feeling which makes him feel guilty for starving the birds by scaring them away while there is enough in the fields for the farmer. With this realisation, he stops scaring them away:

Poor little dears, You shall have some dinner ... You shall. 222

Jude has to pay heavily for this benevolence. The farmer beats him black and blue with the same clacker which Jude is given to scare the birds away, but he does not change his decision "to be kind to them" 223 as a bond of fellow-feeling unite them with him. With writhing body and aching heart, he leaves the fields, he feels as if a fish is hooked out of water; his sensitive heart is wounded to see the cruelty and barbarity of the farmer. On his way back home, he sees some earthworms lying on the damp ground. Amid his own afflictions and agonies, he does not forget that if he goes this way, he will surely be crushing some of them to death.

At this juncture Hardy pertinently comments:

221 JO, p. 19.
222 JO, p. 19.
223 JO, p. 20.
Though Farmer Troutham had just hurt him, he was a boy who could not himself bear to hurt anything. 224

In fact, he is one of those rare human beings whose hearts bleed to see even "the trees cut down or lopped". 225 It is owing to this trait of loving-kindness and sympathetic attitude toward the suffering creatures that it is almost settled that he will suffer a lot, "ache a good deal before the fall of the curtain upon his ....life. 226 He walks "tip-toe" 227 among the worms in order to avoid unnecessary butchery. However, he feels himself united with all creatures "with a magic thread of fellow-feeling" 228 and the grip of this thread becomes all the more tight as he undergoes more traumatic and harrowing experiences.

Even as a child, Jude's hypersensitive heart and reflective mind can perceive the bitter truth that "mercy towards one set of creatures (is) cruelty towards another." This perception sickens his sense of harmony. His heart aches to see life "garish(ing) and rattling". 229 He realises that this suffering is being extenuated by mutual intolerance cruelty and selfishness. Such realisation instils in him a boundless and endless love for the human beings. It is this sympathetic concern for the fellow beings which drives him toward Arabella with the thought that she would be suffering on account of his breaking the promise to meet her. Later

225 JO, p. 21. 228 JO, p. 23.
226 JO, p. 21. 229 JO, p. 23.
on, belied by the myth of the coming baby, he is tricked into an imprudent marriage by Arabella. He puts his dreams of Christminster and learning at stake in order to save Arabella's honour and to be just to her. He comes forward and embraces the higher principle of duty for his companion in her distress by marrying her though the marriage bells seem to be the death knell of his intellectual aspirations and ambitions. Like an "honourable youngman", he obeys the voice of his conscience and accepts marriage simply as a "reparation" for the wrong done to her chastity.

Jude is a born altruist who cannot bear any sort of life suffering and tries his level best to assuage and minimize the suffering as far as possible. When he comes to know that Arabella has starved the pig for the whole day before killing it, he is deeply pained and wounded at heart. He pities "the poor creature" whom he would have to kill in order to sell. With a feeling of disgust and revulsion, he exclaims:

> Upon my soul I would sooner have gone without the pig than have had this to do. A creature I have fed with my own hands. 232

Brute Arabella calls him "a tender hearted fool" and makes fun of him. Jude decides "to stick" the pig "effectively so as to make short work of it" though he has to "lose a shilling a score if the flesh is "red and bleedy". When

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230 JO, p. 63.  
231 JO, p. 61.  
232 JO, p. 70.  
233 JO, p. 70.  
234 JO, p. 70.  
235 JO, p. 70.
Arabella protests, he shouts wildly:

Do be quiet Arabella, and have a little pity on the creature. 236

His agony and anguish are beyond endurance when he sees "the white snow stained with the blood of his fellow-mortal". 237

At Christminster, Sue's pale, thin and frail body gives Jude the impression of her being a weaker fellow who needs his protecting strength and assistance. He cannot afford to hurt her sentiments and sets the gratification of her wishes above his own aspirations and ambitions. Altruistic and conscientious Jude throws aside his ecclesiastical and theological aspirations and bows down to the capricious and whimsical tendencies of Sue. When he learns about her unhappy marital life with Phillotson, he sets for Melchester immediately to help her and soothes her aggrieved heart in her dilemma. He remains wrapped in thoughts about Sue's predicaments and forgets his own hard circumstances. He makes endless endeavours to adjust himself according to her whims and fads and in turn, suffers a lot. Gradually and slowly, he learns "the lessons of renunciation". 238 Though he is pricked a lot by Sue's hot blow cold manners, he never leaves her. When Sue asks him not to meet her after they have enjoyed moments of a long passionate kiss, he humbly acquiesces and writes:

