CHAPTER FIVE

CHARACTER IS A GROWING CONCERN

Hardy determines the general tendencies of his characters by tracing their development during the whole course of their lives and by analysing their reactions to different actions and situations. This canon of historical dialectic pertains to his conviction that man is the evolutionary product of nature; he has evolved, is evolving and will evolve in future. While evaluating a character, we are not only to keep in mind his actions but also to analyse his motives and intentions which never belie a character. In Far From the Madding Crowd, the character of Bathsheba can be assessed on this basis.

Our first impression of Bathsheba is that she is vain, proud, egoistic and coquettish, in other words, she seems to be another Fancy Day of Under the Green Wood-Tree, vain and highly amusing, light-hearted and flirtatious. She sees her own face in the mirror with great admiration in her eyes, considering herself to be "a fair product of Nature in the feminine kind."¹ Hardy tells us that in the sparks of her eyes "the vistas of probable triumphs"² and an obvious suggestion that she imagines hearts as "lost and won"³ are remarkably discernible. Oak's sharp eyes can, at a glance, see into "her faults", the greatest of them being "vanity".⁴

¹ FFMC, p. 5. ² FFMC, p. 5. ³ FFMC, p. 7. ⁴ FFMC, p. 7.
She gives us the impression of being quite immature, impulsive and wayward. At this stage, she has no whims or ideas about married life. That is why she rejects prospering Oak's proposal on the plea that he is humble and docile and hence, cannot tame her. She spurns his earnest suit from sheer caprice. Quite immature, fanciful and self-spirited Bathsheba does not find a proper life-partner in Oak. However, she is in no way unsympathetic or cruel. When she sees smoke arising from Oak's cottage, she immediately rushes to him, extracts him out and places his head in her lap in order to bring him back to consciousness. She is so kind that having no water to sprinkle on him, she pours down the bucket of milk on him.

In fact, Bathsheba's vanity is the root of many of her ills. Her false pride and youthful vanity arise out of her consciousness that she has a maddening beauty and coaxing personality. It is her romantic idea of life that does not allow her to accept the honest and industrious Oak and later on, well off, sincere, solemn and devoted Farmer Boldwood. Instead, it throws her into the path of raffish Troy. She inherits a prospering farm from her uncle. This sudden change in her fortune gives airs to her inherent vanity and pride. She becomes over-confident and self smug. As a matter of fact, she is strongly wilful and highly impulsive.
Her impulsive act of smiling at her own reflection in the looking glass has a touch of coquettish vanity and self-admiration. She indulges in romantic fancies which prove ghastly to simple and solemn people like Farmer Boldwood. She is so proud and egoistic that Boldwood's inattention to her charming face distracts her. She is piqued at his indifferent attitude to her glamorous beauty. Her vanity is wounded to think that "the most dignified and valuable man in the parish should withhold his eyes, and that a girl like Liddy should talk about it". The idea of sending valentine to Boldwood is hinted at by Liddy and decided by Bathsheba through a toss. She does it in a fit of spring folly simply to "upset the solemnity" of Boldwood, as Hardy maintains it, but this prankish valentine makes this confirmed bachelor tread, for the first time, the threshold of "the injured lovers hell". She rejoices at her victory when she sees Boldwood's eyes following her everywhere. He becomes "surcharged with the compound, which was genuine lover's love". But when she realises the seriousness of her prank, she is remorseful and repentant. In fact, from the heart of her hearts, she respects Boldwood and never intends to tease him deliberately. It is just a trick to draw his attention, without causing any real harm to him. Hardy clarifies her position in his authorial comment:

5. FFMC, p. 110. 8. FFMC, p. 135.
6. FFMC, p. 111. 9. FFMC, p. 139.
7. FFMC, p. 135.
Being a woman with some good sense in reasoning on subjects where her heart was not involved, Bathsheba genuinely repented that a freak which had owed its existence as much to Liddy as to herself, should ever have been undertaken to disturb the placidity of man she respected too highly to deliberately tease. 10

The truth is that Bathsheba does not know about Boldwood's temperament. She could never imagine that this harmless trick would bring disastrous consequences for her as well as for Boldwood. Being immature and young, she was far from thinking that this prank might be taken as genuinely meant. As a matter of fact, it was innocently played out of ignorance. She intended no harm at all to him. It is rather Boldwood's repressed passions that are more to be blamed for, as Hardy tells us:

> The insulation of his heart by reserve during these many years, without a channel of any kind for disposable emotion, had worked its effect. 11

Seeing Boldwood restless, she feels aggrieved to the depth of her heart. She is at a loss to know how to tackle the situation she has recklessly precipitated.

Bathsheba's personality is a curious mixture of opposite tendencies. Her character enfolds such dominant traits as love, renunciation, reckless dreaminess, romantic fancies and impulsiveness along with proclivity to repentance and self-rectification. These almost self-contradictory

10 FFMC, p. 135.
11 FFMC, p. 139.
attributes of Bathsheba's personality fairly indicate that in her childhood, she has not received proper guidance and schooling and all through these years of her life, she has been struggling hard consciously or unconsciously to give a direction to her wayward impulses in order to attain a definitely formed consciousness. Bathsheba's childhood is marked by a craving for love and affection. Because of her neglected childhood, she is whimsical and impulsive. Her whims are those of an inherent inconsistency, natural in an inexperienced but generally kind girl. She tells Boldwood that "an unprotected childhood in a cold world has beaten gentleness out of me". During her encounters with the inherent pains and sufferings of life, she develops new facets to her personality. Dale Kramer aptly sums up her development over the course of action and says:

Bathsheba definitely evolves from a flititious, light hearted girl to a self-confident farmer, to a chastened but stubborn wife, to a tormented woman ... to a subdued female anxious for the protective strength of Gabriel Oak.

Bathsheba, vain and vacillating among her three lovers, is a development from Fancy Day, but she has a sexual vibrancy that only Troy can fully respond to. As an inexperienced girl, she gets her skirt tangled in Troy's spur, places her body at the centre of his sword-drill and

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12 FFMC, p. 239.
13 Dale Kramer, Proms of Tragedy, p. 31.
gets enchanted and fascinated with his dexterity and "succumbs to the cajoleries that she knows to be false".\textsuperscript{14}

Hardy pertinently comments that in Bathsheba, we see the "element of folly distinctly mingling with the many varying particulars"\textsuperscript{15} of disposition. Her character is marked by a sharp contradiction as the authorial comment goes:

\begin{quote}
Bathsheba, though she had too much understanding to be entirely governed by her womanliness, had too much womanliness to use her understanding to the best advantage. \textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

Though she is rational where business, farm and its management as are concerned, there are few irrational assumptions\textsuperscript{17} her personal matters. It is these irrational assumptions which making dominate her an indeliberate, inadvertent and unconscious agent of evil. When she realises the massiveness of consequences she has invited unwittingly, she is smitten with a genuine remorse and is ready to pay a penalty for her wrong deeds. She is capable of warning others against the thorn under the sweet flower, but where her own impulses are concerned, she is totally blind. Troy awakens impulses in her that re-enforce the sense of her own unreliability in matters of emotions. Throughout the novel, she is shown torn between an unconscious desire to be sexually mastered and a conscious desire to maintain sexual independence, and even to exert sexual authority. Her love

\textsuperscript{14} FFMC, p. 219. \hspace{1cm} 16 FFMC, p. 219.  
\textsuperscript{15} FFMC, p. 219. \hspace{1cm} 17 FFMC, p. 149.
for Troy is that of a "self-reliant Woman" when she "abandon(s) ... (her) self-relaince".\textsuperscript{18} Being myopic and egoistic, she assumes impulses to be a pleasanter guide than her discretion.\textsuperscript{19} Time and again, Hardy refers to her as "a child of impulses"\textsuperscript{20} as "contradictoriness of feminine heart"\textsuperscript{21} and as one who is unable to "direct her will into any definite grove".\textsuperscript{22} Even the most reckless and incurable lover Boldwood is surprised by her inconsistency and calls her "a wretched woman -- deluded".\textsuperscript{23}

Bathsheba is unable to follow a straight and narrow course in love. The most remarkable manifestation of her disintegrating romanticism is her capitulation to Troy whom she marries for no better reason than "jealousy and distraction".\textsuperscript{24} It is more out of indecision than absolute conviction that she marries him secretly though he warns her that his constancy in love is not reliable. Soon, the truth of his statement dawns on her. The story of his desertion of Fanny and her subsequent death in child-birth comes to light, bringing indescribable agony and anguish to her. By and by, she is purified of her romanticism and vain folly and emerges out to be a wise and experienced married woman who has tasted the tribulations and tortures of life. The errant Bathsheba is changed into a reflective and sober lady who sprinkles flowers on the grave of Fanny, sympathises with her

\textsuperscript{18} FFMC, p. 219. \hspace{1em} \textsuperscript{22} FFMC, p. 237. \\
\textsuperscript{19} FFMC, p. 220. \hspace{1em} \textsuperscript{23} FFMC, p. 237. \\
\textsuperscript{20} FFMC, p. 205. \hspace{1em} \textsuperscript{24} FFMC, p. 297. \\
\textsuperscript{21} FFMC, p. 298.
tragic lot and now, no more envies, her. Her marriage with Troy teaches her that she has a social obligation in which only an Oak, eager to save her unprotected ricks against the calamities of nature, can help, and a swanky gallant like Troy is of no use to her. It is Oak with whom she is inseparably united through the bond of toil and labour. She learns the principle of stoic endurance and calm resignation under the mentorship of Oak. We perceive the positive redemptive effect of suffering on her. She learns the sweet uses of adversity, though too late. Vain and proud Bathsheba, who sacks Oak for criticizing her private conduct evolves out to be the repentent woman who gratefully pleads Oak to stay with her and learns to trust his "opinion more than her own" and gradually adopts "the deeds of endurance" which seem "ordinary in philosophy" only. She grows to reject the conventional christian myth of benevolent universe and is educated by experiences to adopt an alternative one as she becomes conscious of the fact that the universe is indifferent to man's aspirations.

Throughout the novel, Hardy depicts a gradual process of growth toward self-knowledge and wider sympathy in the character of Bathsheba as well as in others. The vain Bathsheba who astonishes Oak with her horsemanship, who acts and behaves like man, saddles a pony in a masculine,

26 FFNC, p. 449.
fashion, assumes the masculine role of an aggressor and seducer with Boldwood, is the most infirm girl who requests pathetically to be kissed by the man whose infidelity is proved in day-light. She herself tells Liddy that she is not "a bold sort of maid -- mannish", to which Liddy replies frankly:

Oh, no, not mannish; but so almighty womanist that it is getting on that way sometimes.

