CHAPTER V

A SURVEY OF THE LAST TWO MAJOR NOVELS

The woodlanders is followed by another great work, an agricultural tragedy, Tess of the D’Urbervilles, supposed to be the best of Wessex Novels. According to a review in Athenaeum, this novel is well in front of Hardy’s previous work and is destined to rank high amongst the achievements of Victorian novelists. It is the tragic tale of a woman rather a pure woman and two men—one a sensualist and the other a moralist; and the woman being caught between præval passion of lust and conventional morality and ultimately done to her death. It is based on a conception which is unquestionably unconventional and is rather revolutionary for an age of conventional morality. The essence of the novel lies in the perception that a woman’s moral worth need be measured not by her actual deeds or achievements but by the whole aim and tendency of her life and nature. Men, for their own conveniences, have made moral law which becomes a doctrine to be followed both by men and women. Even supernatural sanction is also falsely ascribed to it. But men can violate this man-made doctrine with quite a little punishment or with no punishment at all. But woman cannot so violate it. If she ever violates it, she is looked upon as one having transgressed. This inconsistency in the treatment of men and women with regard to the observance of man-made moral doctrine is very much appalling.

and constitutes an indictment on the whole human society. This traditional pattern of right and wrong, this anomalous human situation, one for men and another for women, caught the sensitive soul of Thomas Hardy while writing this novel. In his *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Hardy throws an open challenge against this traditional code of conduct.

Clementina Black, a novelist and publicist of the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, rightly observes: "In regard to men the doctrine is no novelty; the writers who have had eyes to see and courage to declare the same truth about women are few indeed; and Mr. Hardy in this novel has shown himself to be one of that brave and clear-sighted minority". It was perhaps for this sort of comparatively modern and unorthodox opinion almost in the form of an open challenge to the traditional moral pattern that the novel, on its first publication, had to meet with volleys of criticism in the *Quarterly Review*, the *Saturday Review* and in the *National Review*. Notwithstanding its criticism, the book had an immense popularity among the then reading public in England and America and was much praised by H.W. Massingham, Richard Le Gallienne, William Watson and Lionel Johnson.

2. Thomas Hardy's *Personal Writings* (Edited by Harold Grelon) (Macmillan: London: 1967) P. 251
3. Ibid
This novel of Hardy, _Tess of the D'Urbervilles_, more than any other has been translated into a large number of European languages, such as, German, French, Russian, Dutch and Italian. In Russia, the book was read and approved by Tolstoi during its twelve months' publication in a Moscow monthly periodical. As reported by W.R. Rutland, the novel was reprinted some forty times in England alone during the period from 1900 to 1930. As much by its intrinsic qualities as by its subject matter which reoused so much stir, _Tess of the D'Urbervilles_ did more than any other novel to widen Hardy's reputation as an outstanding novelist, as an outstanding impressionist of the withering agricultural society of Wessex. To Hardy, novel was an impression not an argument, as he stated in his preface to the fifth and later editions of _Tess of the D'Urbervilles_.

As stated by Mrs. Florence Emily Hardy, her husband could have then little foreseen that this exceptionally popular novel was destined to be the beginning of the end of his novel writing career.

This novel of high-pitched emotional quality with its sub-title: "A pure woman faithfully presented" makes the

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suggestion of almost an enormous impersonality. It is
indeed the fate of a pure woman which standing as a mighty
symbol suggests its subject matter— the destruction of
the English peasantry. Perhaps no other English novel
of the nineteenth century, has the quality of being such
as accurate social document as *Tess of the D'Urbervilles.*
Arnold Kettle rightly observes: "Its subject is all-pervasive,
affecting and determining the nature of every part. It is
a novel with a thesis - a roman à thèse - and the thesis
is true." The process of the disintegration of the
peasantry which began with industrial revolution had
reached its most pathetic stage in the nineteenth century.
The industrial revolution has created in turn the modern
capitalistic economy which has not only affected the
industrial sector but also the agricultural sector. It has
had a spectacular effect on the system as well as on the
motive of farming. With the introduction of capitalistic
economy, the system of farming has undergone changes in
the form of gradual replacement of human labour by
mechanical and scientific devices. But the far more
important change is perhaps that the motive of farming is
no longer "sustenance" but earning more profit. Further,
in such a system of capitalistic farming, the farm
labourers have become mere wage-earners. Naturally, under
the pressure of modern capitalistic system of economy, the

(Perennial Library; Harper & Row, Publishers:
New York) P. 227
age-old yeoman class of small plot holders or peasants, with their age old tradition of independence and native culture, began to groan in pain. The forces of modern capitalism were too strong for the peasants to overcome and so they began to wither fast. As Arnold Kettle puts it: "The developing forces of history were too strong for them and their way of life, and because that way of life had been proved and deep-rooted its destruction was necessarily painful and tragic. Tess is the story and the symbol of destruction." This novel is thus a typical example of the vanishing rural virtues and the uprooting of the settled habits of life and thought, which the rural economy once secured. The awareness of this contemporary social realities certainly makes Hardy a typically modern writer.

Tess, the title figure of the novel, stands as a revolutionary symbol of a 'pure woman' wronged by hard morality of convention, the convention being that when men and women break a law, it is the woman who pays. She is the simple expression of a sexual situation round which 'The whole creation moves', and it is in this theme that Hardy traces an eternal meaning. Before writing this novel Hardy was seemingly a champion of man the faithful against woman the unfaithful. But in this novel Hardy champions more directly and clearly the cause of women who often suffer in this world even in spite of their best of intentions; and behind the suffering the

root is the lack of social spirit and the undemocratic attitude of men towards women. Tess is perhaps the perfect representative of all pure women who suffer in this world less for their own fault and more for the fault of the others, less for their own impurity and more for the lack of democratic spirit in society. Herein perhaps lies the modern significance of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

Through the moving presentation of this 'pure woman' Tess, Hardy wants to illustrate his conviction that there is not only no providence guiding individual men and women in the right way, but in many cases there is something like a malign fate which deviates them from the right way and entraps them into wrongness. That every human endeavour, whether good or bad, is thwarted by a malign fate lends a mood of anxiety and a sense of futility; and this awareness of living in a tragic world, as has been amply illustrated through the most lamentable results of Tess's honest endeavours, is certainly an important aspect of modern sensibility.

Tess is the most poignant of Hardy's heroines. The conspicuousness of Tess is not merely for what she symbolises, nor merely for the thesis she implies, but also for the reason that she is the central figure, the title role of the novel, for whom Hardy has written more singly than any other heroine of his any other novel "about casual wrong, the will to recover, the growth of love, faithful-
ness, frail happiness and death," as G.D. Kilingopulo puts it. Tess, as the product of Hardy's fertile imaginative experiences, has also been distinguished from his other women by an appellation "a pure woman". Such an appellation, however, raised volleys of adverse criticism against Hardy.

In the nineties of the nineteenth century it was far too intolerable to the guardians of public morality that the girl like Tess should be called a "pure woman". So stereotyped and so conventionalised their ideas were that to them, calling Tess "a pure woman" was certainly an insult to morality. Hardy was under the impression that this sub-title would be accepted without dispute and so he appended it in a late preface to the Wessex edition, as Hardy admitted it in his preface to the fifth and later editions dated March 1912. 2. Hardy in the same preface also regretted that he would have done better not to add this sub-title. "Melius fuerat non scribere" - "It would have been better not to write it." 3. Though Hardy expressed his regret, but nevertheless he reminded his critics that the word 'pure' should not be construed in a narrow and special sense as it was "artificial and derivative" resulting "from the ordinances of civilisation".

3. Ibid : P.39
4. Ibid : P.27
The word 'pure' should rather be applied in a wider and more general sense to Tess so as to mean, as Duffin interprets it, "unbroken, unspoil'd, unadulterated, unflawed, perfect!" 1. It is felt that Hardy need not have given this explanation or expressed his regret at all. No doubt, the critics of the nineteenth century objected to his appellation of Tess as 'a pure woman' but the twentieth century critic, Albert J. Quarard, for example, calls Tess a pure woman. According to him, there are two pure women in Hardy, one is Dolly South, while the other is Tess. 2.

Notwithstanding the comments of the critics, Tess is such as has been drawn by Hardy; and the essential purity of her soul is far from questionable. The term 'purity' may be applied in non-physical sense as well. If Tess has lost the purity of her body in spite of herself, she has nevertheless preserved the purity of her mind, the purity of her soul, for ever. Duffin observes that Tess is as much moral as any prude. Even if we consider Tess from that standpoint of orthodox moral code, we cannot miss the basic fact that in her behaviours, in her thoughts and in her desires, Tess is always unimpeachable. Whether in her relation with Clare, with Alec or with any of her admirers, she is perfect on all occasions. Infinite is her beauty; infinite is her variety; and she is infinite in her shame, remorse or regret.

1. H. C. Duffin: Thomas Hardy (Indian Branch Oxford University Press: 1967) P.218
Though a system of good training and education in childhood conscience is generally developed. But Tess, only with her sixth standard education, has been found to be in possession of an amazingly wonderful conscience right from the moment she appears in the novel. Tess’s beauty does not perhaps consist in what she is but in what she symbolises. As Hardy observes: “Beauty to her, as to all who have felt, lay not in the thing, but in what the thing symbolized.” 1 In mind and morals Tess is stainless and has the strong inclination to be stainless from first to last. Even during her horrible days of dissipation with Alec, according to Duffin, she is able to remain guiltless mentally and morally, because weariness, despair and pain make her mind drugged and dead. But it does not mean that she may be equally stainless in body. Indeed in Tess there is a slight variation between her body and mind. Hardy’s description of Tess is relevant in the context: “She had an attribute which amounted to a disadvantage....; and it was this that caused Alec d’Urberville’s eyes to rivet themselves upon her. It was a luxuriance of aspect, a fulness of growth, which made her appear more of a woman than she really was. She had inherited the feature from her mother without the quality it denoted. It had troubled her mind occasionally, till her companions had said that it was a fault which time would cure.” 2

1. Thomas Hardy: Tess of the D’Urbervilles (Printed in Great Britain by K & R Clark Limited, Edinburgh: Year not mentioned) P.381
2. Thomas Hardy: Tess of the D’Urbervilles (Printed in Great Britain by K & R Clark Ltd. Edinburgh) P.48-49
suggestion that certain features of Tess's physical growth stand hostile to her mental purity. They almost emphasise an aspect of seductive, rather than serene, beauty in her. It is this aspect that draws Angel Clare to her. As Hardy describes: "How very lovable her face was to him. Yet there was nothing ethereal about it; all was real vitality, real warmth, real incarnation. And it was in her mouth that this culminated." 1. Tess has eyes quite deep, cheeks quite fair, arched brows and chin and throat almost sharp; and she has a mouth that has nothing to equal on the face of the earth. The sight of such a woman is distracting, infatuating and maddening to any young man even if he has the least fire in him.