236 JO, p. 70. 238 JO, p. 164.
237 JO, p. 72.
It is a lesson in renunciation which I suppose I ought to learn at this season. 239

Again, when she requests him to come to her help, he rushes to her immediately living aside all personal ambitions and plans. He plans to be a parson, one who can alleviate the suffering of struggling humanity without any formal degree; but he knows it well that in the company of Sue, a romantic pagan with a deep scorn for religion and religious dogmas, he can never achieve his ecclesiastical aspirations. Sue is so afflicted and lonely that he cannot desert her for the sake of abstract religion. So, he undergoes a terrible mental strife -- a war wages between his humanistic tendencies and selfish motives. Finally, his altruistic impulses get the better of him and he embraces the religion of humanity in preference to the abstract dogmatic religion. Distracted mentally and pained at heart, he declares:

I'll never care about my doctrine or my religion any more. Let them go. Let me help you. 240

He receives untold agonies and afflictions at the hands of Sue, owing to her inconsistent and self-seeking attitude, but he stands by her and declares in unequivocal terms:

My dear one, your happiness is more to me than anything ... your will is law to me. I am something more than a mere selfish.... fellow. 241

239 JO, p. 213.
240 JO, p. 220.
241 JO, p. 245.
In fact, Jude's selflessness and self-sacrificing proclivities become the root cause of his tragic predicaments and utter failure in achieving his intellectual or ecclesiastical pursuits. Jude can well perceive that "the torturing destiny" of the Christminster graduate, whom Sue tortured to death, is sealed for him also; but too full of the milk of human kindness, he finds it well nigh impossible to desert such a feeble, frail and orphan girl who has no one else to call for help but Jude. He resigns himself to her whims and fancies completely. He is ready even to be "crucified" at the hands of Sue. The tender-hearted fellow whom the shriek of a rabbit caught in a man-trap makes him so restless that he remains awake in agony throughout the night, becomes a martyr at the alter of his love for Sue. He "who in his childhood had saved the lives of the earthworms" can now visualize the suffering of Sue committed to a love less marriage.

It is not Sue alone whom Jude helps at the cost of his own comfort and pleasure. Arabella, who served him badly, entrapped and cheated him, also gets his care and assistance whenever required. When she writes to Jude, asking for his help in getting divorce and in settling down with another man, he neither hesitates nor thinks of taking revenge on her. Instead, he offers his kind and unconditional help to her. Later on, when she comes to seek his help in her

242 JO, p. 247.
243 JO, p. 248.
244 JO, p. 219.
hard-circumstances, she gets his sympathy. He cannot resist his too dominating altruistic impulses. Hardy comments at Jude's sympathy welling up at her appeal:

An inconvenient sympathy seemed to be rising in Jude's breast at her appeal. 245

He decides to "do her the kindness of hearing" her troubles, notwithstanding Sue's best efforts to thwart him from helping needy Arabella. Sue tries to exploit his emotions by rousing hatred in his heart for Arabella. She cunningly says:

O but why should you take such trouble for a woman who has served you so badly. 247

Kind and conscientious Jude is free from any such instinct of anger or revenge. He replies gently:

But Sue, she is a woman, and I once cared for her; and one can't be a brute in such circumstances. 248

He easily forgives Arabella for her past treachery and considers her nothing but a poor "fellow-creature erring, careless, unreflecting" 249 who deserves every sensible man's sympathy. Though he is separated from her by law, neither law nor other restrictions can break the relation of humanity that binds all human beings together.

Jude himself introspects sometimes and thinks that he is "too thin-skinned" and too "horribly sensitive" 250 to

245 Jo, p. 268. 248 Jo, p. 270.
246 Jo, p. 269. 249 Jo, p. 270.
be born in this mechanical world of shifting loyalties and gross brutality. His heart is always aching, seething and writhing under pain to see the "weltering humanity". Though a "reprobate", an immoral and unworthy person in the eyes of hypocritical ecclesiastical wardens of God, he is more Christian than most of them are, because he follows a different religion — the religion of humanity, which can be easily perceived in his care, love and affection for the destitute child. He is hard-hit to know that the child Father Time, is neglected and scorned by all. He is reminded of his own unhappy childhood as an orphan boy kicked and hated by all and loved by none. A deep love and tender sympathy surge up in his heart when he reacts on himself the pain he sees in the life of that neglected child. Following Hardy's Golden Rule "of love your neighbour as yourself and viewing "all humanity as members of one corporeal frame", he writes to Arabella to send him the child who is "waiting to give and receive sympathy". He does not at all bother to verify the parentage of the child, for such questions are useless. In an emotionally wounded tone, he expresses his views to Sue:

Mine or not mine...I would take him and bring him up. The beggarly question of parentage...What is it after all? What does it matter, when you come to think of it, whether a child is yours by blood or not? All the little ones of our times are

251 JO, p. 292.  
252 JO, p. 306.  
253 Life, p. 224.  
collectively the children of us adults of the time, and entitled to our general care.255

This speech speaks volume of Jude's large-heartedness and humanistic tendencies, in other words, his religion of humanity. When the child arrives, Jude showers his filial love and affection on him, trying his level best to make the gloomy child as happy as possible.