In fact, Bathsheba is girlish, womanish and mannish at once. In her early twenties, she is very much a child. All the three men are at once, lovers and father to her. She can entice Boldwood with her youthful charms, but in the face of a furious revenge, she finds herself as helpless as "only a girl". In the presence of dashing Troy, there is "a little tremulousness in the usually cool girl's voice". In her, Hardy depicts growth as a fitful ebbing and flowing of an improvement of external and internal struggle against whimsical traits in an infirm nature. After the reported death of Troy, she is reminded of her previous injustice to Boldwood and is, now, eager to make "reparation of her fault" by marrying him as "a sort of penance". Thus, with best of intentions, Bathsheba invites the worst of consequences by encouraging Boldwood to renew his love-suit that culminates

27 FFLIC, p. 449.
28 FFMC, p. 233.
29 FFMC, p. 241.
31 FFMC, p. 413.
32 FFMC, p. 420.
in Troy's murder and Boldwood's life-imprisonment. After Troy's murder, even her residual zest for life passes away and her rebellious tendency dies, giving place to submission and introspection so much so that Hardy calls her to be of "the stuff of which greatmen's mothers are made" and one "indispensable to high generation". Bathsheba, whom even her menfold call as "vain feymell" and "head-strong maid (who) won't listen to no advice at all" is so much changed by her baptismal experiences that the surgeon is perforced to exclaim:

Gracious Heaven...this mere girl, she must have the nerve of a stoic.

Over and above her round individuality, Bathsheba stands symbolically for life itself, capricious and alluring, marked by the duality of perception. This duality of her perception is corrected with the evolution of consciousness and awakening of knowledge and wisdom through experiences. Finally, she learns the ethics of how to live as painlessly as possible in this world of cruelty and pain. Infirmity and indecision -- the outcome of her ignorance -- are replaced by coherence of thought and courage in matured Bathsheba as Penelope Vigar says her "progression from naive complacency to deepening self recognition". It is only at the end of the novel that Bathsheba, "totally subdued and dependant on

33 FFMC, p. 449.
34 FFMC, p. 48.
35 FFMC, p. 114.
36 FFMC, p. 452.
37 Penelope Vigar, The Novels of Thomas Hardy: Illusion and Reality, p. 104.
Oak, enters into a mature recognition of her own limitations and acceptance of the blessings of an unambitious existence". Hardy's own depiction of Bathsheba's three-phase development from innocence through experience to maturity cannot be over-looked while passing our judgement on her character. Hardy alludes to Wordsworth's poem "she was a Phantom of Delight'(1904) in order to show Bathsheba's evolution from a phantom of delight through a woman of simple wiles, praise, blame, love, kisses, tears and smiles and finally, a mature lady", a being breathing thoughtful breath", endowed with stoic endurance, foresight, strength and temperate will and a perfect woman nobly planned. After coming out of the cobwebs of complexes, pride, prejudices and social conventions, she recognises a real and lasting, trustworthy and tested friend and life-partner in Oak. Her advances toward Oak show that she has experienced a moral regeneration, an initiation into a new state of perfect consciousness; she has been liberated from her terrible conflict of dual perception; and she has evolved out to adopt sorrow and suffering as a part and parcel of life.

Bathsheba has, from the very beginning, a lively and highly sensitive conscience which pricks her whenever she happens to commit some mistake or does injustice to someone. When Oak approaches her for the first time at Norcombe Hill

38 Dale Kramer, Thomas Hardy: Forms of Tragedy, p.34.
39 FFMC, p. 391.
with his love-suit, she is tortured by the pricks of conscience when she lights the flame of irresistible love in Boldwood's heart unwittingly. She is filled with a disquiet and curses herself for being "wicked to have made... (him) suffer so". 40 It is her guilty conscience that makes her agree to Boldwood's proposal of marriage after six years though she suffers intense agony. When Oak informs her about his plan of migrating to California very soon, she is made to introspect herself. Her heated imagination brings her past intercourse with Oak before her eyes and she conscientiously concludes that she has been rude, harsh and unjust to him who has stood by her, fought for her and worked for her with his staunch devotion and unflinching love. It is this realisation which makes her move to Oak's cottage with a repentent heart, awakened consciousness and enlightened perception. Christopher Walbank aptly comments that "the harmony between man and labour" that was destroyed by Troy "with his irresponsibility and ignorance" 41 is established at last by the union of Bathsheba and Oak, bound together by the essential ethics of toil, suffering and love. The quality of their love is neither romantic nor consuming and passionate, it is rather the outcome of a perfect harmony between their love, work and feelings, a faith in that

40 FFMC, p. 148.
41 Christopher Walbank, Thomas Hardy, p. 48.
comaraderie that is the product of experience, endured side by side, which alone can make love as strong as death. This final act of submission, self-abnegation and wisdom redeems the previous follies and faults of immature and inexperienced Bathsheba who is humbled, tamed and awakened through many years of severe schooling.

In *The Return of the Native*, Hardy catches at the root of tendencies and traces their continuity to establish what Eustacia comes to be finally, proving in this way that no human act or emotion is entirely unconnected with what a person has done or felt at sometime in the past. From the very beginning, Eustacia is dominated by an illusionary dreaminess accompanied by a fickle-mindedness and haughtiness, and she remains so up to the end of her life. Incorrigible selfishness, egoism and evasiveness that end with Eustacia's tragic suicide establish Hardy's canon that nature never neglects the past and what we have been will decide what we will be.

Eustacia is romantic, sensual and ignorant, living with a negligent grandfather who never exercises any check or restraint on her. She is her own mistress. Having a confused consciousness and no moral education at all, she has a savage independence of spirit as the author tells us:

Eustacia Vye was the raw material of a divinity. On Olympus she would have done well with a little preparation. She had the passions and instincts
which make a model goddess, that is, those which make out quite a model woman. 42

She is always lost in a world of fantasies and dreams. She acquiesces in illusion. Her life is primarily nocturnal, a moonlight existence, Leonard W. Deen aptly comments:

She is a goddess in her power and Capriciousness, a Titaness in her rebelliousness, a witch in her solitude and mystery, a femmefatale in her power to arouse passion in others, and a Cleopatra in her pride, her passion and her scorn of consequences. 43

Eustacia is a wayward and impulsive girl, quite common place in her wishes and feelings -- a passion for the beautiful in life as is consistent with a shallow heart and uncultivated mind. Her life is remarkably marked by a feeling of boredom and ennui. She is encumbered by a greater reservoir of unused emotions ready to precipitate itself on the first attractive person Wildeve who comes along, but he does not answer her passions satisfactorily. So, she leaves him in a situation of exasperated boredom. However, when she comes to know that Wildeve is going to marry Thomasin, her passions for him are again excited and she signals him by lighting fire on the heath. Such is her nature that she loves and hates in a single breath. Hardy says:

She knew that he trifled with her; but she loved on. 44

She has a "flame-like" soul craving for adventures and

42 RN, p. 93.
43 Leonard W. Deen, "Heroism and Pathos in The Return of the Native", Hardy, the Tragic Novels, ed. R. P. Draper, p. 120.
44 RN, p. 92.
45 RN, p. 93.
excitements of life. The life at Egdon seems to impose a circumscribed life of petty concerns which offers no fulfilment to her large ambitious soul. She dreams of some other place, some heroic gallant on white horse anxious to kiss her ruby-red lips. Eustacia is the clearest example in Hardy's fiction of the complete submission to the law of mediated desire. She ceases to love the man who is not loved by other woman and loves him again when he becomes desirable to other person. Her "supersubtle epicurean heart" does not desire "the undesired of others". Her relation to Wildeve is mediated by way of his relations to Thomasin. As soon as she comes to know that Thomasin does not want to marry Wildeve, he is magically drained of his attractiveness for her. The behaviour of hers goes to prove that she is thoroughly selfish and unscrupulous. For a very selfish and trivial motive, to show her "power" and to get rid of her boredom for a while, she calls Wildeve to thwart his plan of marrying Thomasin. The same selfishness and hankering after pleasures and gratification of passion can be seen in her again summoning of Wildeve after her bitter separation from Clym. She feels no qualms of conscience about breaking Thomasin's marriage by enticing her husband through persuations and her charms. She would have broken her marriage vow by fleeing with Wildeve if he would have been "a Saul or a Bonaparte".

46 RN, p. 371.
47 RN, p. 126.
48 RN, p. 371.
In fact, Eustacia is an extremely self-centred girl who has detached herself from others on Egdon. That is why people do not like her and call her a witch. Her rejection of society and non-conformity is mainly responsible for her ennui and boredom with life. Mrs. Yeobright tells Clym:

Miss Vye is to my mind, too idle to be charming.
I have never heard that she is of any use to herself or to other people. 49

Eustacia herself confirms this opinion of Mrs. Yeobright about her:

I have not much love for my fellow-creatures.
Sometimes I quite hate them.50

The same hatred becomes one of the causes of her not answering the knock at the door by Mrs. Yeobright even when she sees her quite tired, sick and exhausted to the soul. No scruples in her heart evoke a pity in her. She does a monstrous cruelty which one should not do, as Mrs. Yeobright says "against a neighbour's cat on such a fiery day as this". 51 At this juncture, she appears to be completely devoid of the milk of human kindness. In fact, she has no tender feelings or kindness in her heart. She can do any damn thing in order to save herself from blame. Clym seems to be right when he says that she is "a murderess".52 She, therefore, deserves to be punished as mercilessly as possible.

Eustacia is very adament so much so that she would

49 RN, p. 226. 51 RN, p. 306.
50 RN, p. 226. 52 RN, p. 342.
like to break than bend. Even Clym attacks her ruthlessly in a ferocious mood, she does not accept her fault. She rather declares boldly:

I'll hold my tongue like the very death that I don't mind meeting, even though I can clear myself of half you believe by speaking. 53

She does not open her mouth even for her own sake when she is adamantine. Her egoistic soul will not like to say anything in her defence. She says among tears:

Who of any dignity, would take the trouble to clear cobwebs from a wild man's mind after such language as this? No, let him go on, and think his narrow thoughts, and run his head into the mire. I have other cares. 54

She is the kind of woman who will not beg for mercy or make any confession. It is her rigidity and stubbornness that contribute to bringing about her tragedy. She possesses real energy of resistance to circumstances and has a buoyancy of spirit arising from the unrestrained sensibility which is the moving force of her life. We find a "smouldering rebelliousness" under the shady splendour of her beauty.

Eustacia's misfortune is that she lives in a world of day-dreams and fallacies. Her yearning for the distant, whether it be for Paris or a mysterious jewel-dealer who is returning to heath, is her driving force which blinds her.

53 RN, p. 345.
54 RN, p. 345.
55 RN, p. 94.
She is a pathetic victim of an overwhelming passion for beauty and luxury. When she comes to know about Clym returning from Paris, she immediately falls in love with him. So susceptible she is to the mysterious lure of Clym that one glimpse is enough to cause an outpouring of bottled up emotions. Clym seems to promise so much that the ennui of undirected passion becomes focussed on him in an instant of infatuation. J.H. Miller accurately assesses her infatuation with Clym.

Eustacia's love for Clym is directed not toward him, but toward what he seems to stand for, or to promise her. She remains lost in a reverie up to the end of her life. J.I.M. Stewart accurately evaluates her character and says that "quite contrary to Clym, Eustacia feels attracted towards glamorous and glittering life in Paris. An escape to Paris represents for Eustacia the acme of imagined happiness".