Angel Clare has never before in his life seen such a woman with such lips and such teeth, producing a bewildering and yet a bewitching effect. She is apt to force upon his mind 'the old Elizabethan simile of roses filled with snow' with such a persistent iteration. A lover may off hand call it perfect. "But no - they were not perfect. And it was the touch of the imperfect upon the would-be perfect that gave the sweetness, because it was that which gave the humanity." 2. Tess's sister Liza-Lu has been described as the "spiritualised image of Tess, slighter than she, but with the same beautiful eyes." 3.

1. Thomas Hardy: Tess of the D'Urbervilles
(Printed in Great Britain by R & R Clark Ltd, Edinburgh) P. 194
2. Ibid: P. 194
3. Ibid: P. 516
This comparison rather to illustrate the fact that while Lisa-Lu is pure both in body and heart, Tess is pure in heart only. She would have, however, remained equally pure as her sister but for an accidental happening on a fateful chilly September night in the Chase that robbed her of her maidenhood and made her an unmarried mother. Except this physical lapse, she has no other; but this and only this accounts for her fall. Tess after all belongs to the blood of the D'Urbervilles, and so she has inherited from her race a slight incalculousness of character. It has given her a touch of yieldingness and a touch of animalism in her flesh. It makes her respond to the great external pressure. So she falls; and her fall is inevitable.

Hardy's Tess reminds us of Shaw's Candida. In Bernard Shaw the main emphasis is on education and environment which can blot out heredity. Hardy also affirms Shaw but in a negative way. In Hardy the main emphasis is on heredity which becomes quite active when both reformatory education and meliorative environment are absent. In Tess there is absence of both of them. The force of heredity is too strong in her to be obliterated by her meagre sixth standard education. Even she has had not the basic training on sex usually imparted by a mother to her daughter. So she makes an agonised cry when she realises the impact of her contact with Alec. "O mother, my mother! How could I be expected to know? I was a child when I left this house four months ago. Why didn't you tell me there
was danger in men-folk? Why didn't you warn me? Ladies know that to fend hands against, because they read novels that tell them of these tricks; but I never had the chance o' learning in that way, and you did not help me!" 1

Though not without a taint of guilt in physical sense, arising solely out of her birth and blood, Tess nevertheless masters some qualities of mind which are indeed rare and remarkable. She is receptive, impressionable and high-strung. More poetical and less practical as she is, her soul soars high when she looks at the star studded sky at night. The sound of Clare's harp causes in her an emotional stress, while the physical touch of Clare causes in her an accelerated pulse driving her blood to her finger-ends. At the same time she is in possession of perfect nobility and generosity of sentiment. Her sympathetic attitude towards her simple rivals at the farm, such as, Marian, Betty Priddle and Iss Het and her splendid faith in Angel are indeed wonderful. She feels that she should be true and just to Clym and should not keep any secret from him, not even her dismal past that amounted to her seduction and loss of maidenhood by Alec. And so, despite her mother's advice to the contrary, she discloses her past to him and she pays. It shows her inexperience and want of practical sense and at the same time the essential purity of her heart. She thus suffers

1. Thomas Hardy: Tess of the D'Urbervilles
(Printed in Great Britain by R & R Clark Limited Edinburgh) P.106
inevitably only because of her earnest desire to do justice to the man she loves and marries. Yet, she consents to be Alec's mistress, thereby rendering her character apparently inconsistent. But a careful examination of the totality of her case does not make her character so much inconsistent as it appears to be. If there is at all any inconsistency, it is the inconsistency in nature that shapes and rules human destiny; and in Hardian scheme of things it is often the case. But Hardy, in his conception of Tess's character, saving for the accident of birth in the D'Urber-ville with its attendant beauty or ugliness, virtue or vice, has allowed his heroine to be developed as much naturally as possible. Tess goes to Alec to live as his mistress not because of his constant inducement to her, nor because of satisfying her vulgar physical passion, but because of the fact that under the stress of too much neglect from her husband a passionate sense of cruel injustice awakens in her; that her husband would never return to her again; and that she has minor brothers and sisters who are required to be well provided for.

Indeed, Hardy's conception of Tess is that of a heroic woman par excellence. Tess is heroic not only in the sense of her social forbearance to the pains and privations of life, but also in her act of revenge upon Alec D'Urber-ville, the human instrument of her undoing. He has robbed her of her happiness, and so she kills him with a mere carving knife. Then she joins her husband. Now, none can
come between the husband and wife and ruin their happiness. This is not all; there is yet something more over which she shows her exceptional courage and her admirable strength of mind. In her nocturnal shelter at the Gothic temple, when she is surrounded by men who have come to arrest her, Tess without being least nervous accepts the inevitable. "It is as it should be....Angel, I am almost glad - yes, glad! This happiness could not have lasted. It was too much. I have had enough; and now I shall not live for you to despise me...1. These are the words borne out of her experiences of life, borne out of her awareness of living in a tragic world; and Tess like Elizabeth Jane, in her sufferings of life far greater than those of Elizabeth Jane, realises that happiness is but an occasional episode in the general drama of pain. So she stands up, shakes herself, goes forward and calmly courts her arrest, quietly saying, "I am ready". All these are not what may be expected of an ordinary woman, and Tess indeed is extraordinary; she is great; she is heroic. Duffin rightly observes: "whatever else we call her, Tess remains the most lovable of Hardy's heroines. All women adore her, and some men. What she might have made of life, what life might have made of her, had circumstances and Clare been kind, is beyond dreaming." 2.

1. Thomas Hardy : Tess of the D'Urbervilles (Printed in Great Britain by R & R Clark Limited: Edinburgh) P.814
2. H.C. Duffin : Thomas Hardy (Indian Branch Oxford University Press) P.221.
In Sensee Review dated November 1892, W.P. Trent commented that Tess was the greatest character not only in Hardy but also in recent fiction. 1.

The hero of the novel Angel Clare, the Vicar's son, is first presented to us on the scene of May-Day revel at Marlott with an "uncrumbled, uncabin'd aspect in his (Angel Clare's) eyes and attire", thereby suggesting that he is yet not on a profession and is still an apprentice. That he is a desultory tentative student of something and everything can be easily predicted of him by his looks, manners and dress. Life is after all a veritable piece of apprenticeship; and for Clare the period of apprenticeship continues almost throughout his whole life. When his apprenticeship ends and when he begins to learn, it is too late.

The next appearance of the hero takes place at the dairy farm at Blackmoor Vale, clad in ordinary white pinner and leather leggings, with his boots clogged with mullch of the yard. This is all his local livery but beneath it, as Hardy says, he has "something educated, reserved, subtle, sad, differing". 2. He is too much absorbed in his own thoughts to notice even fair-sex. As the dairymen's pupil he has been learning farming in all its branches. At another farm he has already learnt sheep-farming, and

2. Thomas Hardy: Tess of the D'Urbervilles (Printed in Gt. Britain by R & R Clark Ltds: Edinburgh) P. 146
he has now been learning dairy-work from Mr. Crick. As he has been sketched by Hardy, Clare has an appreciative voice with fixed abstracted eyes and a mobility of mouth somewhat too small and too delicate for a man to match. His prominent personal bearing clearly brings out the impression of his never being subject to any inference or indecision. "Nevertheless, something nebulous, preoccupied, vague, in his bearing and regard, marked him as one who probably had no very definite aim or concern about his material future. Yet as a lad people had said of him that he was one who might do anything if he tried". 1

This youngest son of a neighbouring vicar has come to the Talbothays Dairy for a term of six months. His object is to acquire some practical skill in the various processes of farming so that he can start a farm by himself in course of time. Among his three brothers he is the only exception in not having obtained a university degree, although his early promise was enough to show fitness for any length of academical training. He gives up his university education only because he does not want to enter church services. Angel, as often a modern man does, feels that all his education and experiences of life should better be utilised for the honour and glory of man rather than for the honour and glory of God. In mediaeval times faith was a living

1. Thomas Hardy: Tess of the D'Urbervilles
   (Printed in St. Britain by R & R Clark Ltd: Edinburgh) P. 169
thing; but in modern age man is more rational and sceptical. As a rational being, Angel Clare is sceptical about God and so he is drawn more to man than to God.

Early association with country solitudes has bred in him almost a complete aversion to modern town life; and this is perhaps the reason for which he is eager to undertake the farming profession. Farming profession in rural areas will on one hand quench his thirst for solitude and will enable him to serve his socialistic idea of rendering some material service to mankind rather than the impractical spiritual service; it will on the other hand afford him an independence without the sacrifice of intellectual liberty which he values more than anything else. So he comes to Talbothays dairy farm at the age of twenty-six and begins mixing with the dairy folk completely disregarding the age-old artificial distinction between high and low, intellect and non-intellect, and educated and illiterate. Such free mixing with rank and file in talking, sitting, eating and drinking together indicates that Angel is quite unorthodox and progressive. He communistically sticks to his rule of taking part with the rest in everything. Thus, he shows an attitude of the mind which is unquestionably modern. He, like many men of our own age, comes to realise that the magnitude of life does not consist in "external displacements" but in subjective experiences.

As the dairyman feels, Angel is one of the "Rebellest Romurs". He is so unorthodox and so untraditional that he
was extremely glad to hear from a job-seeking boy that he was to be known by his name only and not by his surname. For his family was not so old as to have a surname at all. Jumping and shaking the boy’s hand, he uttered: "Ah! You’re the very boy I want! I have great hopes of you". Angel even gave the boy half-a-crown. It shows that Clare is a rebel against the traditional old families. Tess can win interest in his eyes only because of her "supposed untraditional neatness".

Of the three brothers, Angel is the most appreciative humanist, the most ideal religionist and even the "best versed Christologist". Yet in their (two brothers') presence Angel has often a standing consciousness that he is like a square peg in a round hole. As against Clym’s dynamism, his other two brothers, Felix and Cuthbert, have rather fixed ideas; they are opposed to anything new and liberal. As a sceptic, Angel feels that anything old, however good, must have a corrupting influence upon the society. At the same time he is also of the view that the old institutions, in spite of the loss of their political virtues, nevertheless retain their poetic, dramatic and historical values.

"Politically I am sceptical as to the virtue of their being old. Some of the wise even among themselves ‘exclaim against their own succession’, as Hamlet puts it; but lyrically, dramatically and even historically, I am tenderly attached to them". 2. Angel is thus alternately attached to the old

1. Thomas Hardy: Tess of the D’Urbervilles
   (Printed in Gr. Britain by R & R Clark Ltd; Edinburgh). P. 196
2. Ibid: P. 315
families by virtue of their inherent poetry, drama and history and detached from them on account of their loss of political virtue. It shows that Angel has in him a peculiar combination of the rational and the romantic.

