Thomas Hardy is one of the greatest English novelist. Born and brought up in Dorset on the south coast of England and trained as an architect, Hardy eventually chose literature as his career. In the beginning he wrote some youthful poetry but turned to novel writing as he found it as a sure means of quick success. *The Poor Man and the Lady* was the first novel of Hardy but he could not get it published on account of its bold satire. His next novel *Desperate Remedies* brought his success in 1871. Since then he never looked back and continued to write novels and short stories for the next twenty five years. Criticism of his last two novels, his position as an established novelist in the world of English literature and substantially good financial position revived in him his love for poetry. He gave up novel writing and continued to write poetry until his death in 1928. The remarkable achievement of this latter period was *The Dynasts* the long epic drama which Hardy wrote in six years.

Hardy was extremely attached to the traditional rural culture of Bockhampton. He always preferred the simple elemental rural setting as a background and his characters were country people living in nineteenth century Wessex. His novels can be regarded as village tragedies which depict the drama of broken love, wronged girls, the feuds and the hangings. Love-affairs and ill-matched marriages are an important source of unhappiness and agony. Hardy
concluded that pain and disappointment constituted an integral part of human existence in the world.

Hardy’s novels portray a conflict between the unsophisticated rustic people and the cultured civilized people of urban world. In this conflict an important role is played by the characters who create disturbance and upheaval in an otherwise calm and placid rural society. These characters can be called rootless destroyers in the novels of Hardy. Here Hardy’s five novels viz., *Far From the Madding Crowd*, *Tess of d’Urbervilles*, *The Woodlanders*, *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge* have been taken up for the study of these characters. In *Far From the Madding Crowd* Sergeant Troy is a rootless destroyer who gives a jolt to the bucolic life of the novel. He fails to integrate himself with the rural community. In the *Woodlanders*, Fitzpiers and Mrs. Charmond are alien intruders who sound a discordant note in the simple village community. Byronic cynicism of Fitzpiers and emotional self indulgence of Mrs. Charmond come into conflict with the natural woodland life of simple rural folk who live and work in the lap of nature. Simple natural surroundings do not harmonise with their (Mrs. Charmond and Fitzpiers’s) so called sophistication. In *Tess of d’Urbervilles* Alec is a rootless destroyer who by his sexual aggressions derives Tess to despair and untold mesuries and ultimately to death. He is a drifter whose impact on Hardy’s rural world is destructive. In *Mayor of Casterbridge* Farfrae serves as a rootless character in the sense that he becomes
the cause of the downfall of Henchard. He is a Scotchman and is completely opposite of Henchard. The novel *Under the Greenwood Tree* presents the urban invader Maybold, the Vicar who causes disturbance and upheaval among the church singers. So, these rootless personages are incapable to accomodate themselves with natural peaceful surroundings.

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