In fact, Eustacia is Emma Bovary of the heath or perhaps more exactly its Caroline Lamb, looking for some impossible tempestuous Byron to transport her from the nullity of heated Egdon to some glamorous city. She is the best example of Hardy's characterisation of a particular kind of woman foreshadowed in Elfride of A Pair of Blue Eyes and more dimly in Bathsheba. Her hedonism verges on the border

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56 J.H. Hiller, Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire, p. 129.
57 J.I.M. Stewart, Eight Modern Writers, p. 33
of neurosis. She is a romantic whose hatred of the heath and whose vision of a romantic life in some glittering city constitute an obsession. She nourishes a vision of romantic love and pines for "the abstract called passionate love more than for any particular lover". For her, love is a vehicle to "drive away the eating liness of her days".\textsuperscript{58} She knows love to be "a doleful joy" and still longs for it "as one in a desert would be thankful for brackish water".\textsuperscript{59} Hardy makes it clear through his authorial comments that love is a game which Eustacia plays in order to "deliver" herself from "fearful gloom and loneliness".\textsuperscript{60} of her "banished" life. That is why faithfulness and fidelity in love cannot be expected from her as she thinks:

\begin{quote}
A blaze of love and extinction, was better than a lantern glimmer of the same which should last long years. \textsuperscript{62}
\end{quote}

That is why she can shift her love at once and without any scruples or pricking of conscience from Wildeve to Clym and again to Wildeve as easily as we change dresses. She idealises Wildeve "for want of a better object" and as soon as she sees "the advent of a greater man" Clym, she longs to be free. In fact, her fiery soul's longing for "surface brilliancy" and the paltry excitement of promenade flirtations at a fashionable watering-place and an elegant

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{58} RN, p. 96.
\item \textsuperscript{59} RN, p. 97.
\item \textsuperscript{60} RN, p. 95.
\item \textsuperscript{61} RN, p. 96.
\item \textsuperscript{62} RN, p. 96.
\item \textsuperscript{63} RN, p. 98.
\end{itemize}
summer" can lead her, as H.C. Duffin says, to "anything in trousers" obsession that draws her toward Clym. It is her dream of heroic love and social brilliance that makes her frustrated with Clym after the reversal of his fortune. Richard Carpenter aptly says that Mrs. Yeobright can see the tragedy of her son writ-large in his matrimony with such "idle and voluptuous husy of questionable antecedents".

Eustacia is, more or less, a representative of the elemental urges of human consciousness which have broken the primary harmony of nature. So she feels bored and disgusted. Her ambitious yearning for the pleasures of cosmopolitan cities makes her circumscribed life at heath as an exile and creates confusion in her consciousness. She cries bitterly for happiness without a clear-cut comprehension of it. Throughout her life, she remains engaged in the mad pursuit of the fulfilment of her dreams and fantasies, but she gets only frustration and disappointment. In her hedonistic tendencies, she is just the opposite of Clym's intellectualism and humanitarianism. She adopts a non-challant and indifferent attitude toward Clym's affliction. She is so jealous that she envies him for his "gift of contentment" which she does not possess. She declares her envoy:

If I were a man in such a position I would curse rather than sing.

64 RN, p. 98.
65 H.C. Duffin, The tragic Novels of Thomas Hardy, p. 17.
66 Richard Carpenter, Thomas hardy, p. 94.
67 RN, p. 332.
68 RN, p. 332.
She pities herself for being the wife of such a "poor afflicted man earning money by the sweat of his brow". She is wounded to see Clym enjoying the humiliating work which is galling to her. She weeps in silence because Clym's mood of serenity and contentment has "the blasting effect upon her own life". Instead of having a sympathetic attitude toward Clym in his misfortune, she blames and curses him for putting her in that humiliating and jarring situation. Hardy perfectly assesses her mental state:

To Eustacia the situation seemed such a mockery of her hopes that death appeared the only door of relief if the satire of Heaven should go much further.

When she sees Clym singing, she is overpowered by a strong sense of defiance with a "rebellious sadness" and goes to East Egdon in search of "reckless gaiety". Eustacia hedonism compels her to steal away some moments of pleasure even if they are temporary and false. Wildeve's offer to dance disturbs her "equilibrium of the senses" and she enters the dance from "the troubled hours of her late life as one might enter a brilliant chamber after a night walk in a wood". She allows herself to enjoy the pleasures of the moment quite heedless of social norms and propriety and makes "an irresistible attack upon whatever sense of social order there was in their minds by riding upon the whirlwind".

Hardy aptly comments that Eustacia's "reason" becomes "sleepy and unperceiving in inverse proportion". She crosses all limits of decency and decorum for the gratification of her passions. Henceforth, she decides to steal pleasures by all means, fair or foul, in order to wash away "the silent perturbation descending on her". In fact, she does not believe in fidelity for its own sake. Her only guiding principle is hedonism. She can never understand that type of selfless love which Venn has for Thomasin. She is rather incredulous about this type of self-sacrificing love:

What a strange sort of love, to be entirely free from that quality of selfness which is frequently the chief constituent of the passion, and sometimes (as in her own case) its only one. 

Hers is a grasping and self-gratifying love. She loves Clym as he appears to be the hero who will transport her from this dull and drab life of Egdon to the gaudy and glamorous life in Paris where she imagines herself "dancing to wondrous music" with a partner "in silver armour". That is why when she finds herself shut up in a small cottage on the very Egdon Heath, she is completely disenchanted and disillusioned. Her love and admiration for Clym also vanish with the failure of her ambitions. She rebukes and reproaches him when he is undergoing the worst sort of inward suffering due to his mother's tragic death. She blames him

77 RN, p. 284 79 RN, p. 176
78 RN, p. 303 80 RN, p. 142
for the failure of her romantic dreams:

You are nothing to me in future, I have lost all through you, but I have not complained. Your blunders and misfortunes may have been a sorrow to you, but they have been a wrong to me. All persons of refinement have been scared away from me since I sank into the mire of marriage. Is this your cherishing...to put me into a hut like this, and keep me like the wife of a hind? You deceived me...not by your words but by appearances.81

Her words make it clear that she loves Clym only to be introduced by him to some of the wonders of the world, and to the dazzling delights of Parisian society.

A careful look at the brief career of Eustacia shows that her egoism, selfishness and illusionary nature are incorrigible. And they continue to be so upto the end of her life. Governed purely by the principle of self-gratification, she gets ready to flee with Wildeve whose changed fortune promises her a bright life in Paris. She lives from moment to moment. Even after passing through the trials and tribulations of practical life, she cannot get rid of her romantic fantasies. Thus, while Clym attains to the stage where self is abnegated and passions are completely sublimated by a higher principle of altruism and humanitarianism, she remains confused in her consciousness and remains passionately driven by a blind pursuit of snatching some happy moment of a luxurious life. She

81 RN, p. 348.
ultimately bids farewell to this world at a time when she is completely engrossed in her mad pursuit for happiness. Thus she proves Hardy's dictum that we will be what we are, and we are what we have been. Hardy's description of Eustacia, in the beginning of the novel, as "a motionless figure" with an "extra-ordinary fixity" proves to be judicious and accurate.

In *The Mayor Of Casterbridge* Hardy determines the value of a character by tracing his logical development in terms of accidental happenings and under-current feelings. It is not the deed done but the intention behind it which makes it good or bad. Hardy amply applies this historical method on Henchard, the protagonist in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. In the very title of the novel, he declares that Henchard, whose character is the best example of Hardy's deep psychological insight into the hidden recesses of human heart and soul, is "a man of character".

Henchard is perhaps the most controversial and complex character of Victorian novels. He invites a host of critical comments. Fredrick R. Carl calls Henchard "essentially a goodman who is destroyed by the chance forces of a morally indifferent world upon which he has obsessively attempted to impose his will". Rosemary Sumner says that

82 RN, p. 81.
83 RN, p. 80.
Henchard is "a violent, demanding self-centered ... conspicuously old fashioned behind the time ..." 85 and "a monolithic aggressive, rigid" 86 fellow. The fluctuating attitude of Henchard makes Irving Howe say:

Henchard is one of those unfortunate people whose burden it is that he responds with excessive force to both the demands of ego and the claims of moral commandment. 87

R. Carpenter assesses Henchards as "a man of strong passions" 88 Professor H.C. Webster compares him with Shakespeare's King Lear. He says that Henchard's first folly in selling his wife "inevitably recalls first scene of King Lear and that his final defeat and isolation inevitably and even with more pathetic force recall King Lear's lonely death ... In a sense, he is as tragic as Lear ..., in another sense, he is still more pathetic". 89 F.R. Southerington calls him a man who is guided by "egoism and obstinacy". 90 Jean Brooks says that he "is overtly or implicitly compared with Achilles, Ajax, King Lear and Faust"; he is a man whom "the primitive past and primitive nature operate" in his "instinctive impulses usually disastrous in a modern civilization that

85 Rosemary Sumner, Thomas Hardy: The Psychological Novelist, p. 57.
86 Ibid., p. 58.
87 Irving Howe, Thomas Hardy, p. 86.
88 Richard Carpenter, Thomas Hardy, p. 103.
89 H.C. Webster, "Introduction", The Mayor of Casterbridge (New York: Kinehart 1948), p. IX.
90 F.R. Southerington, Hardy's Vision of Man, p. 100.
must progress morally". Laurence Lerner says that Henchard is a "mixture of pride and impulses", "a rash head-strong man" who has "a tendency to impose himself on the world". Trevor Johnson says that "Hardy's genius has given in Henchard a character essentially simple, superstitious, almost child like, as much the slave of his emotions as a seven year old child."

Not only the critics and readers but also other characters in the novel itself give us strikingly divergent opinions about the protagonist and we get a variety of conflicting assessments of his character. Seeing Henchard's behaviour in the furmity tent, an onlooker calls Henchard "a cruelty". Susan also supports this view when she says to Henchard:

I've lived with thee a couple of years, and had nothing but temper.

Elizabeth's first impression of Henchard is that he is a generous, kind and warm hearted man, but, later on, after the discovery of her true parentage, she changes her opinion and tells Lucetta that he is an angry man but "not certainly bad". Lucetta expresses her own opinion and says that "he is a hot-tempered man -- a little proud, perhaps ambitious, but not a

93 Trevor Johnson, Thomas Hardy, p. 113.
94 MC, p. 42.
95 MC, p. 44.
96 MC, p. 111.
bad man". 97 Farfrao calls him "a man of passion"98 and "a bit crazed"99. Thus, Henchard's character is made so complex that we get a host of divergent and opposing comments from readers and critics.

The opening scene of the novel introduces Henchard as a violent, cruel, reckless and drunken fellow, one who gives free play to his whims and eccentricities, without caring for the sentiments of others not even for social propriety. He presents himself as a hard-hearted fellow who "evinces no love for his wife or child".100 Susan expects anything worse possible from him which shows his unpredictable behaviour and moodiness. After getting over-drunk, he sells his wife and child for five guineas to a sailor, which shows, that Henchard excercised a property right over his wife. Our moral sense is outraged at this heinous crime and he, no longer, appears to be "a man of character", but one who is made of villainous stuff. We must keep in mind that Henchard does not sell Susan and his daughter for the sake of five guineas; it is not the money but thwarted ambition which makes him sell them in order to be free and that also in a drunken frenzy when he does not fully understand the implications of the act. Being myopic and ignorant, he simplifies his predicaments by reducing them to "the ruin of good man by bad
wives". He is jobless and penniless, burdened with a family. He is ambitious by nature and wants to make a fresh start in life. His frustrated ambition, accompanied by his temperamental aggressiveness and heightened by excess of rum, makes him get rid of Susan by this shocking transaction for which he has to repent throughout his life. It is not the act of selling but the aftermath that is more significant and decisive. Henchard bears no ill-will or malice against Susan. As soon as she flings her wedding-ring in his face, he is awakened from his stupor, and "a stolid look of concern" permeates his face", as if, after all, he "had not quite anticipated this ending". In the morning when he recollects the incident, he is remorseful. That Henchard does not want to strike this bargain is clear from his ruminations in the morning:

Yet she knows I am not in my sense when I do that.