This is just one side, rather the superficial side of Angel's character. He is most conspicuous among Hardy's protagonists, and has a far deeper side. As Hardy says about him: "Within the remote depths of his constitution, so gentle and affectionate as he was in general, there lay hidden a hard logical deposit, like a vein of metal in a soft lea, which turned the edge of everything that attempted to traverse it. It had blocked his acceptance of the Church; it blocked his acceptance of Tess. Moreover, his affection itself was less fire than radiance, and, with regard to the other sex, when he ceased to believe he ceased to follow; contrasting in this with many impressionable natures, who remain seriously infatuated with what they intellectually despise". 1 Thus, in so far as the matter of love and sex goes, Angel's attitude is certainly at variance with his attitude on other matters. In other matters Angel is conspicuously unconventional and unorthodox, while in matters of love and sex he is orthodox as well as conventional.

Nevertheless, there is no duality in him between his reason and emotion, between his intellect and infatuation.

1 Thomas Hardy: Tess of the D'Urbervilles.
(Printed in Gr. Britain by R & R Clark Ltd., Edinburgh)
He follows what he believes and does not follow what he does not believe. As his name implies, Angel is free from grossness of any kind, and his hold upon life is always spiritual, always ideal. Arnold Kettle however calls him a prig, a hypocrite and a snob. 1. This is perhaps not a fair estimate of Angel. He is neither a prig, nor a hypocrite, nor a snob. The only charge that can be reasonably brought against him is that his sense of spirituality has eclipsed his sense of humanity. In his relation with Tess he is conducted by passion, rather than by reason. Here, of course, we should not forget that Hardy has introduced him in the novel as an apprentice and he continues to remain so right up to the last; first as an apprentice to profession and then as an apprentice to life. Through him Hardy perhaps wants to show that life is after all an apprenticeship. Experiences make men learn. It is chiefly for this reason that Angel has not been made a full grown figure. He rather remains somewhat pale and insatiated beside Tess, the best and the most convincing of all Hardy's women. Nevertheless, quite in keeping with his name, as Duffin observes, a sort of super-natural brightness always illuminates Angel Clare.

The other important character of the novel, Alec D'Urberville is the very antithesis of Angel Clare. He is the prime instrument of Tess's tragedy and his life is

mainly motivated by the gratification of animal instinct. He is not an original D'Urberville at all; as the Pall Mall Gazette dated December 31, 1891 observes, he is "but the characteristic product of a xen family of nouveaux riches who adopt the name in buying the D'Urberville estate."1 This lover and sensualist is almost a stock villain of Victorian melodrama, the serpent who destroys the poor young Eve. As Hardy has sketched him, he has indeed become the archetypal Victorian villain, the like of whom is also not perhaps rare in the days of our own.

Alec has almost a swarthy complexion, with full lips, badly moulded, though red and smooth. Though he is only twenty-three or twenty-four, he has a well-groomed black moustache with curved points. Despite a singular force in his face and in his bold rolling eyes, he has a touch of barbarism in his contours. His appearance almost reflects the character of the man. His very first address to Tess: "Well, my beauty..." without having known or seen her before, is enough indication that he is a downright sensualist, who is the very embodiment of a reckless passionate 'child of the devil'. His first appearance in the novel convinces every reader that he is a boldly designed villain of the piece. His sensual life is, however, followed by his conversion to Christian ideals only for a short while. For, again, there is a swift transformation of him from virtue

into vice, and such transformation is quite in keeping with his nature as a sensualist.

It may however be said in defence of Alec that he is not altogether unredeemed; he is also capable of some degree of generous emotions. He is really sorry at the suffering of Tess and is ever ready to help her if she only accepts his help. He has mad passion for the girl and he pursues it up to the last and finally loses his life. In his passion for Tess he is not a hypocrite and does never betray himself. Thus, Alec D'Urberville has both merits and demerits in his character; his demerits even though for overweighing his merits. And the total impression he leaves is that the gratification of animal instinct is the ruling passion of his life. It makes his character all the more convincing as a boldly designed villain, at least more convincing than the other Hardian villains.

The modern significance of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* lies primarily in its emphasis on history, a lively interest in the past for its own sake. For the novel begins with an immediate and insistent emphasis on historical processes so that the characters of the novel, ab initio, are not seen merely as individuals but as the products of history. John, the father of the heroine, discovers his ancestry as belonging to the D'Urbervilles, and this genealogical discovery is not merely a comic introductory, but a forceful historical fact that shapes the course of the novel and the destiny of its characters. The description of the Blakemore landscape
in the second chapter of book I has also a significant
reference to history. The May Day dances of the past and the
early pagan rites are recalled through the club-walking
scene at Marlott. In this club-walking scene we have the
first glimpse of our heroine as a village maiden of fourteen
or so. Her features and particularly her manners show some
marked differences from those of her mother. These differences
simply emphasise the changes resulting from historical
evolution. In this context Arnold Kettle comments: "Jean
Durbeyfield lives in the peasant folk-lore of the past, Tess
has been to a National School, when they were together the
Jacobean and the Victorian ages were juxtaposed". As the
product of the National School under a London trained
Mistress, the daughter can speak two languages, the house-
dialect as well as the ordinary English, while her mother
can speak only the house dialect. Tess is thus symbolic of
the process of evolutionary changes.

The discovery of his ancestry by John Durbeyfield,
Tess's father, gives him an added encouragement to visit the
public house at Rolliver's. Mrs. Durbeyfield finds in it a
pleasant diversion, and so she also follows her husband just
to sit beside him for an hour or so, dismissing all thoughts,
cares and anxieties during the interval. As Hardy says:
"A sort of halo, an accidental glow, came over life then.
Troubles and other realities took on themselves a

1. Arnold Kettle: An introduction to the English Novel
metaphysical impalpability, sinking to mere mental phenomena for serene contemplation, and no longer stood as pressing concretions which chafed body and soul."

This sort of escape from reality of life by drowning senses in liquor is not however uncommon even in our own days. Only Tess with her Sixth Standard education, who is more rational more reasonable and more sensible, can feel the absurdity of such a course.

Excessive drinking at Rollicker's affords John Durbeyfield no other advantage than idle repose. It makes him fail to undertake the journey to Casterbridge market the early next morning for delivering the beehives to the retailers. At last Tess herself has to go accompanied by her nine year old brother Abraham. In course of the nocturnal journey under the starry sky, Abraham questions Tess about the stars:

"Did you say the stars were worlds, Tess?"

"Yes"

"All like ours?"

"I don't know; but I think so. They sometimes seem to be like the apples on our stubbard-tree. Most of them splendid and sound - a few blighted." 2

Thus Tess has no divine but rational conception about stars. This is undoubtedly a modern notion. In this ill-fated journey, Prince, the sole bread earner of the family, loses his life by an accident. In the opinion of Arnold Kettle

1. Thomas Hardy: Tess of the D'Urbervilles
(Printed in Great Britain by R.R. Clark Limited, Edinburgh) P. 24

2. Ibid : P. 34 - 35
this accident represents a striking symbol of the struggle of the peasantry. The two noiseless wheels of the morning mail cart runs into Tess's slow, unlighted wagon, and the pointed shaft of the cart enters the breast of poor Prince like a sword. His life blood spouts in a stream from his wound and falls with a hiss on the road. This had been a common incident in Italy during the last world war. The army vehicles used to run down the peasant carts. But the army was not always to blame. For the peasant carts were often on the wrong side and unlighted too. At any rate the clash between Tess's cart and the morning mail cart represents something more than a clash between two individual vehicles, and results in hardships for the weak peasantry. It is symbolic of the crushing of the weak peasantry by the strong ruling class. Further, this accidental clash which results in the death of unfortunate Prince is the significant preface to the tragedy of Tess, a peasant woman. Regarding herself in the light of a murderer of the only bread earner of the family, Tess suffers from a sense of guilt. It allows her to be pursuaded by her mother into visiting the more prosperous branch of the family, the Trantridge D'Urbervilles to 'claim kin'. In spite of herself, she goes and falls into the lust of a sensualist.

At Trantridge Tess meets the wrong man, a thorough-going sensualist, Alec D'Urberville, whose only ruling
passion of life is the gratification of animal instinct. To her great dismay he offers his love to her, rather too violently. Hardy comments: "In the ill-judged execution of the well-judged plan of things the call seldom produces the comer, the man to love rarely coincides with the hour for loving". This has been the case with Tess who is tossed and tussled beyond measure by her rich yet undesirable lover. But the girl is helpless; she is entirely at the mercy of the ruling class, as many poor women have been from time to time. This social injustice, Hardy feels, cannot be completely eradicated either by closer inter­section of social machinery or by the emergence of a finer human institution. In course of time Tess is seduced by Alec. Thus, the vice appropriates the virtue, the coarse the fine and the wrong man the right woman. Nobody knows its cause. Even the analytical philosophy of many thousand years has failed to explain why it happens so. Yet it happens; it is perhaps a condition of earthly existence. Hardy by exposing this fundamental truth of life may be regarded the representa­tive of all ages, not to speak of a particular age only.

Tess is maiden no more. She has now learnt that 'serpent tisses where the sweet bird sings', and her views of life have been totally changed by her experience. After about four months she leaves Trantridge for Marlott, her native village. On way to Marlott she meets a painter who

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1. Thomas Hardy: Tess of the D'Urbervilles. (Printed in Great Britain by R.R. Clark Ltd., Edinburgh) P. 49
is engaged in painting upon blank walls, something like wall-postering of our own days. On one such wall the man has painted: "THY, DAMNATION, SLUMBERETH NOT." Tess questions the painter if he really believes what he has painted. "Believe that text? Do I believe in my own existence?" is the reply. It sounds almost like modern scepticism.

Tess's unconscious physical contact with Alec on the fateful night in the chase makes her an unmarried mother in course of time. Thus, Hardy makes her break the accepted social law, something unthinkable in the Victorian age. Once Tess has become the mother of an illegitimate child, she is no more afraid of anything worse. Boldly does she take the baby and does her motherly duties - say, suckling the child - even in public. After all, Tess is now a mother, and the motherly instinct of preserving her own kin is common to all women. Tess is no exception. Bearing herself with dignity, she can now calmly face people holding the baby in her arms. While working in the field Tess sometimes indulges in a reflection of her own conditions. She is now a spouseless mother with no experience of life except that of the parent of a nameless child. She is, sometimes, weighed down with sorrow for what has happened. But finally she shakes her senses not to be in a state of depression for the past happenings. Everything would be settled in course of time. Time heals
the wound. "The past was past." Tess realises that the world bothers very little about her. To others, even to her own friends, she is only a passing thought; her own state is her own concern only. Others may share it only indirectly.

Life, as Hardy says, has its counterpoises and compensations. The event has made Tess a social rebel and has also for a moment made her the most interesting personage in the Marlott village. Her friends are sympathetic to her, and their friendliness wins her still further away from herself. She begins becoming gay again. But with her moral sorrow passing away, a fresh one arises on her natural side, and it knows no social law. Her baby falls sick and is about to die. The girl-mother forgets the baby's offence against the society in coming into the world, and her soul's desire is to continue the offence by preserving the life of the child. What mortifies Tess is not merely the thought of simple loss of her baby but the fact that her baby has not been baptised. Lack of legitimacy has caused the lack of baptism. The mental torture of the girl-mother is followed by a swift deterioration of her child's condition. The baby begins to sink. It is now useless to devour the poor little thing with kisses. Tess can no longer stay in bed; she begins walking about the room restlessly. She makes monosyllabic utterances: "O merciful God, have pity; have pity upon my poor baby! Heap as much anger as you want to upon me,
and welcome; but pity the child! "1. It proves that
mother's love for her child, whether legitimate or
illegitimate, is always eternal.