Jude is extremely sensitive to the wrong done to others unwittingly. This sensitiveness increases in its vehemence and degree all the more with the addition of more and more traumatic and horrifying experiences of life which melt his kind heart. With every new kick received by him at the hands of sordid life and its cunning people, his altruistic and benevolent impulses become all the more powerful and dominating. On Remembrance Day, he is so hypnotised by the romance of intellectual atmosphere and the spectacle of the procession of Doctors of Divinity that he remains standing there in rain along with exhausted and pregnant Sue and little children. Later on, when the charm is broken, he is reminded of his callousness of making them all suffer mental and physical pain for the gratification of his foolish desire to eye-witness the procession. He is filled with genuine contrition and vows sincerely:

I'll never care any more about the infernal cursed place, upon my soul I won't.256

255 JO, p. 280. 256 JO, p. 334.
Further, he holds himself responsible for the tragedy of the triple murder for he did not care to find a proper lodging for the family and, like an utterly selfishman, remained lost in his own fads and fancies, "gratifying my infatuations". Had he found a suitable lodging, the tragedy might have been averted. He accused his own sensuality for this mortifying grief of Sue, for it was he who almost compelled Sue to submit to his sexual passions against her wishes. He distorts Sue's ethereal nature and idealistic love for him into an animal passion. He confesses sincerely:

I seduced you...you were a distinct type... a refined creature, intended by nature to be left intact.

He accepts his guilt open-heartedly and confesses that he "ought to have lived in mental communion and no more" with Sue who, in fact, is "a spirit" and no flesh at all. Under the heavy weight of self-accusation and guilt-complex, he burst out:

My God I spoilt one of the highest and purest loves that ever existed between man and woman.

Jude accepts Sue's decision to get separated as "a penance for how he over-ruled it at first time". He does not want to make her more agonised by imposing his own will on her. He abnegates his personal feelings for the sake of Sue's consolations though it is mental death for him. It is this

257 JO, p. 334. 260 JO, p. 359.
258 JO, p. 349. 261 JO, p. 360.
259 JO, p. 359.
selfless concern for others which makes Rosemary Sumner comment:

High sensitivity to the suffering of others is the characteristic of his mind. His ethics remain other centred and not selfishly individualistic.262

Gentle and benevolent, he never nourishes any ill will against her. He takes a long journey in rain to have a last glimpse of Sue's sorrow-stricken face. When he is about to die, Arabella asks him if she should send for Sue. He declines the offer though, in the heart of his hearts, he pines for a "moment of happiness"263 with her. He renounces self-gratification and opts for complete renunciation for Sue's sake. Like a stoic and self-sacrificing humanist, he replies:

Don't tell her anything about me that I am ill or anything. She has chosen her course. Let her go. 264

Thus, we see that he has risen above self and has become an embodiment of altruistic impulses. In the end, Jude, who "could rest no longer till he had put "the creature" out of its pain",265 coughs himself away to the graveyard in order to remove his harmful presence from this world that wants him no more.

262 Rosemary Sumner, Thomas Hardy: The Psychological Novelist, p. 91.
263 JO, p. 397
264 JO, p. 407.
265 JO, p. 219.
Jude stands for Hardy's own humanistic views. Hardy enlarged his concept of altruism "from humanity to the whole conscious world collectively" after it was revealed by Darwin that "all organic creatures are of one family". Jude also tries "to develop all means of easing...mortal's progress through a world not worthy of them" as did his creator throughout his life. Jude's centre of altruism includes all sentient creation and his large-hearted sympathy includes all dumb suffering in its compass. He upholds the sanctity of life sacred, as is evident from his categorical statement.

I am not a man who wants to save himself at the expense of the weaker among us.

In his altruistic pursuits, Jude becomes a symbol of Hardy's concept of alleviating the unnecessary human suffering by awakening of an active sympathy in the heart of man in place of callous impersonality. Jude ruminates that social evils are not completely irremediable like natural calamities. They can, at least, be mitigated and assuaged by developing a sound secular ethics of humanity.

266 *Life*, p. 346.
267 *Life*, p. 332.
268 *JO*, p. 389.