And again:

She was not queer if I was. It's like Susan to show some idiotic simplicity. Meek ... that meekness has done me more harm than the bitterest temper. 103

Through his authorial comments Hardy makes it clear that Henchard does all this in a dream-like way. When the dream is shattered, he is sober, calmer and repentent. He is filled with "the conviction that he must somehow find her and

102 MC, p. 45.
his little Elizabeth Jane and put up with the shame as best as he could." He repents conscientiously and accepts that it is "his own making and he ought to bear it." He is so remorseful at the previous night's blunder that he goes to the extent of taking a severe oath of not touching liquor for twenty-years. He keeps this oath conscientiously, which shows that his contrition is genuine. He searches for Susan and the child for months together. It is only when he is told that a sailor of this description has migrated along with a woman and a child that he decides to settle down in Casterbridge. This incident goes to prove that though he is an aggressive and egoistic fellow, essentially he is a conscientious, kind-hearted man capable of genuine repentance and ready to amend the wrong done. In fact he is a man who is an easy prey to eccentric follies, and one who acts on the spur of the moment without any thought to its consequences.

Henchard is not constant in his behaviour. The worst curse of all is his temper, so violent and so irritable that even those whom he loves from the depth of his heart cannot endure it. That is why he is estranged from all one by one, though he would have given his heart's blood for any one of them. In the Furmity Tent, Henchard's behaviour makes critics call him virile, rigid, and devoid of all passions and emotions, but it is not at all true about him. As a

104 MC, p. 49.
105 MC, p. 49.
matter of fact, he is excessively emotional. Only a sentimental person like Henchard can inflict such a severe punishment on himself as not to touch any strong liquor for twenty-one years. It is not lack of emotions but excess of emotions that make Henchard possess everybody vehemently. Hardy's own comments can pertinently be quoted here. He says that Henchard is a man:

whom some human object for pouring out his heat upon...(be it emotive) or (be it choleric) is almost a necessity.106

His separation from his wife and a guilt-complex create an emotional and lasting void in his heart. It is this emotional void which arises in him a passionate desire for full possession of some other person. His life becomes a sequence of relationships in which he focusses first on one person and then on another, desiring each with unlimited vehemence. From Susan to Lucetta, Farfrae to Elizabeth, he moves in an exasperated desire, a craving to fill the emotional void in himself. This heart-felt longing for possession makes him keep Farfrae near him and results in "a tendency to domineer".107 He has a "tigerish affection" for Farfrae whom he finds resembling his younger brother. His open-hearted and lavish affection for Farfrae makes him think of him as "undisciplined, if warm and sincere".108

106 MC, p. 176.
107 MC, p. 137.
108 MC, p. 137.
109 MC, p. 150.
Besides the deep primal discord of Henchard's character, he has, within the boundaries of his consciousness, a great deal of complexity. Trevor Johnson is absolutely right when he says that Henchard is "incapable of being luke-warm". He badly needs affection, but being egoistic and aggressive, he does not want this affection to be showered on him as an act of mercy. He demands rather "coercive affection in order to feel manly and esteemed". Ian Gregor aptly says that in characterizing Henchard, Hardy is "preoccupied by the question of divisiveness of consciousness within man himself whereby his very energies become directed towards his self-destruction". It is this 'divisiveness of consciousness' that exerts adjectives which make rival claims upon Henchard—egoistic rash, jealous, proud, generous honourable, conscientious and kind. The novel presents us with what Ian Gregor calls it, the "kaleidoscope of moods all being lived out at the nerve's end and fuelling them all, there is a deep and diffused sense of self-estrangement".

Henchard is just and fair in his deeds. He makes amends to Susan by marrying her and providing her with all the comforts of life. He gets ready to provide Lucetta with his name for her selfless services at Jersey as soon as he is free to do that. That Henchard is fair in his savage fashion

110 Trevor Johnson, *Thomas Hardy*, p. 115.
112 Ian Gregor, *Thomas Hardy*, p. 115.
113 Ibid., p. 118.
is shown in his fighting with Farfrae with one arm tied behind his back, thinking him to be physically a weak person. He is large-hearted and conscientious. He responds publicly and makes a dignified withdrawal as magistrate and accepts furmity woman's allegation that he is no better than she. Only a man of high moral courage can lower himself in public-eyes in such a way. If he wished, he could have hussed her up by not accepting her allegation, as no one else in Casterbridge knows about his past. When he becomes bankrupt, he proves himself fair and honest by going to the extent of selling his watch to pay a needy creditor. This generous performance of a bankrupt belies the previous opinion of the people about Henchard as unscrupulous, cunning, selfish and money-minded, one who refuses to replace the bad wheat and later on, tortures Able Whittle by making him come to work without his breeches on, humiliating him so much that he feels like committing suicide, but immediately, Hardy informs us that he is the same generous and benevolent person who was "kind like" to Whittle's old mother. In fact, he keeps a soft heart throbbing under hard exterior.

Trevor Johnson rightly compares Henchard with Steinback's Lemmy of Mice and Men. He says that he is like Lemmy, "the giant whose unwieldy strength causes him to crush the puppies he loves in his great clumsy hands". Like Lemmy, he has the touchstone of brute strength in all things.

114 MC, p. 417.
115 Trevor Johnson, Thomas Hardy, p.113.
which makes him break away from Farfrae, his trusted friend and confidant, estranges him from Elizabeth Jane, the gem of his heart and makes Lucetta shudder at the thought of marrying such a bully. What is remarkably perceptible in his behaviour is his inconsistency. His actions are always out of touch with his deeper reasoning, guided as they are by, according to Jeannette King, "his instinctive drive and egotism triumphing over his personal human needs". The antagonistic tendencies of his character come to be seen in his behaviour every now and then. After dismissing Farfrae, "his heart sank within him at what he had said and done". At one time, he considers Elizabeth to be a sweet sensitive girl and the next moment, he cannot tolerate his "house to be troubled with her" and does not want to be "encumbered with her". He thinks that her rustic behaviour will "disgrace him to the dust", but then, he thinks that she is the only ray of hope amid the gloom of despair. All this shows that Henchard is "impulsive in his loves, his hates, and his decisions". If we judge Henchard's character on historical premise, we see that in him, human nature's dualism of personal and impersonal forces is so intensified that his whole circumstances, as far as they are injurious to him, seem but an objectification of his own self-injuring nature.

118 MC, p. 190.
119 MC, p. 189.
120 MC, p. 185.
121 Laurence Lerner, *Thomas Hardy's The Mayor of Casterbridge*, p.11.
Abercrombie touches the real pulse when he says that "his conscious aspirations are undone by the impetuous stream of unconscious vigour which his own being provides, and fatally provides".\footnote{L.Abercrombie, \textit{Thomas Hardy}, p. 78.}

Besides the deep primal discord of his nature, Henchard has, within the boundaries of consciousness, a great deal of complexity. His dismissal of Farfrae, roaring at Whittle, his shouting in council "so that his voice might be heard as far as the town pump"\footnote{MC, p. 162.} and his dismissal of Newson with a lie, all these and many other episodes have an explosive, childish quality. He is the man who is unduly sensitive on the point of status and dignity. He thinks that he has been "completely ground down to the last indignity"\footnote{MC, p. 186.} by Elizabeth's working in a public house, but after undergoing much changes and alterations, and after the awakening of his higher consciousness en route suffering, the same Henchard approaches Farfrae and asks him for work as a hay-trusser in his yard. It is because he comes to realise that humble work is not the thing to be ashamed of. Henchard, who once detests Elizabeth, comes to love her and prepares her breakfast "with house wifely"\footnote{MC, p. 369.} concern so much so that he dreams of a future lit by Elizabeth's filial love. Elaine Showalter pertinently comments that "Henchard is in a sense
unmanned'. Again, "his hasty and desperate lie to Newson, reveals finally how dependent he has become on ties of love". Henchard's final surrender, when Newson reappears, opens him fully, for the first time, to an understanding of human need measured in terms of feeling rather than property. Hardy gives, what Elaine Showalter says, "the fullest nineteenth century portrait of a man's inner life -- his rebellion and his suffering, his loneliness and jealousy, his paranoia and despair, his uncountrollable unconscious ego". Through a complex series of incidents, he first denies and divorces his personal self and ultimately, accepts and educates it, moving "towards both self-discovery and tragic vulnerability". Hardy displays the process of Henchard's progress from egoism to altruism and ignorance to knowledge through tragic experiences and shows how Henchard, when stripped of his mayor's chain, his master's authority, his father's rights, is disillusioned and awakened to the realities of life.

Merryn William evaluates Henchard's character sagaciously when she says that Henchard's "problem is that he craves for affection, but can only give it in bouts and spurts". Being myopic and ignorant, he does not know that the best way to deal with people is by considering their feelings, which he learns later on from the vicissitudes

126 Elaine Showalter, "The Unmanning of the Mayor of Casterbridge", Critical Approaches to The fiction of Hardy, p.103.
127 Ibid, p.112.
129 Elaine Showalter, "The Unmanning of the Mayor of Casterbridge," Critical Approaches to The Fiction of Hardy, p.102.
of his life. Henchard's lie to Newson reveals "the hunger of a father for a child which he wants to claim as his own". It is the irresistible urge for filial love which makes Henchard say:

I will do anything, if you will only look upon me as your father. 132

Straightforward and simple, he is quite unpractical and naive. Though he acts like a rogue in spoiling the life of many a character, there are many redeeming features in him which establish the essential goodness of his heart and soul. Merryn William points out this dichotomy of his character and says that Henchard is:

...a man of tremendous and sometimes frightening strength who can wrench a bull's head...a giant with black whiskers and eyes which always seemed to have red spark of light in them...some unsuspected qualities of generosity and goodness and sometimes something unpleasantly cold and scheming about his younger rival. 133

For a long time, Henchard constantly keeps wavering between the best and the worst in his own nature. The tragic death of Lucetta and his own public humiliation mark the beginning of a profound change in him so much so that he ceases to value himself and loses all ambitions of life. His will shows that the egoistic and myopic Henchard has finally come out of the darkness of ignorance. He gets mastery over

131 Ian Gregor, The Great Web of Tragedy, p. 134.
132 MC, p. 175.
his wrath, aggression, ambition and possessiveness which have kept his noble-soul and kind-heart in a recessive position. He reaches the zenith of heightened consciousness and dies like one with stoic endurance and calm resignation, finding solace in other's happiness. At last, he succeeds in renouncing the ambition of social recognition to which, as Merry Williams says, "he has given twenty years of his life". By the time death approaches Henchard, his baptism through suffering has been completed, morally he is "a changed man", which undeniably is a proof of the maturing of the basic traits of goodness and generosity in his nature. Starting with the blind egoism of an aggressive and impulsive fellow, he attains to the state of wisdom and renunciation. Henchard, who has been showing only occasional sparks of sympathy and love, comes to adopt the principle of tolerance and self-sacrifice and thus, proves himself to be really "a man of character".