Tess will not allow her child to die unbaptized. In
the absence of a parson, she herself baptises the child;
she herself acts as the parson, while her next sister acts
as the clerk at Church. In the name of the Father and of
the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, the child is baptised by
Tess and given the name "Sorrow". As soon as the ceremony
is over, "Sorrow the undesired - that intrusive creature,
that bastard gift of shameless nature who respects not the
social law", passes away. Tess herself has baptised her
child and so she herself gives it a christian burial, for
the parson refuses to administer it. The courage and mental
strength shown by Tess right from the birth and burial of
her child, is really unique; it is not something expected
of a girl of conventional outlook. It can be expected only
of a girl whose outlook has been shaped by historical
evolution, by the rush of modern ideas resulting from
modern civilisation.

The fever and fret of life sometimes makes man
think of his death. Yet man lives on hope. While there is
life, there is hope. If truth is to be told, as Hardy
observes, women do, as a rule, live through such humilia-
tions, as Tess has been subjected to, and regain their

1. Thomas Hardy: Tess of the D'Urbervilles
(Printed in Ct.Britain by R.K.Clerk Limited
Edinburgh) P. 120
spirit afresh. Tess is also a woman and is no exception. The pulse of a hopeful life is still warm within her. She is still expecting to be happy in some nook which does not know her past. So she is bound for the dairy called Talbothays. "It was unexpanded youth, surging up anew after its temporary check, and bringing with it hope, and the invincible instinct towards self-delight". 1. This is the most common natural human tendency.

At Trantridge the woman meets the wrong man; but at Talbothays dairy the man meets the wrong woman. Here, Tess meets Angel who, in spite of her Sixth Standard education, finds in her "the ache of modernism" and takes an unusual interest in her. For Tess, like many sensitive persons of modern age, has a general complaint: "why the sun do shine on the just and the unjust alike". 2. Partly because of her youthful bloom and partly because of her untraditional neversness, Angel falls in love with Tess. Angel proposes to marry Tess but she refuses. Her refusal, though unexpected, does not daunt Angel. His experience of women is great enough for him to be aware that negative often means nothing more than the preface to the affirmative. This is more or less the common attitude of womankind in general.

1. Thomas Hardy: Tess of the D'Urbervilles
   (Printed in Gt.Britain by H.R.Clark Ltd., Edinburgh)
   P.129
2. Ibid : P154
Once this young pair undertake a journey by the spring wagon to the nearest Railway station at a distance of about 30 miles from the dairy. In the way they pass one of the several seats of an ancient Norman family, formerly of great influence, the D'Urbervilles; and Angel draws Tess's attention to it. Whenever Angel has to pass these ancient seats, he cannot help thinking about their owners. "There is something very sad in the extinction of a family of renown, even if it was fierce, domineering, feudal renown." 1. The Rly station which the pair visit has the evident touches of modern life, and the receptive mind of Tess is greatly affected by the material progress of the modern age. This journey to and from the Rly station affords a better understanding between the hero and the heroine and also affords the readers a better view of their inner recesses. Tess knows that she is a D'Urberville and tells Angel as such. As a hater of old families, Angel feels that he should have been more glad if she were the descendant of an unrecorded rank and file of the English nation rather than of the self-seeking and the fortunate few who make themselves powerful at the expense of the rest. Such a progressive idea, somewhat uncommon in those days, is, however, quite common in the days of our own.

Tess has no particular elation for her descent, because she knows that there are many like her belonging to

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1. Thomas Hardy: Tess of the D'Urbervilles
   (Printed in Gt. Britain by W.H. Clark Ltd., Edinburgh)
   P. 341
ancient families but now reduced to peasantry. Many of the present tillers of the soil were once the owners of it. Angel wonders why a certain school of politicians has not yet made a capital out of it, as they are supposed to have been doing at present. Hardy certainly foresaw the doings of the modern politicians even in the nineties of the last century. Sitting on the spring wagon beside Clare, Tess makes some futile attempts to disclose her past to her lover. But at the last moment her courage fails. Her instinct of self preservation is stronger than her candour. At any rate this journey brings the lovers still closer, and Tess agrees to marry Clare.

Soon takes place a quiet wedding, and begins the unrelieved tragic tale of poignant pity. Now, we shall see Hardy's philosophy of the Immanent will at work with a far greater force. It is the pessimistic and deterministic view of the world in which man is at the mercy of an unyielding fate. In spite of her mother's prudent advice, Tess discloses her past to her husband with a hope that she would be pardoned. But she is not only not pardoned but is also deserted by her husband. It seems that Angel, the idealist, turns more cruel to Tess than even Alec, the sensualist. The social degradation of Tess which began with her seduction has still been continuing. It was to some extent mitigated by the kindness of the dairyman and his wife; but now it starts in its ugliest form when Tess goes to serve at the farm at Flintcomb Ash on contract system.
Once again Tess gets the company of her former comrades of the Dairy farm, Marion and Iss. The three comrades become, as Arnold Kettle observes, "fully proletarianised, working for wages in the hardest, most degrading conditions". Marion, like many afflicted people of the modern age, has taken to drink as a means of temporary escape from drab realities and squalor of human existence. "Lord, that's the only comfort I've got now! If you engage, you'll be set swede-hacking. That's what I be doing; but you won't like it." 2. This is what she says to Tess. And Tess continues her drudgery without drinks.

Alec D'Urberville has now become a preacher; but a mere sight of Tess revives in him his old passion for the girl. He forgets his vocation and much to Tess's distress resumes meeting her at Flintcomb Ash. In the mean time a lonely sojourn on the Brazilian soil brings a little change in Clare, and his stony heart seems to have been slightly melted. What arrests him now as of a value in life is less its beauty than its pathos. Having long discredited the old system of mysticism, he now begins to discredit the old appraisement of morality. He feels that it needs readjusting. It is thus a complete rationalist's outlook. "Who was the moral man? Still more pertinently who was the moral woman? The beauty or ugliness of a character lay not only in its achievements, but in


2. Thomas Hardy: Tess of the D'Urbervilles (Printed in Great Britain by R. A. Clark Ltd; Edinburgh) P. 363
its aims and impulses; its true hostory lay, not among things done, but among things willed. 1. Viewing Tess in these lights, a regret for his hasty judgment begins to oppress him. In Brasil Angel also discloses the sorrowful facts of his marriage to a stranger who is wiser and more cosmopolitan than Clare. He views the matter in quite a different light. He thinks that what Tess has been is of no importance beside what she should be; and he plainly tells Clare that he was wrong in coming away from her. It is, indeed, a revolutionised notion which can be expected only of a man of modern mind.

Tess leaves Flintcomb Ash on account of her mother's serious illness. But the Durbeyfield couple change places, and the dying one is out of danger, while the living one dies. The death of Sir John D'Urberville, apart from being a personal loss, is also a social loss. For his death results in the uprooting of the descendants of the D'Urbervilles from Marlott village. Their house and their premises have so long been held under a lease on the life of John D'Urberville. With his death, the lease terminates. The descendants of the D'Urbervilles, once the land owners, have now become landless for ever. Hardy observes: "So do flux and reflux - the rhythm of change - alternate and persist in everything under the sky." 2. Change is a universal phenomenon, and by having demonstrated it in the process of disintegration of peasantry, Hardy has shown

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1. Thomas Hardy: Tess of the D'Urbervilles
(Printed in Great Britain by R.R. Clark Ltd, Edinburgh) P.438-9

2. Ibid : P.463
the true spirit of modernism. The depopulation of villages which has begun with industrial revolution finds another instance in the migration of the surviving descendants of the D'Urbervilles from Marlott village.

The stranger's advice carries Clare to a new conviction. He is now free from disillusionment. After the death and burial of the stranger, Angel returns home. But it is too late; he traces Tess only to find that she has been won over by her seducer. Tess already wrote certain letters imploring him to return to her, but she got no reply. In his long silence and in her long suffering she has been smarting under a sense that she has been too much wronged by Angel who has punished her much more than she deserves. At this juncture Alec poses to be penitent and provides for her mother and her little brother and sisters. He also persuades her to believe that Angel will never return.

But Angel does really return, and the devil gets his due. Alec pays with his life as the price of his lying. After killing her seducer Tess runs back to her husband. Angel is now a thoroughly changed man who receives her warmly. The couple run for their lives and take shelter in a mansion called Bramshurst Court. This is the supreme bliss in the storm-tossed life of Tess. Having been experienced by the hardships of life, Tess now fully gives herself in to the enjoyment of the present moment. For no one knows what is in store for tomorrow. "Don't think of what's past! I am not going to think outside of now.
Why should we? Who knows what to-morrow has in store?" 1. The couple take full rest in this mansion for five days. They spend their sixth night on the stonehenge. While lying on the stonehenge, Tess rightly apprehends that her days are numbered. She proposes that in her absence Angel should marry her younger sister, Liza-Lu, who has all the best of her without the bad of her. She also expresses her longing for meeting Angel after death. But she knows that it is not possible, just as any modern man feels. It is at the stonehenge that Tess is arrested, and the novel reaches its tragic climax with her execution. The President of the Immortals has ended his sport with Tess.

Here are certain opinions passed by certain critics on *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and these opinions will undoubtedly place it as a modern novel. Bernard J. Paris, for example, calls it a fine modern novel and the best work of Hardy's fiction. 2. According to A. J. Querard, Thomas Hardy much influenced D. H. Lawrence whose Ursula in "The Rainbow" was modelled much upon the character of Tess, particularly in the matter of her love for Angel that sustained her. 3. Patric Braybrooke was of opinion that *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* was a marvellous book. According to him, "Mr. Hardy chides at the ruler of the universe for

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2. Nineteenth Century Fiction, Vol. 24, Number 1; Edited by Blake Nevins; University of California Press; June 1966. P. 79

3. The Victorian Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism Edited by Ian Watt; Oxford University Press 1971. P. 413
sporting with Tess. So far, so good. This is a kind of subtle materialism, for the fact that whatever power there
is behind the universe is obviously of no utilitarian value. But — and this is where it seems to me — Mr. Hardy is
inclined to limit himself — he makes no sort of suggestion that Tess, when she has died, may find some compensation
for her miseries beyond the grave." 1. Indeed, for Hardy, there is no divine consolation. This is certainly the result
of his modern rationalistic outlook. According to Harold Child, Hardy has become the "writer of the Gay" with Tess.
As he observes, "Were Tess of the D'Urbervilles newly published this year, few would be found obtuse enough to
deny it as an immoral work, and few too to timid to admit that Tess was, as the title page proudly claims for her,
a pure woman, and her tragedy an enlarging and ennobling study. Still, there was some excuse for the objectors of
35 years ago. The novel doubtless took them by surprise." 2. Tess has really broken no moral law. Tess has only fulfilled
a natural law; but in the eyes of the society she is a "fallen" woman. Hardy had the courage to tell the truth and
pointed out the fallacious judgment of the society. It is that which raised so much outcry against the novel on its
first publication; and it is that which makes Tess of the
D'Urbervilles a modern novel.