In The Woodlanders the evolutionary process of character formation is delineated through the growth of its beautiful gentle conscientious and docile heroine Grace Melbury. Grace who is susceptible to vanities, fallacious notions, dreams and worldly ambitions, eventually comes to develop a mature sense of social obligation and duty through

135 Ibid., p. 126.
her own various experiences of life to have the taste of which she has to pass through the white heat of suffering. The positive qualities of her character, which get their maturation in her acceptance of social obligation and her wide-eyed recognition of the irrevocable nature of things, can be traced in her character by looking at her retrospectively.

In initial stages, Grace is dreamy, illusive and vain, aspiring for the sophistication of aristocratic life. This aspect of her personality is noticed at once by Giles when he goes to welcome her home. Hardy tells us:

> It seemed as if the knowledge and interests which had formerly moved Grace's mind had quite died away from her. He wondered whether the special attributes of her image in the past had evaporated like these other things. 136

Her mind has advanced so much by cultivation that after coming from school, she keeps thinking of "a broad lawn in the fashionable suburb of a vast city, the green leaves glistening in the evening sun, amid which bouncing girls, gracefully clad in artistic arrangements of blue, brown, red and white, ... playing at games with laughter and chat in all the pride of life, the notes of piano and harp trembling in the air". 137 In a way, she has "fallen from the good old Hintock ways". 138 That is why she is elated and excited at

136 WL, p. 43.
137 WL, p. 44.
138 WL, p. 45.
the thought of having acquaintances with the fashionable aristocratic lady at Hintock House. When Mrs. Charamond's carriage passes by them, Grace feels herself "nearly a kin to it". She is enchanted to see the magnificently decorated house of Mrs. Charamond and her splendid dresses and elegant ways and manners so much so that the very mention of her name, later on, makes her fall "into such an abstracted gaze at the mental image of Mrs. Charamond and her niceness": When Grammar Oliver, the maid servant, tells her about Fitzpiers, she is, at once, bewitched by her details of him as one "who belongs to the oldest, ancientest family in the country." She keeps ruminating about him, fixing her eyes on the distant glimmer. In the very first meeting, she is hypnotised by his charms and artificial sophistication of manners. No doubt, it is Melbury who almost compels Grace, by applying all sorts of pressures and persuasions to marry Fitzpiers, but her own yearing for a fashionable and comfortable life also plays its vital role. With her little snobberies and docile submission to her father's will, she is led into a wedlock with "rakish and self-regarding" Fitzpiers.

Evidently, Grace shares consciously or unconsciously, something of her "naively snobbish father's" ambition of social advancement. Nevertheless, she is very sensitive and conscientious. When Melbury talks about marriage in terms of

profit and loss, she is deeply hurt. She feels very uneasy "at being the social hope of the family". She has a tender liking for and sympathy with Giles though, unconsciously, she hates his rustic manners and unpolished behaviour. When Melbury asks her not to meet Giles in future, she "sigh(s)". Hardy tells us that "it was a sigh of sympathy with Giles, complicated by a sense of the intractability of circumstances". Melbury himself has "a strong suspicion that somewhere in the bottom of her heart, there pulsed an old simple indigenous feeling favourable to Giles though it had been overlaid with implanted tastes". After Giles' suit is dropped as a possibility, she becomes all the more kind and sympathetic to him and the generous revival of an "old romantic attachment" makes her oblivious of "those social shortcomings of his, which contrasted so awkwardly with her later experiences of life". Her father's rigid and unsympathetic attitude toward Giles in his troubles touches her heart "to a warmer sentiment". It is this deep-seated sympathy and silent mutual understanding between Giles and Grace that lead them to a wishful longing for companionship after Fitzpiers's elopement with Mrs. Charmond. She sincerely mourns his suicidal sacrifice for her. In fact, if Melbury had not exerted his pressures and persuasions on her,

144 WL, p. 102.  
145 WL, p. 88.  
146 WL, p. 80.  
147 WL, p. 107.  
148 WL, p. 102.
she would have married Giles happily and would have certainly adopted the Hinlock ways again.

Essentially, Grace is simple, gentle and meek. It is only her fashionable education and cultivation that has modified her original tastes and likings. After getting married with Fitzpiers, she feels herself out of place in that artificial and superficial atmosphere of too much privacy. Very soon, she realises that she cannot live up to his standard of social aloofness and pretensions. She comes to know that she has a deep-seated fondness for rustic people and their manners. She feels hurt at her husband's comments about Giles in a disdainful tone. Basically, she is one of the Hinlock rustics, only separated from them by the veneer of cultivation and a thin veil of civilization. Though educated and cultivated, she is quite free from all the cunning, shrewd and subtle ways of the so-called civilized life. That is why when she discovers Fitzpiers's illicit relations with Mrs. Charmond and Suke Damson, she is at a loss to understand how a man can love-three ladies simultaneously. It is only her education that has created a dichotomy in her...between her modern nerves" and "primitive feelings".\textsuperscript{149} In fact, she is danging between two worlds -- the sophisticated, modern world of Mrs. Charmond and Fitzpiers and the ancient, convention-ridden world of

\textsuperscript{149} \textit{WL}, p. 276.
Hintock, represented by Giles and Marty. In her refinement and cultivation, she is above Giles and below Fitzpiers and in this way, she belongs to neither of the two worlds. She has attained refinement without renouncing rustic simplicity and generosity. That is why, when Melbury rejects Gile's suit for Grace, she is filled with contrition and a sense of guilt overpowers her. Marriage, for her, is not a question of loss or profit, but a question of faith and of keeping promise. Her fashionable boarding school education has trained her in artificial manners and snobbishness. Nevertheless, she essentially remains the same virtuous, faithful conventionalist and God-fearing Grace. Even Melbury, the most deluded person, comes to realise that her position is "in mid-air between two storeys of society". Rosemary Sumner pertinently comments:

Grace is torn between the world of the woods, and the world outside; her two lovers personify the split. 151

Her dilemma springs from her inability to reconcile her opposing tendencies. She does not even recognise this dichotomy in herself--a blend of simple, straightforward country girl and refined, cultivated lady, pining for the elegance of aristocratic society. With the awakening of higher consciousness in her, she comes to comprehend the nature of her strife and the dilemma is resolved with the death of Giles who appeals to her rusticity.

150 WL, p. 235.
151 Rosemary Sumner, Thomas Hardy: The Psychological Novelist p. 83.
In the initial stages, Grace has no individuality or identity of her own. Rosemary Sumner confirms this view in his comment that Grace has no "well-developed and well-defined personality" in the beginning so much so that Hardy introduces her through her father's eyes. Her father is extremely fond of her and almost "worships her footprints", but he does not regard her as a being with a volition of her own. He decides all issues relating to Grace exclusively. It is he who takes the decision of her marriage with Giles as a penance for the wrong once done to his father; later on also, it is he only who tells Grace that Giles "is not for the like of "her and not her equal", though she feels morally bound to marry him. Melbury regards her as "a gem he had been at such pains in mounting". So, he will not "sacrifice" her and will try his level best to prevent the "balance of her feelings...turn in Winterborns favour...to preserve her on her elevated plane". Being a merchant by profession, he applies the same ethics on Grace also, and tells her:

*If you do cost a great deal...you'll yield a better return.*

She is pained to see that her father considers her "a mere Chattel". Her sense of her own significance is undermined by such an attitude of Melbury, however adoring it may be.

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152 WL, p. 86.  
153 WL, p. 22.  
155 WL, p. 83.  
156 WL, p. 87.  
157 WL, p. 87.
She has "a nebulousness of character" and unassertively follows the course "mapped out for her",\textsuperscript{158} without ever having developed any wishes of her own. She simply plays the role created for her by her vehement and ambitious father. She acquiesces with her father's wishes reluctantly; it is only for once that she tells her father frankly:

I am a woman now, and can judge for myself.\textsuperscript{159}

But the next moment, he succeeds in coaxing her to agree to his plans. This lack of self-assertiveness and too much submissiveness becomes the cause of her undoing. If only she had had a bit more self-assertiveness and a bit less docility, she might have averted the tragic course of her life. She tells Giles in a helpless tone:

For myself, I would have married you...someday...I think. But I give way, for I am assured it would be unwise.\textsuperscript{160}

Her simple words reveal her gullibility and impracticability and that she has not yet developed her own logic to decide what is wise and what is unwise for her. Her generosity, simplicity and vulnerability which make her an easy prey to her father's myopically ambitious plans, and later on, to the hypnotic influence of coercive, irresistible Fitzpiers" who proves "the ruler rather than her equal"\textsuperscript{161} She makes only a timid effort to break off her engagement with him after

\textsuperscript{158} Rosemary Sumner, \textit{Thomas Hardy: The Psychological Novelist}, p. 86.
\textsuperscript{159} WL, pp. 79-80.
\textsuperscript{160} WL, p. 92.
\textsuperscript{161} WL, p. 155.
getting suspicious of his fidelity, but Fitzpiers dominates her "rebellious impulse...shaping her will into passive concurrence with his desires". 162

After undergoing the trials and tribulations of married life with an infidel and flashy husband, Grace comes to realise that she should have obeyed her instincts by marrying Giles instead of giving way to her father's ambition of improving socially by marrying a rakish fellow of ancient aristocratic family. She finds that it is very painful to remain a "fastidious miss" 163 of her father's ambitions. She develops a revulsion from Fitzpiers. In a moment of self-illumination, she finds that her early interest in Giles has "revitalised into a growth by her widening perceptions of what was great and little in life". 164 Her inherited country tastes, which were distorted by "training and tilting," become apparent and lively in their original colours and she comes out to be "the crude country girl of her latent early instincts", throwing off "the veneer of artificiality...acquired at fashionable schools". 165 Hardy comments:

His (Giles') homeliness no longer offended her acquired tastes; his comparative want of so-called culture did not now jar on her intellect; his country dress (which irritated her previously) even pleased her life; 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

162 WL, p. 162.  
163 WL, p. 267.  
164 WL, p. 206.  
165 WL, p. 193.
was a revulsion in her sentiments from all that she had formerly clung to in this kind. 166

In her disillusioned but awakened state, she realises that the real virtues of life are "honesty, goodness, manliness, tenderness, devotion" which exist "in their purity...in the breasts of unvarnished men" 167 such as Giles. After having a dip into the troubled waters of sorrow and suffering, she retrieves her inherent faith and love for rustic people and develops "a never ceasing pity in her soul for Giles as a man when she had wronged". 168 She becomes self-confident and critical of her father's judgements and decisions which have dragged her into the mire of agony and anguish. That is why when Melbury asks her to meet Mrs. Charmond and to request her to release her husband from her amorous grip, she declines bluntly asserting her own self-respect and dignity:

I don't wish to be more humiliated; if I have anything to bear I can bear it in silence.

and further:

Let her do her worst: I don't care. 169

Boldly and vehemently, she makes Melbury realise that "cultivation has only brought (her) inconveniences and troubles". 170 To her, the so-called "attainments whose completion had been a labour of years and a severe tax upon

his purse"171 are her undoings and his decision of marrying Grace with Fitzpiers was the most erring decision of his life.

**Henceforward, Grace exercises her own will while deciding the course of her life.** When Fitzpiers returns repentant and remorseful to make up with Grace, Melbury asks her to make the best of the bad bargain. He tries to pressurize her by alluding to his name and family honour, but she is not yet mentally prepared to accept him after all that has taken place. As a revolt against her father's wishes and Fitzpiers' plans, she leaves the house and takes shelter in Giles's hut. Later on, when Giles sacrifices himself at the altar of love for her, her rebellious spirit becomes all the more furious and bold. She kisses Giles's eyes, mouth and tarnished hair in Fitzpiers' presence and declares openly:

*He(Giles) is everything to me.*172

Without caring for propriety or morality, she allows Fitzpiers to draw "the extremest inferences"173 from her staying with Giles in the same hut without telling him the real circumstances of her seclusion. When Melbury asks her to accompany him in order to "escape any sound of shame",174 she agrees to it only when assured that Fitzpiers will not stay

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171 *WL*, p. 209.  
172 *WL*, p. 207.  
173 *WL*, p. 298.  
174 *WL*, p. 300.
under that roof. Thus, aches and afflictions of life make Grace "a new woman,...a creature of more ideas and dignity, and above all, more assurance". Later on, when she finds that Fitzpiers has "a tender regard" for her, which is evident from his moaning and groaning on seeing Grace's skirt caught in the man-trap, she decides of her own accord to join Fitzpiers to Sherton without even consulting or informing her father. When Melbury reaches there, he finds that she has come out to be a self-willed and mature woman. He remarks:

...Very well...You are your own mistress.

Finally, the nebulousness of consciousness is replaced by enlightenment and awakening in Grace which make her realise her social obligation by accepting the social and moral bond of marriage. She obeys the call of duty though she knows Fitzpiers may turn out to be unfaithful again. Her mental illumination has bestowed upon her the realisation that she is not to indulge in self-gratification. With this realisation, she accepts, as Hardy says, the fate to be "doomed to an unhappy marriage with an inconstant husband" for the sake of her social obligation. Her vulnerable innocence is replaced by a wide-eyed consciousness and wisdom. Her final reconciliation with Fitzpiers is not like the previous one...a hypnotised and mesmerised surrender.

under fallacious notions... but a clear eyed, awakened compromise under a deep-felt sense of social duty. Thus, we see a progressive increase in the clarity of the final illumination in Grace which she acquires when she comes out of her narrow and infatuated vision of life. She joins Fitzpiers in response to the urgency of newly-realised social sensibility. The inherent traits of renunciation, rectification and reconciliation have developed fully by now and she attains to the profound insight into the true nature of the practical world around.

Hardy's concept of value-judgement in terms of the dialectics of the historical method is brought to bear in the character of Tess in Tess of d'Urbervilles, whose life comes out to be what it sounds from the very beginning... a tale of tears. She is simple, sensitive, conscientious and considerate to the feelings of others when we meet her for the first time. She develops through a series of incidents and happenings that leave their indelible impact on her life. In the end too, she is essentially the same Tess. Clemential Black confirms this assessment of her character when he comments that Tess is essentially "simple, sincere and passionately faithful; her behaviour, actions and her thoughts, even in the most critical circumstances, whether with Alec or Angel, are above
reproach if judged by standard or code". 179

Tess is a very conscientious and duty-conscious girl from the very beginning. This quality in her character becomes evident from her feeling guilty for merry-making while her mother is busy doing manual jobs at home and again, when the horse is killed due to her negligence. Her sensitivity makes her feel herself responsible for every thing in the household. She assumes the role of the bread-winner after the death of the horse.

The life of this sensitive and conscientious girl is shaped to a great extent, by her parents's illusiveness. They are always lost in making castles in the air about the return of their knightly ancestry. Mrs. Durbeyfield, her mother, is a woman of what Duffin says, "slip-shod morality". When she sees the rolling eyes of Alec fall on Tess's beautiful body, she rather takes it to be a sure sign of some good taking place. She injects into her (Tess's) mind an idea, a likely possibility of Alec marrying her. She is ready to risk her daughter's virginity in order to improve her economic status and to revive her d'Urberville ancestry. Without any hesitation, she sends her daughter deliberately into the temptations with as much sangfroid as if she had been the vilest of her sex. She thinks that if Alec "does

180 H.C. Duffin, Thomas Hardy, p. 50.
not marry her before, he will after".\textsuperscript{181} It is obvious to her mother from the very first what is to be Tess's fate at Trantridge; but her mother does not mind. She rather forces her to have this experience with a cynical consolation that Alec will make her his lady. Tess, though realises the futility of this day-dreaming, does not put much resistance against her mother's plan. She has the presentiment of her future at Trantridge, but her guilt-complex and the essential "tractability"\textsuperscript{182} of her disposition make her surrender to her mother:

\begin{quote}
Do what you like with me, mother.\textsuperscript{183}
\end{quote}

Her mother does not sound her against the danger of men-folk, for she fears that "it mid zet her against him, or against going there, even now".\textsuperscript{184} Tess feels irritated at the thought of Alec marrying her. So she dissuades her childish mother from indulging in such a reverie, but her mother is fully convinced that "if she plays her trump card aright", she will certainly win Alec's heart as he is all "afire wi' love" for her as "any eye can see".\textsuperscript{185} Tess does not oppose her mother and it is this element of passive submission and resignation that takes her to Trantridge and opens her to the amorous advances of Alec.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{181} Tess, p. 64.
\item \textsuperscript{182} Tess, p. 60.
\item \textsuperscript{183} Tess, p. 60.
\item \textsuperscript{184} Tess, p. 61.
\item \textsuperscript{185} Tess, p. 64.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Hardy considers natural disposition and inborn proclivities as a circumstance in a man's environment. Our inherited traits are of special and unique nature in as much as they automatically modify all the other circumstances. A persistent intractability in Tess's nature becomes the cause of her undoing. She is, by nature, resilient and ignores the seriousness of the issue when Alec tries to take liberties with her. Her evasiveness encourages Alec and he kisses her and flirts with her. Pained at heart, she thinks of going back to Marlot but the guilty sense of the harm she has done to the family by killing the horse makes her stay there against her conscience.

Tess is simple, gentle conscientious and essentially ignorant of the cunning ways of the practical world. Any false sympathiser such as Alec can seduce her, and he does too. Having "no experience of life", she can never see through the tricks and evil-ways of this rakish man. She is swayed for a little while by the soft manners of Alec. Hardy makes it clear that Tess is, in no way, responsible for her sexual experience. She is blank sheet of snow, and artful Alec makes her a prey to his "adroit advantages". Here, Hardy refers to Tess as one "trapped", "betrayed", "Wronged" and "ensnared". These references go to prove that she becomes a helpless victim of Alec's

sensuality. In fact, hers "were not the sins of intention but of inadvertence".\textsuperscript{191} This simple natural experience brings appalling misery and tragedy in her life. That she does not understand the gravity of the issue involved in her "confused surrender",\textsuperscript{192} becomes evident from her statement to Alec:

\begin{quote}
I did not understand your meaning till it was too late. \textsuperscript{193}
\end{quote}

and further from her accusing of her mother:

\begin{quote}
Why did not you tell me there was danger in men-folk ... I never had the chance of learning in that way, and you did not help me. \textsuperscript{194}
\end{quote}

Even Alec, the seducer, himself confesses:

\begin{quote}
Scamp that I was to foul that ... innocent life. \textsuperscript{195}
\end{quote}

These statements along with Hardy's own authorial comments that "a course pattern" was traced upon "this beautiful feminine tissue, sensitive as gossamer, and practically blank as snow"\textsuperscript{196}, speaks volume of her innocence and helplessness in the case of her seduction.

Tess is very conscientious and really a pure woman. Had she been a little cunning, practical or shrewd, she would not have had to suffer such horrible mental tortures. In

\begin{tabular}{llll}
191 & \textit{Tess}, p. 400. & 194 & \textit{Tess}, p. 100. \\
192 & \textit{Tess}, p. 100. & 195 & \textit{Tess}, p. 354. \\
193 & \textit{Tess}, p. 94. & 196 & \textit{Tess}, p. 90. \\
\end{tabular}
that case, she might have stayed there at Trantridge and made Alec marry her and thus got benefitted by taking advantage of her pregnancy. But she is far away from such deceit and cunning. Even when her mother asks her to marry Alec, she replies:

Perhaps any woman would, except me. 197

Tess is so scrupulous and thoroughly gentle that she can never marry a man whom she does not love. That Tess obeys the call of her conscience is evident from the dilemma she has to face when she comes under the sway of irresistible urge of love for Angel. She makes many conscientious efforts to reveal her past to Angel, but every time she finds herself dissuaded by him. Moreover she feels that she has become 'another woman' after her meeting with Angel. Thus her innate evasiveness and dreaminess make her forgetful of her tainted past.

Myopic and ignorant as Tess is of the practical ways of the world, she maintains that "the recuperative power which pervaded organic nature was surely not denied to maidenhood alone". 198 Above all, Angel appears to her be an advance and liberated youngman. Tess succumbs to Angel's ethereal love, accepting the unreal role he creates for her even while she is aware of its falsity. However, she is not

197 Tess, p. 99.
198 Tess, p. 119.
aware of the tragic consequences this act will bring. Again she misconceives the whole issue when Angel makes a confession to her. She anticipates the same open hearted forgiveness from him as she has granted him willingly. Angel's idealised conception of Tess as "fresh and virginal daughter of nature" cannot be replaced all of a sudden by the image of a sexually experienced unwed mother. Thus, Angel's obsession with physical purity may be taken as a unique determinant of Tess's future life. The bitterest and the most woeful part of her life starts with her confession which leads to her desertion by Angel. In her stupified simplicity and truth, she catches the intimate cadence of, what Jean Brooks calls, a "noble and passionate woman" who retaliates to Angel's blame:

> It is in your mind that you are angry at.

Tess's misfortune is that she lives in a world where men have either sensual or spiritual feelings toward women, denying them a whole personality, the combination of flesh and spirit. She becomes the victim of an ambivalent attitude toward women that is traceable in both, Hardy and the culture in which she lives. The inevitability of her plight is to be found in the psychological nature of the existence that she and other characters are imagined to have. She meets two men in her life -- Alec and Angel. Alec sees her as flesh, a

199 Tess, p. 142.
201 Tess, p. 263.
sexual object, and Angel, as an image of pastoral innocence and purity — each is given to the extremes; each keeps the divisiveness within himself, but it is the woman who pays as a consequence. Tess is doomed because her character is hard-pressed by her past. Even Angel does not realise the essential purity of Tess and rejects her on the basis of her blotted physicality, upholding the validity of conventional views of chastity. Hardy touches the real predicaments of Tess and says:

The problem is that society makes no provision for a special case like Tess's whose justifications rely upon the unique self. 202

She is marked by what Dale Kramer says, "a fully articulated evocation of a sensitivity too extreme to survive the shocks of a powerful order of material nature and the grossness of the social world". 203 She has an unusual sensitivity to experience. Between the two extreme attitudes of Alec and Angel, she is so devastated in mind and spirit that Angel returning, "too late to find her installed in the lodging house as Alec's mistress realises that "his original Tess had spiritually ceased to recognise the body before him as hers — allowing it to drift, like a corpse upon the current". 204 She struggles hard to remain true to her finer human impulses in the face of her powerful adversaries. She

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203 Dale Kramer, Forms of Tragedy, p. 121.
204 Tess, p. 425.
battles against chance forces, against her own passionate nature, as well as against social conventions which cripple her personality. Thus, she is frustrated by the paradoxes of life; she becomes "a prisoner of her past".