1. Patrick Braybrooke: Thomas Hardy & His Philosophy
   Published by C.W. Daniel Company; London; 1928. P.153
2. Harold Child: Thomas Hardy;
   (Nisbet & Co. Ltd. London : 1925) P.65
Commenting upon *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* Juliet McLanchlan observes: "My own view is that close study will, rather, bring greater appreciation of what is fine in *Tess* and show its limitations, both of subject and style, in a less severe light. Especially as we see more of what Hardy is attempting, the barriers for twentieth century readers are broken down, and the theme becomes much more fascinating, much broader in its interest." 1. Similarly, J.T. Laird holds that the distinctive narrative voice, which is heard in varying degree in all Hardy novels, is not that of Hardy the man. It is as if the voice of an anonymous narrator who represents the dramatised version of Hardy. The same view has also been expressed by J. Hillis Miller. He asserts that the narrative voice of Hardy's novels is as much a fictional invention as any other aspect of the story. And this device certainly helps to achieve a degree of objectivity. 2. Thus, different critics have passed different opinions about *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and have praised it in varying degrees. But the fact that it is a modern novel has been disputed by none. Whether directly or indirectly the critics have rather called it a modern novel.


Tess of the D'Urbervilles is followed by Hardy's last fictional masterpiece Jude the Obscure published in 1895. In the preface to the first edition Hardy calls it "the tragedy of unfulfilled aims", and here the tragedy issues as much from character as from environment. So it is classified by Hardy as a novel of character and environment and this invariably gives a modern touch to Jude the Obscure. The final publication of the novel has had a long history. The scheme of the novel was undertaken in 1890 from the materials collected and rough notes made in 1887 and onwards. Some of the circumstances were suggested by the death of a woman in the former year. Hardy revisited the scenes in October 1892 and thereafter the narrative was written in outline. The full-length novel was written from August 1892, and the whole novel with the exception of a few chapters reached the hands of the publisher by the end of 1894. At first the narrative began to appear as a serial story in Harper's Magazine on and from November 1894 and continued serially in monthly issues.

Jude the Obscure was published in a book form on 1st November 1895. Hardy did not tell his first wife Mrs. Emma Hardy anything about the publication of this novel. For she had serious objections to the publication of the manuscript of Jude the Obscure. According to Carl J. Weber, Mrs. Hardy threw the pages away from her in disgust when she found out what Hardy had put into the story, such as, Sue's remark 'how hopelessly vulgar an institution legal
marriage is'. She also told her physician Dr. Fred B. Fisher that she would never have anything more to do with any book her husband wrote. This was not all. She even wrote to Dr. Richard Garnett at the British Museum and sought for his help so that he would use his good offices in persuading Mr. Hardy not to publish the 'Vicious' manuscript. Her letter of request perhaps produced little result. Then she made a special trip to London and repeated her request to Dr. Garnett. Mrs. Hardy implored the Director of the British Museum and she even wept before him. But that, too, failed. Only the news that got around the British Museum and subsequently into the world outside was that Mrs. Hardy had been trying to prevent the publication of her husband's novel.

In all fairness to Emma Hardy it should, however, be said that she was not alone in her dislike of Jude the Obscure. A lecturer in Liverpool also spoke of its filth and pollution. A scandalised review was written about Jude the Obscure by Jeannette L. Gilder in the New York World in which she denounced the immortality of the novel and its 'coarseness which is beyond belief'. By far the strongest objection was raised by William Walsham How, the first Bishop of Wakefield, and a figure of some distinction. He wrote an irate letter to the Yorkshire Post dated June 8, 1896 calling it 'garbage' and claimed to have thrown the

2. Ibid: p. 30
novel into the fire. A letter of complaint was also sent by the Bishop to W.F.D. Smith, Esq., M.P., and its result was that the book was quietly withdrawn from the library with an assurance that any other book by the same author would henceforth be thoroughly examined before the same was allowed to be circulated. 1. At the instance of Margaret Oliphant, almost a common charge framed against Hardy was that he was attempting to establish a sinful 'anti-marriage league'. There was even the fear of some actual threats to his person, and this led to "Hardy's renunciation of the novel as an art-form and to some sour thoughts about humanity in general. It is not surprising, perhaps, that Hardy read King Lear with renewed interest that year. Nevertheless, there were friendly reviews by Edmund Gosse and Havelock Ellis, among others, and a letter of encouragement from a long time here, Swinburne. 2.

Edmund Gosse observed in Cosmopolis dated January, 1896 that should Jude the Obscure be at all to be criticised, it might be done by a moralist and not by a critic. For a critic criticises less of what is told but more of how it is told. In other words, the critic has to examine whether the execution of the story is fine and convincing. To tell such an abnormal story, as Jude the Obscure is, in the most interesting and convincing way is in itself a feat which,

2. Thomas Hardy's personal writings: Edited by Harold Crel (Macmillan: London: 1967) P. 263
it must be admitted, has been completely achieved by
Thomas Hardy. "Jude the Obscure is an interesting book;
it is one of those novels into which we descend and are
carried on by a steady impetus to the close, when we return,
dazzled, to the light of common day." 1 Another reviewer,
has been of opinion that in spite of certain defects of
form which are almost inevitable, Jude the Obscure is by
far the best English novel that has appeared since Tess
of the D'Urbervilles. According to him, Hardy "is the
greatest living English writer of fiction. In intensity,
in grip of life, and, above all, in the artistic combination
of the real and the ideal, he surpasses any of his French
contemporaries. Jude the Obscure is not his greatest work;
but no other living novelist could have written it." 2
Havelock Ellis in Savoy Magazine dated October, 1896
observes that Jude the Obscure is a novel in which there is
a fine self-restraint, a complete mastery of all the
elements of an exceedingly interesting human story. The
distressing male-drama which we may find in his early novel
is totally absent in it. Further, R.Y.Tyrrell in Fortnightly
Review dated June, 1896 gave the best eulogy to Jude the
Obscure. He called it the most splendid of all the works
of Thomas Hardy. In order to strengthen his own stand Mr.
Tyrrell also quoted the comments of the Saturday Review

   (Vikal Publications : Delhi : 1970) P.368
2. Ibid : P.274
dated February, 8, 1896. According to this review, *Jude the Obscure* is a masterpiece 'that will alone make 1895 a memorable year in the history of literature'; further, 'had Mr. Hardy never written another book this would still place him at the head of the English novelists'. Thus, *Jude the Obscure* on its first publication met with a mixed criticism; it was both praised and dispraised. It was because of this mixed criticism and the fear of threat to his own person that forced Hardy to give up novel-writing for good. Hence *Jude the Obscure* was Hardy's last novel. Since then he employed his artistic genius in the writing of poems and plays; and *The Dynasts* was his most memorable poetic masterpiece.

In spite of what is said by the critics, it must be admitted that *Jude the Obscure* is one of Hardy's most mature works. Unlike those of his early tragedies, its plot hinges less upon accidents and coincidences and more upon character and environment. In his early works Hardy has shown his descriptive power, a power of vivid and accurate description of nature; but in this last fictional feat Hardy has evidently exhibited his analytical power, a power to delineate character with so critical an insight that it is at once made real as well as revolting. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the other great novel of almost of the same nature but with less vigour and different theme, is the story of a triangle in love between one woman and two men.

In *Jude the Obscure* the love-triangle is between one man and two women. Love is the ruling passion among the principal characters who, with a touch of free-play among them, have been rendered alive, unorthodox and non-conventional and are much ahead of their own time. They appear as a social rebels to those who are orthodox and who respect social convention. Their tragedy for the most part emanates from their character in the sense that some fatal flaw inherent in character makes their environment unbecoming to and incompatible with the society in which they are born and bred. Such maladjustment between their inner quiverings and outer forces invariably works out their fall.

Jude Fawley, the hero of the novel, is the last and the most complex of Hardy's men. He is the most solid, living and inscrutable person and not at all artificially drawn. He is much more original and ingenious. This little orphaned Baker's boy of Wessex hamlet is first introduced to us as a little boy of eleven assisting thoughtfully in packing the personal effects of Mr. Phillotson, the schoolmaster who is going to leave the Marygreen village for good for the city of Christminster. Jude is genuinely sorry at the parting of his reverend teacher under whom he has so long been taught in night classes. Mr. Phillotson, the departing teacher, offers a book to the boy as a parting gift and advises him to be kind to birds and animals and to read all that he can. The receptive mind of the boy accepts the advice of the departing teacher not merely in letters but in spirit. The boy gets
an immediate chance of practising kindness upon the birds, for he is employed by Farmer Troutham to scare away the rooks by using a clacker.

Having used his clacker for sometime and preventing the rooks from eating the oats, Jude's heart grows sympathetic towards the birds. They seem like himself living in a world which does not want them at all. Funny and sorry, as those lives are, they much resemble his own. He uses the clacker no more and allows the birds to feed in. “Poor little dears! You shall have some dinner - you shall. There is enough for us all. Farmer Troutham can afford to let you have some. Eat, then, my dear little birdies, and make a good meal!” 1. It shows how the little boy of eleven has been influenced by the advice of his teacher that has made him sympathetic to the lower creatures. But unfortunately he is caught, thrashed and sacked from service by his employer, Farmer Troutham who fails to appreciate the motive prompting the child to invite the birds to feed in stead of scaring them away. Having lost the job Jude is now entirely left on the mercy of his hard-hearted aunt Miss. Drusilla Fawley who looks upon the boy more as a piece of undue burden and less as a person of an endearing nephew. But Jude is tender-hearted as well as serious and intelligent. He begins realising that to grow up is a big responsibility. Events do not rhyme quite as one may think. Nature's logic is too horrid for him to care for.

1. Thomas Hardy: Jude the Obscure (Macmillan & Co. Ltd : London : 1957) P.29
Even at the prime of his life his sense of harmony sickens at the thought that mercy towards one set of creatures means cruelty towards another. He has all along been smarting under a sense of shuddering; he wishes if he could prevent himself from growing up, for he does not want to be a man. It is as if he has been suffering from the ache of modernism.