Hardy's dialects of value-judgement does not accept actions as a universally valid criterion for assessing the goodness or otherwise of a character. There are many situations and configuration which make an uncharacteristic conduct not only creditable but almost inevitable. Working on this premise, Hardy writes in the context of Tess' real assessment:

The beauty or ugliness of a character lay not only in its achievements, but in its aims and impulses, its true history lay, not among things done, but among things willed.

Tess is hard pressed by her economic needs. After the death of her father, the family is evicted from their old house. Penniless and jobless, and without any roof over their heads, the family is given support by Alec. Having waited for Angel's forgiveness for long, her pathetic appeals to him having brought no response and ground down by poverty and drudgery, she is compelled to accept Alec's assistance against her conscience. The only way of rescue was to seek help from Angel's parents, but that had already been thwarted by her over estimating them on the basis of the sons.

206 Tess, p. 310.
Finally, she becomes fully conscious that the wheel has come full circle and there is no other way out. Inevitably, step by step, she is drawn into the trap Alec has, once again, laid for her, but certainly, she accepts the trap for the sake of her altruistic impulses. Under compelling circumstances and impelling needs, she is obliged to sacrifice her Ideal to the Real. As such, her second surrender to Alec cannot be called the second fall. As a matter of fact, by this time, Tess has ceased to be herself and she lives only for her family. She is so overpowered by her altruistic impulses that she "did not care what he (Alec) did Wi' her". In committing the murder of Alec, she is actuated into doing a deed of uncharacteristic nature under the gravitational pull of an urgent circumstantial need which disturbs the normal placidity of her character. Tess, who cannot harm a fly, stabs Alec under such circumstantial urgency. Though her persistent self is the one which is identified with the voice of duty and renunciation, the conflict between her opposing selves is never fully resolved. It is this unresolved tension which arouses Tess to action and she kills Alec, the devil who has seduced her mind and body once again. Murder of Alec by Tess is actuated by her noble soul that is pure and chaste thoroughly. She strives for the integrity of her body and Spirit and in a renewed paroxysm of grief and agony, she kills Alec in order to be one with Angel. A deep yearning to "achieve a felicitious wholeness of being".

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commit this desperate act.

Hardy sets store by the inner history of man; it is this which determines the magnitude of Tess' life. Inside her exterior, Tess bears a world of her own, a world which owes its existence to her consciousness which is the record of a pulsating life which had "learnt too well, for its years, of the dust and ashes of things". Irving Howe significantly comments:

Tess embodies a moral pose beyond the reach of most morality. Tess is that rare creature in literature in whom goodness is made interesting. She is human life stretched and reeled, yet forever springing to renewal.

In Tess, Hardy breathes the element of individualization with a view to depict her, as in the case of other protagonists. She is an exclusive type of personality whose real self is misunderstood on the basis of her outward actions and circumstancial decisions. Hardy warns us against such attitude and tells frankly that moral value of Tess is to be evaluated and "reckoned not by achievement but by tendency".

Ian Gregor aptly supports Hardy's stand on Tess as a 'pure' and 'virtuous' woman he says:

Hardy is here feeling his way towards a criticism of behaviour as an adequate moral resistor, 'not things done, but things willed'.

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209 Tess, p. 100.
210 Irving Howe, "Let the Day Perish", Twentieth Century Interpretation of Tess, p. 130.
211 Tess, p. 300. 212 Ian Gregor, Twentieth Century Interpretation of Tess, p. 44.
It is only on the basis of "things willed" that Hardy calls Tess "almost a standard woman”. In fact, Tess is a woman of higher consciousness, living among people whose consciousness is not so developed; the people are either with no awakening, as is in the case of her parents, Alec and the common people of society, or with less awakening, as is in the case of Angel Clare. It is the total make-up of society and the rigidity of social and moral code which see the lapse of woman as serious and unredeemable and that of man as trivial and ignorable, and finally the machinery of law which knows no impulses and feelings, which are root cause of her suffering. Christopher Walbank pertinently comments:

Tess is a natural girl who suffers at the hands of the unnatural. 214

Temperamentally sensitive and thoroughly conscientious, Tess is bound to suffer among bulls and bears, hypocrites and sterile intellectual hoax. She suffers not because of any tragic flaw in her but vastly because she possesses a remarkable sensitivity, integrity and essential purity that cannot stand up against the blind operations of the universe inhabited by insensitive, brute and fastidious people. It is not her own suffering but the predicaments of her supine

213 *Tess*, p. 110.
214 Christopher Walbank, *Thomas Hardy*, p. 184.
mother and orphan children that make her surrender her body to Alec. Here we can quote the pertinent comment of Irving Howe that Tess is "energy and joy, a life neither foolishly primitive nor feebly sophisticated"; she is one who is persistently "subjected to endless indignities, assaults and defeats "but who maintains her balance and "remains a figure of harmony ... between her nature and her culture". Tess cannot be called simply a murderess. Her killing of Alec is a judgement as well as an act of reparation — a symbolic redemption of her lost physical chastity and an act of self-sacrifice. The order that emerges is a moral order. In fact, the sequence of events follows the pattern of acts and their retribution. Redeemed and purified, Tess lives through a brief all-too fleeting idyllic time as if she realised the mission of her life. Hardy comes to Tess's defence against the critics who believe her second stay with Alec as having deprived her of inner purity and writes in the preface to the novel that "her inner purity remained intact to the very last though some outward purity left her by her second fall".

215. Irving Howe, "Let the Day Perish", Twentieth Century Interpretation of Tess, p. 130.

Jude, in *Jude the Obscure* is Hardy's most obscure protagonist. His character can best be assessed by establishing a continuum in his life and by tissuing together the different happenings and things felt, experienced and actually done. The process of ebb and flow of tendencies working behind Jude's apparent outward actions must be kept in the fore-front while passing any judgement on him. He can best be described as a simple, gullible, straightforward, extremely sensitive and highly conscientious fellow who is a born altruist. His character enfolds such dominant traits as love, renunciation, dreaminess and impulsiveness accompanied by "a proclivity to self-sacrifices".\(^{217}\)

Jude is an orphan, living with her aunt who does not have a soft heart for him. As a child he craves for love and care. In fact he is starved emotionally. Nobody cares for him; nobody loves him. His aunt Drusilla is a hard task mistress who upbraids and rebukes him frequently making him realise that he is a "useless boy".\(^ {218}\) Life is simply a burden and a travail for him; that is why he wishes to die at the tender age of eleven. When he is out of employment, his heart is filled with remorse and a guilt-complex deepens in his mind when he think that he will be now all the more burdensome for his old aunt. He realises "his existence to be an undemanded one".\(^ {219}\)

\(^{218}\) *J.O.*, p. 17.
\(^{219}\) *J.O.*, p. 23.
Jude feels lonely, miserable, loveless and luckless; deep sense of ennui develops in his heart and mind. He always pines for sympathy and love in the absence of which he finds, life a penalty. In the whole village, Phillotson, before whom he can pour out his heart, is the only one to sympathise with him. That is why when Phillotson leaves the village for Christminster, he is left alone without any emotional tie. He weeps bitterly on his departure. It is because of this emotional identification with him that Jude remembers his parting words:

Be a good boy, remember; and be kind to animals and birds, and read all you can. 220

It is Phillotson who instils the dream of Christminster in his mind and tells him that university degree is "the necessary hall-mark of a man who wants to do anything in teaching". 221

After Phillotson's departure, Jude is always haunted by the dream of Christminster which, according to him, is "a city of light" where "the tree of knowledge grows" and where there is "a castle manned by scholarship and religion". Christminster becomes a haunting passion with him so much so that he is always seen asking people about the city. He bows down his head in the direction of Christminster reverently.

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220 JO, p. 15
221 JO, p. 14.
222 JO, p. 30.
223 JO, p. 31.
and devotedly. Whenever he thinks of the city, Phillotson comes spontaneously in the picture. In fact he is enraptured by the dream of Christminster more because of Phillotson being there. This dream of Christminster remains with him upto the end of his life though Christminster elbows him off.

He is disillusioned with the passage of time and comes to know with full awareness that he cannot enter it, but his reverence for the place is never shaken. He is so enravished by the vision of the city that he sees it even in his cakes and calls them Christminster cakes.

*Being Orphaned and Rejected*²²⁴ Jude's hungry heart pines for love and recognition. Now it is the "Yearning of his heart to find something to anchor on, to cling to".²²⁵ That is why when he sees Arabella attracted toward him, he gives way to her. He is roused from his abstract dreams of learning by a concrete object of sexuality which ensnares his mind without the least delay. When Jude is dreaming of the higher and happier life of a Doctor of Divinity or even of a bishop that his private learning would enable him to lead, distraction in the form of Arabella comes in the way all of a sudden. His youth, like all youth, is already in the inflammable state of dormant passion which is ignited by the first woman and that too, by "a complete and substantial female animal".²²⁶ Arabella's "unvoiced call of woman to man

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²²⁴ Rosemary Sumner, *Thomas Hardy: The Psychological Novelist* p. 149.
²²⁵ *IO*, p. 20.
²²⁶ *IO*, p. 44.
"is so" distinctly" heard by him that "a dumb announcement of affinity in posse " is established between them there and then. Arabella succeeds in leading him to copulation. Jude, who is "as simple as a child", becomes a helpless victim of Arabella's cunningness. We see a catastrophic overthrow of his intellectual position at the first call of sex. Christminster passes out of his mind. Arabella is all flesh. So, a brief period of sexual gratification disillusioned him, heading him to the realisation that however powerful sexuality is, it does not provide fulfilment.

Jude resumes his "intellectual track" and goes to Christminster. Here again, the tedium and irksomeness of lonely life without any hope drive him toward Sue in whom he finds an anchorage for his thoughts, and who promises to supply both "social and spiritual possibilities". Hardy writes:

From this moment, the emotion which had been accumulating in his breast as the bottled up effect of solitude and the poetized locality he dwelt in, insensibly began to precipitate itself on this half-visionary form.

Though he tries his level best to treat Sue as a cousin, a dear friend, but he cannot blind himself to "the nature of the magnetism" she exercises on him. No doubt,

227 JO, p. 44. 231 JO, p. 97.
228 JO, p. 44. 228 JO, p. 44.
229 JO, p. 49. 229 JO, p. 49.
230 JO, p. 97. 233 JO, p. 98.
he wants to get acquainted with Sue to get her "intellectual sympathy" and "loving kindness in (his) solitude," but it is evident from the text that these are, not at all, the sole causes of his attraction toward her. When he speaks to Sue for the first time, there is some "basefulness of a lover" in his voice. Soon we find him writhing helplessly in the clutches of "the terrible sickness of helplessly handicapped-love" for Sue. He is "passionately enamoured" with Sue's bright intellect and fragile body. Flesh is so strong in him that he can renounce his intellectual ambition with a smile if he gets Sue as "a companion." In fact, he finds in Sue "an object of his intellect and emotion."