Jude tries to practise his teacher's advice not only with regard to kindness but also with regard to learning. He is filled with an insatiable desire to learn. Once having witnessed the smear of light on the night horizon, and taking it to be the city of Christminster, he is fired by the ambition of learning. He struggles tenaciously towards this, and in isolation, for years. As a preface to his pathetic and passionate longing for academic distinction that follows him throughout his life, Jude has already learnt a surprising amount of Latin and Greek. Like an ill-filled lamp, Jude's love of learning flickers. To the day of his death gleams white and bright Jude's dream of scholarship. Duffin observes: "After all, it is the dream that drew Faust to destruction, the passion that was sung by those who carried the Grammarian to his funeral, the desire for 'fame' which Milton called the last infirmity of noble mind." 1. It is rather a kind of passion or an ambition which is possessed by many a modern man.

At the age of nineteen Jude gives up his aunt's little business and learns freestone working and becomes a skilled mason. This he does only with a view to keeping himself up at Christminster, whose academic attractions seem to be the only ruling passion of the youth. "Yes, Christminster shall be my Alma Mater; and I'll be her beloved son, in whom she shall be well pleased." Upto this stage Jude appears quite an attractive figure both inwardly and outwardly. Being virtuous by temperament he means no evil. He rather means well, bent upon doing more than well. He tries to elevate himself to the highest level in life. And he seems to be one who is capable of moulding circumstances. But for some men circumstances have an 'adamantine quality', and character itself provides some fatal flaws. Jude is one of such men. Just when he is about to devote himself fully to his educational projects, he obscurely falls into the hands of a woman who is completely animal in outlook and passion. She is Miss Arabella Donn, a human pig, a sex incarnate. Jude is as if lured by the unvoiced call of a woman to a man which has been very distinctly uttered by Arabella's personality. Till the moment of his meeting with Arabella, Jude has never looked at a woman to consider her as such, but has vaguely regarded the sex as being outside his life and purpose. He gases from her eyes to her mouth, thence to her bosom, and to her full round naked arm. This sudden amorous encounter between Jude and Arabella is

1. Thomas Hardy: Jude the Obscure (Macmillan & Co Ltd: London: 1967) P. 43
fraught with dangerous consequences. Jude's intention of reading, working and learning which he resolved even a few minutes earlier suffer a curious collapse. In spite of himself Jude succumbs to his new channel of emotional interest hitherto unsuspected. No doubt he has occasional regret for having neglected his old passion for learning; yet he cannot abandon his new channel of emotional interest. He clings to it. For he wakes up to that fourth dimension, sex, and experiences a new feeling, a new pleasure and a new sensation, ever fresh, ever wild and eternal. For the first time he realises that it is better to love a woman than to be a graduate or a parson or a pope. It is this fatal flaw in Jude's character that gradually shapes and moulds his career into pathos.

Jude's adventures with Arabella are sufficient indications that he is now seized with the animal side of his nature. This is proved not merely by the fact that Jude succumbs himself to the extreme lure of sex but also by the fact that Arabella's essentially animal personality is the chief allurement which draws him to her. Even when Jude has gone to live with Sue he is not prepared to admit that Arabella is 'coarse'. It essentially renders Jude unfit to mate Sue. As Duffin rightly puts it: "But it is Jude's glory to be the very type of the complete (though not necessarily the highest) man - half - earthly, half - divine. Giles Winterborne is a spirit, Sergeant Troy is an animal; Jude Fawley is a man - the spiritual animal".  

L. E. C. Duffin: Thomas Hardy  
(Oxford University Press: Indian Branch: 1967) P.92
He can however keep his flesh, his impulses well under control except on occasions he is maddened or desperate. This is the impression which he usually leaves in course of his dealings with Sue throughout. Hence, the ultimate crime committed by him in violating the social institution of marriage, if it is at all taken to be a crime, appears all the more culpable.

Jude is, however, not incapable of realizing his own lapses. Like a self-critic of the modern times, Jude criticises his own self and affirms that he has been subjected to two besetting sins which are love of women and love of drink. "It was the very question that was engaging Jude's attention at this moment. What a wicked worthless fellow he had been to give vent as he had done to an animal passion for a woman, and allow it to lead to such disastrous consequences; then to think of putting an end to himself; then to go recklessly and get drunk". 1 As soon as Jude comes in contact with Sue the ethereal side of Jude's nature becomes quite conspicuous and assumes importance for some time. Far from being an initiatory, Jude is rather of the responsive type. If man is what woman makes him to be, then Jude is by far its most clear example.

At the outset Jude is conscious of Sue's spirituality, although imperfect; and he resolves to keep their relations pure as far as possible. Behind this early resolution Jude has an orthodoxy which lays down certain conventional laws.

of morality. Jude is after all married, and it would be
wrong for a married man to be in love with another woman.
Again, Jude and Sue are after all cousins, and it is not
well for cousins to fall in love even when the circumstances
seem to favour such passion. Afterwards Jude, of course,
throws away his orthodoxy to the winds. Yet in his amorous
advances to Sue he finds something special and unique
in her that it makes him impossible to think of her
sinfully or approach her carnally.

Hardy presents his Jude as one with delicate features.
Beyond all Hardy's men Jude is most sensitive to both human
and animal suffering. Jude was born with an obscure star
with parents quite poor and origin quite low. Even with such
a background Jude can however rise to strange heights of
understanding and self-mastery. But in spite of the
qualities he has been endowed with, he has, however, been
denied the fulfilment of his academic and intellectual
aspirations of life, perhaps because he has been born much
ahead of his time - at least half a century too early.
Duffin rightly observes: "It is interesting to wonder what
he would have become had he lived in these days of educational
grants and State Scholarships - to wonder whether the
University would have done as much for him as life with
Sue did. Hardy tends the flame of academic desire sleeplessly
through the book." 1. On the back of a milestone from which
Christminster could be dimly seen, Jude had carved in the
prime of his life - "Thither. J.F.". When he returns, all

1. E.C. Duffin: Thomas Hardy
(Oxford University Press: Indian Branch: 1967) P.93
feverish and shivering in rain, after his last meeting with Sue, Jude passes this milestone. He feels the moss grown inscription affectionately with his fingers and returns home to die amid the shouts and hurrahs of the annual University Festival reaching his ears half ironically and half tragically.

Thus, Jude, in spite of his weaknesses and debasement, is a figure of inviolable dignity. He is sometimes the sport of fate, sometimes the sport of women, but mostly the product of his own traits. Yet he is never otherwise than sublime and suffers as much for himself as for others. No doubt, he is a man of passion, but his passion for satisfying his sex-instinct is of comparatively unimportant. What is most important in him is his yearning for knowledge and academic distinction like many a man of our own age. He may be described as having passionate intensity for knowledge and learning; and this is invariably the product of his strong brain. In other words, Jude may be taken to be possessing a considerable amount of intellect, but not without considerable complexity including emotion and partial animalism. His mind retains its complex nature but does not reveal its usual storms and subsidings. This is invariably the mark of a reasonable nature, and Jude is essentially a reasonable character. Jude's tragedy, like any other true tragedy, originates not in any haphazard or indifferent force of circumstances but in inner tensions which shape the action. Jude is as much frustrated by his ideal and intellectual woman, Sue, as by his shining ideal
of the intellectual life, Oxford. Like many intellectuals of modern age, frustration is Jude's permanent condition of life. And it makes Jude the sort of a representative of modern intellectual people.

Jude's counterpart Sue Bridehead, "who", as J.L.M. Stewart puts it "is in part a real Hardy heroine and in part a new woman out of Ibsen", (1) is indeed an interesting character-study, and in point of interest she stands almost as a rival to Tess. Duffin calls her the first and the last 'free-thinking' woman in Hardy, who foreshadows the early Shaw heroines. Jude has the experiences of 'life', while Sue has adventures in thought. She is indeed far in advance of Jude intellectually. To Jude, this pretty, liquid-eyed, light-footed young girl is a "revelation of woman." Sue has her infinite variety and that which charms both Jude and Philotson are naturalness, impulsiveness and sensitiveness.

By far the most important and interesting element in Sue's nature is a certain sexlessness. And her essential perfume lies in her desire for marriage without physical sex-union. She feels that marriage is only a submission, a servitude. Her feminine spirit does not want to wed with the masculine spirit, but submits to the masculine spirit, owns the priority of the masculine spirit and thereby wishes to become the masculine spirit. In her case the term "plutonic love" may not quite apply; nevertheless what Socrates and his great pupil meant by love has some analogy with Sue's ideal of sex-less union of spirits.

In the words of D.H. Lawrence, Sue Bridehead is one of the supreme products of our own civilization; and it is such a product as it quite frightens us. With all her mental alertness and without ever considering the physical quality of marriage, she marries Millston. Her desire for marriage without her submission to physical relation points to a duality in her nature, and this makes her extremely liable to self-destruction. There is always present in her, like a potent fury, the suppressed, the atrophied female. So it is nothing unusual of her to commit a fatal mistake. She is the rarest and the most atrophied female that wants bodily male without bodily union. **1.** This desire for union with the male without any desire for his body makes her a more specialised, more highly civilised female product than even the male product represented by Angel Clare. Her essentiality lies in her remaining in tact. She is utterly confused at any suggestion of the physical. Her is the "ultra Christian principle" of living entirely according to the spirit, to the one male spirit. It is the male spirit which knows, shines and exists beyond feeling, beyond joy or sorrow or pain. It exists only in "knowing." In tune with this Sue is quite herself.

Yet the very desire of living under a male spirit requires that she must receive the male stimulus from a man. Otherwise she will be no better than an instrument without a player. She must have the hands of a male upon her; soak she must into a male vitality. Otherwise it will be skin to

**1.** Hardy: Edited by Albert J. Guerard.
her death. Herein lies Sue's prime difficulty. For it is
difficult to get a man whose vitality can enkindle her
and make her live, and who at the same time will never
demand of her a return, the return of the female impulse
into him. But is there any such fool to accept such a
drainage without receiving any compensating reward in
return? That man should either die or revolt. Sue knows that
she drained the vital male stimulus out of a man, producing
in him only the knowledge of the mind, only mental clarity.
The knowledge of the mind or the mental clarity which men
should strive to attain is not life in itself, rather the
product of life. But what was in store for that man who
drained his male vitality for Sue? He died a premature death
out of frustration, and for his premature death Sue is
partly responsible. She knows it too well. It is at this
stage that Jude, after his misadventure, comes into her life.
Sue rouses Jude and draws from him his turgid vitality which
had become so thick and heavy as a result of his physical
contact with Arabella. But on intimate contact with Sue, he
finds her physically impotent but spiritually powerful. She
has physically nothing to give him. Duffin is of opinion
that Sue is just "dabbling in one of the many subtleties of
modern sex-relations".1

Sue is, indeed, a type of woman for whom Hardy has
always had an attraction. She is in wonderful possession of
self-knowledge, and hence she does not want to be called

1. H. C. Duffin: Thomas Hardy
   (Indian Branch: Oxford University Press: 1967) P. 222
"cold and sexless." She knows that her relation with Jude cannot always be absolutely free from sex-attraction. In the beginning, of course, she seems to be desirous of being loved by Jude for the sake of love. But what is the motive behind love? Has it nothing at all to do with the body? Perhaps it has. She half realises it and so she says: "I am not particularly innocent, as you see.... But I have never yielded myself to any lover, if that's what you mean! I have remained as I began." 1. But a woman cannot remain as she begins. "Perhaps not. Better women would not. People say I must be cold-natured, - sexless - on account of it. But I won't have it!" 2. Sue is thus an intellectual woman in the sense that she is conscious of her own state; and in direct contradistinction to Tess, she is certainly of the late developing type. The creative insight that enabled Hardy to handle these two opposing types with equal amount of sympathy, understanding and conviction should elicit praise even from his bitterest critic.