Jude is primarily a creature of intellect. His conscious nature includes strong emotions, high intellectual aspirations and a noticeable dash of animalism; but these emotions are well under the control of his mind. As a matter of fact, Jude's hungry heart craves for love and tenderness. The feeling of gregariousness is too strong in his mind to bear separation from Sue:

Sue...kill...me...I don't care. Only don't hate me, and despise me like all the rest of the world.

When he starts studying seriously for ecclesiastical and altruistic life after the failure of his intellectual plans,

234 JO, p. 104.
235 JO, p. 105.
236 JO, p. 115.
237 JO, p. 120.
238 JO, p. 122.
239 JO, p. 125.
240 JO, p. 129.
he hears Sue's call, asking him to come to her rescue. He goes to her help thinking that he will love married Sue "only as a friend and kinswoman". But Sue exercises a baneful effect on his ecclesiastical plans. He is subdued with a sense of sacrilege in her company though he cannot oppose her or leave her. In fact, he is so deeply in love with Sue that "the city of learning" becomes "estranged" and "the intellectual and devotional worthies, who had once moved him to devotion, were no longer able to assert their presence." Throughout his life, he is engaged in a deadly war between body and intellect. As a matter of fact, he is a noble man with strong drives, flesh being as much a part of him as the spirit. Talking to Sue, he confesses that "the human" is "more powerful" in him than "the divine". With the realisation that he is "a man of too many passions to make a good clergyman" and to avoid the "life of constant warfare between flesh and spirit", in which flesh is always victorious, he burns his acclesiastic and theological books and becomes a pagan like Sue. By and by, a devout Christian such as Jude becomes a hater of church and its convention, for "an earthly and illegitimate passion (has) cunningly obtained entrance into his heart through the opening afforded for religion". However, this passion is simply the

241 JO, p. 134. 244 JO, pp. 199-200.
242 JO, p. 184. 245 JO, p. 201.
243 JO, p. 212.
enlargement and growth of the deep-seated passion of sensuality that is an essential and perhaps the most dominating part of his personality. It is this sensuality which takes him to be in bed with Arabella twice after their separation though he hates her for her grossness. He is as sensual as Arabella, but not gross like her. He has the flesh well under the rein of reason and will. Throughout, his relations with Arabella and particularly with Sue are made up of renunciation as well as indulgence. He is drawn toward Arabella in obedience to the call of sexuality; he is enraptured by Sue because in many ways, she is the projection of his ownself—his intellectual and spiritual self. Even Phillotson is struck by the affinity of their nature:

They seem to be one person, split in two.246

Just as Tess is destroyed between Alec and Angel, similarly Jude is wrecked between flesh and spirit. He has no sexual perverseness; his are rather quite "normal sex-impulses" which "under the artificial and ritualistic" system of things "are turned into gins and springes to noose and hold back (Jude) who wishes "to progress".247

Another dominating trait of Jude's personality is his extraordinary sensitiveness which has made him pensive and reflective straight from his childhood. Even at the age of

246 JO, p. 236. 247 JO, p. 222.
eleven, Jude's heart aches to see "life glaring, garishing and rattling". He is so sensitive and thoughtful that the farmer Trougham's beating of him for feeding the rooks on his grain, brings to his mind the cruelty of "nature's logic" that is "too horrid" -- "that mercy towards one set of creature (is) cruelty towards another". His heart is sickened at the recognition of this blind logic of nature. Hardy tells us that the face of child Jude wears "the fixity of thoughtful child who has felt the pricks of life somewhat before his time". It is owing to this over-thoughtfulness of disposition that it becomes evident from the very beginning that the child is "born to ache a good deal before the fall of curtain" upon his insignificant life. He is, as Sumner describes, rather "hyper sensitive to the suffering of other". His ethics remain other-centred and, not self-centred. A woeful shriek of a rabbit caught in man-trap is sufficient to make him writhe under indescribable agony and he cannot rest till he has freed the miserable creature from the deadly trap. He will walk "tip-toe" to avoid crushing earth-worms under his feet. In fact, Jude embraces Hardy's compassion and humanism which include all sentient creation and its dumb suffering within its compass. Like Hardy, he respects the

248 JO, p. 23.
249 JO, p. 23.
250 JO, p. 15.
251 JO, p. 27.
252 Rosemary Sumner, Thomas Hardy: The Psychological Novelist, p.149.
253 JO, p.21.
sanctity of life in general as a fundamental morality of life. That is why he cannot bear to hurt a crawling insect or will not scare away the hungry little birds that "seemed, like himself, to be living in a world which did not want them".254

Right from the beginning, Jude is a highly conscientious and altruistic fellow so much so that he remains in the grip of terrible dilemma under the sway of these extra-ordinary traits of his personality. He appears to be one of those people who want to be nobler than their constitutions allow them. He is so thoroughly gentle and conscientious that Arabella entraps him in the gin of marriage under the pretext of pregnancy. He cannot bear to leave Arabella alone to suffer though he has much-sought after plans of intellectual aspirations. Later on, when he resumes the "intellectual track",255 Sue cries for his help. In obedience to an altruistic call, he renounces his theological and ecclesiastical ambitions, saying:

I'll never care about my doctrines or my religion any more, Let them go. Let me help you. 256.

His selflessness reaches its culmination in his re-marrying Arabella at the time when he is suffering from inflammation of lungs and sees death fast approaching him. This time, he has no love for her; nor is he fascinated with her sexuality.

254 JO, p. 19.
255 Rosemary Sumner, Thomas Hardy: The Psychological Novelist, p. 149.
256 JO, p. 220.
It is simply for the sake of Arabella's so called honour that he accepts this bond with a sense of resignation:

If I am bound in honour to marry her ... 
I will. I have never behaved dishonourably to a woman or to any living thing. I am not a man who wants to save himself at the expense of the weaker among us. 257

When Sue chooses her separate path under the hammer blow of sorrow, he does not try to seduce her for his own sake; he simply tries to awaken and enlighten her to the true state of affairs. When he is seriously ill, Arabella offers to call for Sue, but he, quite resigned and submissive to the circumstances, replies:

Sue has chosen her course. Let her go. 258

In his selflessness and self-sacrificing tendency, he becomes almost the mouth-piece of Hardy's concept of altruism, and his golden rule of love thy neighbour as thyself.

Jude is marked by a nebulousness of mind. He is myopic, but he succeeds in attaining to the state of awakening and enlightenment by passing through the baptismal experiences of life. Being elusive by nature, he gives way to illusions throughout his life. First it is the illusion of Christminster, which is shattered by the throwing of a pig's pizzle as there comes the catastrophic over-throw of his intellectual ambitions by fresh and wild pleasure in

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257 JO, p. 220.
258 JO, p. 407.
sexual gratification. Jude, who is "a spiritual animal",\(^2\)\(^5\)\(^9\) as H.C. Duffin calls him, gets again disillusioned and realises that mere sensuality cannot satisfy him completely. Then, he is enraptured by Sue, a free-thinker with unconventional, modern and emancipated spirit, who succeeds in brushing away his cobwebs of superstition, religiosity and conventions. He adopts the skepticism of Sue and emerges awakened and illuminated out of the agonies and afflictions of life. He succeeds in renouncing his nebulousness of mind. Once the mist is clear, he perceives the incomprehensibility of life. Quite early, he sees that things are not likely to turn out according to his expectations. This realisation prepares him for rebuffs and blows of life. As a result, he acquires a perfect magnanimity which is not shaken even when the disaster of the triple death of children strikes him with unmerited agony and anguish. While Sue, a strong, independent and emancipated woman, is turned into a shrivelled, maniac, wasted away by the bitter processes of sorrow, fear and error,\(^2\)\(^6\)\(^0\) he maintains his equanimity, serenity and sagacity. He tries to make Sue perceive the whole affair with her previous rationality and wisdom. It is growth of higher consciousness in Jude that he believes up to the end of his life that Sue is his real wife and their sexual relations without Government on religious stamp are not sinful at all. He has come out of the darkness of ignorance.

\(^2\)\(^5\)\(^9\) H.C. Duffin, *The Tragic Novels of Thomas Hardy*, p. 92

\(^2\)\(^6\)\(^0\) JO, p. 81.
and the cobwebs of conventions, customs and creeds which
hamer man's healthy-grovth. He has come to hate the religion
which shackles man's healthy sexual instincts and calls its
healthy expression as "sinful" and "monstrous errors". He
is pained to see Sue moving from vindication of impulses to
the vindication of abstract dogmas.

Jude now does not accept anything in which he does
not believe. Sue's adoption of ritualistic accelesiasticism
seems to him to be the humbug of a weak woman's affected
belief that comes to her after the loss of her faculties under
the blows of indescribable suffering. Jude's vague
perception as a child that something somewhere is wrong with
the society reaches its perfection in his mature
understanding that the world is not yet ripe to receive
free-thinkers such as they are. They are atleast fifty years
ahead their time. The world is too sordid and unendurable
for thin-skinnd people like them to live in. With the coming
of the day-light of knowledge, he perceives the discrepancy
between dreams and reality, between subjective and objective
truth. He realises that he has been judging the world and
particularly Sue subjectively. In fact Sue is too refined
and too intellectual to feel the urge of flesh. He
confesses openly that he was "stultified in (his) estimate
of Sue". He perceives that in her "extra-ordinary
blindness to (her) old logic", she is doing an immoral thing

261 JO, p. 351.
262 JO, p. 359.
263 JO, p. 355.
for moral reasons".\(^{264}\) He should have lived with her in "mental communion and no more".\(^{265}\) Ruminating upon his failure in achieving his intellectual goals, he perceives that it is the artificial system of things and hypocritical ways of the world under which Christminster denies entrance to those for whom it is meant. When he finds out the reality of Christminster, it no longer remains a glittering star. Instead it appears a "bigoted, cruel and sordid city"\(^{266}\) and church seems to be quite indifferent to the ordinary human predicaments. The traumatic experiences of life enlarge his "views of life, laws customs and dogmas".\(^{267}\) His enlightenment endows upon him the recognition that "it takes two or three generations to do what (he has) tried to doing one".\(^{268}\) He realises that "the world is not illuminated enough for such experiments" as theirs and their sorrows and sufferings are the price they have to pay for being the "pioneers".\(^{269}\)

In this way we see that though Jude proves a failure in life and also in achieving his worldly ambitions, he succeeds in attaining to that rare insight and privileged state of higher consciousness from where, as H.C.Duffin aptly

\(^{264}\) JO, p. 360.
\(^{265}\) JO, p. 359.
\(^{266}\) Merryn William, A Preface to Hardy, p. 110.
\(^{267}\) JO, p. 350.
\(^{268}\) JO, p. 350.
\(^{269}\) JO, p. 359.
says, "the junctions and crossings, and the interweavings of the web of life become distinct and explicable". 270

270 H.C. Duffin, The Tragic Novels of Thomas Hardy, p.118.