The fleshless love which Sue shows in the beginning of her intimacy with Jude and which she maintains for a considerably long period of time does not however tell the whole truth about herself. It is however the origin of her 'epicene quality; and in her general attitude to men she stands as the product of the same quality, and this again gives her the strange power of mixing with men with no fear or delicacy

1. Thomas Hardy: Jude the Obscure
   (Macmillan & Co Ltd: London: 1937) P.185
2. Ibid.
whatsoever. As Sue says: "My life has been entirely shaped by what people call a peculiarity in me. I have no fear of men, as such, nor of their books. I have mixed with them - one or two of them particularly - almost as one of their own sex. I mean I have not felt about them as most women are taught to feel - to be on their guard against attacks on their virtue; for no average man - no man short of a sensual savage - will molest a woman by day or night, at home or abroad, unless she invites him. Until she says by a look "Come on" he is always afraid to, and if you never say it, or look it, he never comes. However, what I was going to say is that when I was eighteen I formed a friendly intimacy with an undergraduate at Christminster, and he taught me a great deal, and lent me books which I should never have got hold of otherwise." 1. Sue not only enjoyed the companionship of the Christminster undergraduate but even underwent the marriage rehearsal with him. All that she said and did on the occasion was simply based on her ignorance of human frailty and fire, nevertheless indicating her exceptional strength of mind. The peculiarly dangerous experiment in emotion which she indulged in enables her to be the sweetheart of Jude even after becoming Mrs. Richard Phillotson. Sue is thus an uncommon and an unconventional woman, the rarest and the best female creation of Hardy.

With liquid untranslatable eyes, but not like the large eyes of Tess, Sue is dark in colour, light and slight in figure. Mobile and living, she is full of mystery and

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1. Thomas Hardy: Jude the Obscure (Macmillan & Co Ltd: London: 1957) P. 154
keenness as well as tenderness; but the apparent impression of her is a nervous motion. She shows her nervous constitution more than once, and towards the end of the novel she remains as "a mere cluster of nerves." Nevertheless, when she is fully exposed she seems like Ariel, all spirit and fire. She is incapable of being caught, held and pinned down. The clumsiness of her curious double nature lends a peculiar beauty to her character and accounts for the tragedy wrought in her life.

Far from being a hard-boiled logician, a self-regulating clockwork or a frigid unemotional robot, she is quiveringly sensitive. She is often perverse but not depraved. She is full of emotions and often indulges in impulsive acts. In Hardy's words, she is an "epicure in emotions" and has her own faculty of reasoning. But in spite of her intellectuality she is not saved at the most critical moment of her life. Even as an intellectual woman she falls as a victim to jealousy, the most unintellectual of human frailties. She submits and subdues herself to Jude's demand primarily because of her fear, lest he should return to Arabella. Though jealous of Arabella's sexual attraction which might encompass Jude for the second time, she goes to see her the next morning. It shows her queer but lovely disposition of nature.

She's intellectuality for the most part rests with the fact that she is more rational than religious; in fact she is precisely irreligious. In the early period of her
life she mostly goes by reason to reach her conclusions. But the conclusions which she reaches by the exercise of reason are not quite profound. She emphatically declares that she does not belong either to the modern world with its railway stations or to the middle ages with their churches. As she herself says, she belongs more properly to the ancient pagan gods. "I am more ancient than mediævalism, if you only knew." 1. It shows that as a matter of cold fact, Sue is profoundly non-religious. But her reason does not secure her up to the last, and the complexity that has resulted from her character seems to be the explanation of her tragedy.

Sue Bridehead is thus the triumph of a psychological portraiture. But it is a new historical situation that shapes the contours of her psychology. Irving Hor is of opinion that Sue could not have possibly been portrayed by Jane Austen, Dickens or Thackery. The growth of intellectual scepticism and modernist sensibility conditions her style of thought, her winsome charms and her maddening indecisions. In the words of Irving Hor: "She is the first major anticipation in the English novel of that profoundly affecting and troublesome creature: the modern girl. If she could not appear in an earlier 19th century novel, she certainly could in a 20th century one - the only difference would probably be that now, living in her neat brownstone apartment in Manhattan or stylish flat in London and working for a publishing house or Television Company she

1. Thomas Hardy: Jude the Obscure
(Macmillan & Co Ltd : London : 1957) P. 141
would have learned to accept a "healthier" attitude towards sex. Or at the least she would have learned to pretend it."

Sue is thus the specimen of a complex modern girl.

Arabella, the other important female character of the novel, is said to be a perfect foil to Sue. Hardy emphasises her coarseness and her animal depravity in contrast not only to Sue's fineness and spirituality but also to the other prevailing Hardy type. She is a sex incarnate, and a complete and substantial form of feminine wantonness and is given to animal satisfaction of her physical hunger. She is indeed the type of a modern feminine depravity; and the gratification of animal instinct of sex seems to be her ruling passion. Her very physical appearance, indicative of her violent animal passion, is sufficient to beguile and bewitch any common young man who is not sufficiently strong in mind to ward off the sex attraction. She is a fine dark-eyed girl, not exactly handsome, but capable of passing as such from a little distance, despite some coarseness of skin and fibre. She has a round and prominent bosom, full hips, perfect teeth, and "the rich complexion of a Cochin hen's egg." She is a complete and substantial female animal - no more, no less. Just for a male-catch to her liking she uses false tresses as is commonly used by a lot of modern girls. 'Every lady of position', she says, wears false hairs - the barber's assistant told me so."

1. The Victorian Novel : Modern Essays in Criticism
   edited by : Ian Watt.

2. Thomas Hardy : Jude the Obscure
Arabella, whose native qualities have been ripened by the experience of a barmaid, is the daughter of a pig-dealer. She is, so to say, a mass of flesh unmitigated by any touch of human feeling except that of merciless calculation as to what may be profitable to her. All that she does in catching Mr. Jude, her Australian husband, Mr. Cartlett and towards the end Mr. Vilbert, the physician, is prompted by her desire for an infinite enjoyment of the animal side of her nature. When she is sure that the days of Jude are numbered, she goes about in catching the quack Mr. Vilbert. "Well! weak women must provide for a rainy day. And if my poor fellow upstairs do go off - as I suppose he will soon - it's well to keep chances open. And I can't pick and choose now as I could when I was younger. And one must take the old if one can't get the young." 1

This sums up the character of Arabella: her feminine depravity, her prudence and practical sense. She has no moral scruple whatsoever. As the native product of the field, this rustic woman is exuberant and overflowing with health, vitality and appetite. In contrast with Sue who is intellectual and ethereal, Arabella is practical and positive. Far from being passive she is always vivacious even to the excess and knows how to mould the situation to her own advantage. D.P. Hannigan, in Westminster Review dated January 1896, rightly observed: "In Arabella we have

a faithful portrait of a foul-minded woman whom we can compare to no other female personage in Mr. Hardy's novels. L.

In Jude the Obscure Hardy has indeed made a full and definite statement on evil and mischance and self-destructiveness, on the social and the cosmic absurd. After writing somewhat evasively for some years, he has written rather openly on sexual questions and tensions and advocated, what may be called, 'free - love' as opposed to conventional love imposed by marriage. Here, Hardy seems to have posed the most fatal problem 'the deadly war between flesh and spirit'. Hardy's attitude to the poor but talented youngman, his struggle for self education, his acceptance of the decline of his own world and the emergence of a colourless modernity have been proportionately adjusted to cause Jude's uprooting. Further, Hardy's obscure bitterness about marriage, love and sex, which are conventional in character, goes to make the novel an interesting and an important social document of the twentieth century. Indeed, this story of thwarted ambition can be enjoyed only with a true sense of sympathy. Unfortunately we are living in an age when nearly all men are hankering after material success in life. The very word 'failure' makes most of us tremble, and the apparent pessimism of Hardy appears quite distasteful to the vulgar-minded modern aspirants who are desirous of achieving success by hook or by crook. Nevertheless, the intrinsic worth of the novel can never be lost and shall always be

understood and appreciated by the careful readers even in spite of misrepresentation by a number of critics.

D.F. Hannigan in West Minister Review dated January 1898 commented on *Jude the Obscure* : "It is certainly 'strong meat', but there is nothing prurient, nothing artificial in this work; it is human in the widest sense of that comprehensive word." 1. In Seventeen Review of the issue of July - Sept 1975, Harold L. Weatherby has observed that *Jude the Obscure* does not only give a profound insight into Hardy as a novelist but also sheds an interesting light on major developments in modern fiction.

This novel, in some ways, is antithetical and complementary to *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Hardy in his contribution to 'The Tree of Knowledge' in the New Review of June 1894, affirmed the need for sex education both for boys and girls. For Hardy is reported to have said: 'It has never struck me that the spider is invariably male and the fly invariably female.' 2. The disasters which befell Tess and Jude resulted largely from their early sexual misfortunes, and both of them are destined to suffer on account of their having fallen in love with intellectuals who are 'ethereal'. But the comparison between the two novels need not be stressed too far. Arabella is not the exact counterpart of Alec; she is more subtle and more irrational than Alec. And *Jude the Obscure* is too complex

1. Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage; Edited by R.G. Cox.
2. A Hardy Companion by F.B. Pinion
and too modern a novel to be merely looked upon as a companion-piece to *Rass of the D'Urbervilles.*

The central theme of the story - the academic frustrations of the young man had perhaps its root in Hardy's note dated April 26, 1888. It recorded the suicide of a young man who failed in his efforts to 'go to Oxford.' 'There is something (in this) the world ought to be shown, and I am the one to show it to them - though I was not altogether hindered going, at least to Cambridge, and could have gone up easily at five-and-twenty.'

Such a feeling, as Mr. F. B. Pinion observes, on the part of Hardy must have arisen from the recollections of the academic frustrations of his friend Horace Moule. The hero of the novel Jude Fawley suffers from such academic frustrations which, inter alia, form the subject matter of the novel, and which give the novel a modern touch, because quite a lot of young men of our own age are made to suffer on account of their academic frustrations. Hardy, while writing *Jude the Obscure,* must have in mind the non-fulfilment of the academic intentions of his friend Horace Moule.

Jude Fawley is of obscure birth but has an insatiable longing for a scholarly life. Having lost his parents he comes to live with his aunt Drusilla Fawley at the age of eleven at Marygreen where he engages himself in earning as well as learning. His schoolmaster, Mr. Phillistoon leaves for Christminster, the city of light and knowledge. Jude, too, intends to go to Christminster for greater learning.

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and better prospect. At the age of nineteen he learns something of a freestone-working so that at Christminster he can earn and learn. But all his hopes of learning are nipped in the bud because of his infatuation for Arabella whom he is forced to marry. Soon a rupture is caused in their conjugal life mainly because of their basic temperamental differences: while Jude hankers after intellectual pleasure, Arabella after animal, physical pleasure. Out of frustrations Jude thinks of committing suicide but finally gives up the idea. Then he takes to drinking. "Drinking was the regular, stereotyped resource of the despairing worthless. He began to see now why some men bunged at inns." 1

After their separation, the wife sails for Australia, while the husband goes to Christminster. For he is still hoping to live an academic life. For a moment there seems to be an illumination for Jude. For Christminster is the very centre where one can earn one's living at the same time undertake learning if one is interested in learning. To live a scholarly life Jude is prepared to accept any employment which he may get on the strength of his late employer's recommendation. But he will accept it only provisionally. As Hardy says, this is Jude's form of the modern vice of unrest. At Christminster Jude comes in contact with his cousin Sue Bridehead. Both of them being young and almost of equal age are easily attracted to

1. Thomas Hardy: Jude the Obscure
each other. Jude also renews contact with his former teacher Mr. Phillotson, and Sue accepts the post of a tutor in Mr. Phillotson's school. To Jude's utter disappointment Sue is engaged to Mr. Phillotson. He has still not abandoned his idea of an academic career. But he is fated to face not only emotional frustration but also academic frustration. For the purpose of prosecuting studies Jude has written several letters to academic dignitaries. Only in one case reply has been received and that, too, is most disappointing. Mr. T. Tetruphanry of Biblioll College has advised that Jude as a workman should have a much better chance of success in life by remaining in his own sphere and sticking to his own trade than by adopting any other course. This incident has almost its parallel in the life of Thomas Hardy who was once advised by Horace Moule to devote more time to architectural assignments than those of literary. In this connection Edmund Blunden recorded that "Moule, a natural leader, did not recommend in preference to it the visions of a university, a parsonage, a connection like his own with the literary press; and Thomas Hardy accepted the considered verdict for the time." 1

Jude goes to Melchester to take holy orders; it is a new idea - the ecclesiastical and altruistic life as distinct from the intellectual and emulativa life. A man can preach and do good to his fellow creatures without being a pupil of Christminster and without having anything but ordinary

knowledge. It is not, however, "an ethical or theological enthusiasm at all, but a mundane ambition masquerading in a surplice." Jude is afraid that his whole scheme has degenerated to, though not originated in, a social unrest which has no foundation in the nobler instincts, and which is purely an artificial product of civilisation. At the present moment there are thousands of young men on the self-seeking track, and Jude is one of them. At Melbourne Jude meets Sue who is then undergoing training in Melbourne Normal School at the expenses of Mr. Philpston. Sue feels quite lonely in her training school, and to enjoy an outing with her cousin she obtains a full day's leave from 3 A.M. to 9 P.M. In stead of returning within the stipulated time, Sue returns next morning only to be awarded with a severe punishment. She is kept confined in a locked up room and is forbidden talking to anyone else. It makes the girl desperate; she manages to escape from her captivity and runs away from the training school to her cousin. As a measure of protest against such severe punishment not only does Sue run away to Jude but even the other girls of the school also resort to a strike like that of our own day. When Sue is missing from the school the matron is much disturbed not for any sympathetic feeling for the girl but for a comparatively modern phenomenon, the possible censure by the press. The possible half-column detailing of the event in all the newspapers will severely tell upon the reputation of the training school.

1. Thomas Hardy: Jude the Obscure
This incident is followed by a hurried marriage of Sue with Mr. Phillotson who suits more as a father than as a groom to the bride. Perhaps their difference in age embitters Sue too much and she finds her married life most distasteful. It makes her leave her husband. She comes to live with her cousin and both the cousins now stand in a very strange relation. Jude's academic failures led him to come to Manchester to take holy orders. But he is now forced to give it up under the strong spell of his beautiful cousin, Sue Bridehead. Having got her fully to himself, seemingly as his mistress, Jude forgets Church altogether. "The Church is no more to me. Let it lie! ... My point of bliss is not upward, but here." Jude feels that even after the failures of his academic and ecclesiastical schemes, he can still be happy with Sue. This is certainly a human feeling quite becoming of one who is composed of flesh and blood, of one who is a real man of the real world. This infinite longing for happiness even amid adversity makes Jude an all-time modern man, and Jude the Obscure is unquestionably a modern novel.

In the mean time Arabella, now Mrs. Cartlett, proposes to restore her little child by her first husband under the custody of its lawful father, Jude. Jude accepts the child less because it belongs to him but more because the poor thing is wanted by nobody. The sentiment expressed by Jude in the context seems to be like that of a modern

1. Thomas Hardy: Jude the Obscure
humanist. "I must say that, if I were better off, I should not stop for a moment to think whose he might be. I would take him and bring him up. The beggarly question of parentage - what is it, after all? What does it matter, when you come to think of it, whether a child is yours by blood or not? All the little ones of our time are collectively the children of us adults of the time, and entitled to our general care. The excessive regard of parents for their own children, and their dislike of other people's, is, like class-feeling, patriotism, save-your-own-seal-ism, and other virtues, a mean exclusiveness at bottom." L. Hardy with a deep love for the unwanted, unfortunate and the poor seems to have expressed his own opinion through Jude and criticised some of the modern tendencies.

The arrival of Arabella's legitimate child adds a new complication to the otherwise smooth living of Jude and Sue. The name of the child is Little Father Time. He is so called because he looks so aged that his face is like the 'tragic mask of Melpomene'. The boy is certain that Sue is his real mother and addresses her as such. It makes the cousin-couple feel the need for regularising their irregular relationship by being wedded in the Church. They go to Church but finally shrink from ceremony, because they think that the bond of wedlock, in stead of enkindling, will rather deaden the intensity of their mutual love for each other. "The intention of the contract is good, and right for many, no doubt; but in our case it may defeat its own

L. Thomas Hardy : Jude the Obscure
(Macmillan & Co Ltd : London : 1937) P. 283
ends because we are the queer sort of people we are - folk in whom domestic ties of a forced kind snuff out cordiality and spontaneity. Everybody is getting to feel as we do. We are little beforehand, that's all. In fifty, a hundred, years the descendants of these two will act and feel worse than we." 1 Thus, Jude and Sue claim to be much ahead of time, and they in their earnest zeal to enjoy love which should always be free, free from any bondage whatsoever, tear off the age old social custom of marriage.

Marriage without the promptings of heart, imposes a relation which is, indeed, artificial at bottom; and the cousin couple prefer natural to artificial relation. This was indeed too rebellious and too advanced a notion to receive any acclamation as early as in nineties of the nineteenth century.

Sue has now become the mother of two children, and a third is also expected. But owing to the violation of the age old marriage law, the Fawleys become subject to severe censure everywhere and take to a nomadic life for some time. At last they arrive at Christminster, the city of Jude's early dream. It is the 'Remembrance Day.' At the desire of Jude but to the dislike of Sue the whole family goes to witness the ceremony. But the 'Remembrance Day' finally turns to be the 'Humiliation Day' for Jude; and he is now much disillusioned. For he realises that he is, 'after all, a paltry victim to the spirit of mental and social restlessness, that makes so many unhappy in these days!' ... I

1. Thomas Hardy: Jude the Obscure
perceive there is something wrong somewhere in our social
formulas; what it is can only be discovered by men or women
with greater insight than mine, - if, indeed, they ever
discover it - at least in our time. "For who knoweth what is
good for men in this life? - and who can tell a man what shall
be after him under the sun?" 1. This is an eternal question
which man has been asking from age to age, and there is no
satisfactory answer so far, at least acceptable to a modern
rational mind. Apart from scepticism, Jude also shows his
analytical bent of mind to probe into the problems of modern
maladies that make so many of our young men restless and un
happy.

It becomes extremely difficult for the Fawleys to
procure a house at Christminster. Father Time is under the
impression that they are unable to get a house because they
are too many. And if at least the children may be done away
with, the accommodation problem is likely to be solved. This
is such a feeling as drives the lad to despondency. So he
kills himself after killing the other two children born of
Sue. Sue is completely overtaken by this most painful tragic
incident so much so that she blames herself as its sole
cause. But in reality, Father Time, the author of this
ghastly tragic action, is an uncommon and exceptional type.
Jude tells Sue: "The doctor says there are such boys
springing up amongst us - boys of a sort unknown in the last
generation - the outcome of new views of life. They seem to
see all its terrors before they are old enough to have

1. Thomas Hardy: Jude the Obscure
staying power to resist them. He says it is the beginning of the coming universal wish not to live. He's an advanced man, the doctor; but he can give no consolation. In this way Jude tries to console Sue; but it is of little use. The face of Father Time expresses the whole tale of their situation. On that little shape has converged all the insauspiciousness and shadow which have darkened the first union of Jude, and all the accidents, mistakes, fears, errors of the last. He is their 'nodal point', their focus, their expression in a single term. For the rashness of these parents he has groaned, for their ill-assortment he has quaked and for their misfortunes he has died.

Now Jude cannot hold Sue back in his spell any longer. She says: "It is no use fighting against God! 'Jude contradicts: 'It is only against man and senseless circumstance'. But Sue's illusion is over. The legitimate child of Arabella has killed her illegitimate children. It is a great lesson to her. Her apprenticeship of life is over, and now she must return to her lawful husband. At the time of her parting from Jude, Sue, however, expresses what may be termed almost a universal feeling. "Your generous devotion to me is unparalleled, Jude! Your worldly failure, if you have failed, is to your credit rather than to your blame. Remember that the best and greatest among mankind are those who do themselves no worldly good. Every successful man is more or less a selfish man. The devoted fail." 2. Once Sue is gone away,

1. Thomas Hardy: Jude the Obscure
2. Ibid: P. 374
Arabella again comes into the life of Jude who remarries her only for the sake of saving a woman's honour. Sue is also remarried to Mr. Phillotson, and this is described by Mrs. Edlin as a funeral rather than a wedding. Jude dies miserably alone, unloved, uncared for and unintended. Indeed, the last scene of the novel describing the death of Jude is one of the most poignantly pathetic passages in English fiction.

Arabella thinking that Jude has been sleeping peacefully slips out to enjoy some of the festivities going on in Christminster. Having awakened by cough in the lonely room Jude murmurs: "A little water, please. Water - some water - Sue - Arabella! Throat-water - Sue - darling - drop of water - please - 0 please! "1. Nothing but the deserted room receives his appeal, and no water comes. The organ notes of the festivities, as faint as a bee's hum, roll in as before. Shouts and hurrahs begin to pour and drown the faint organ notes. Jude's face undergoes painful changes, with his parched lips scarcely moving, the dying man whispers slowly:

'Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, there is a man child conceived.' 2. This is really the voice of the educated proletarian, speaking more distinctly than ever spoken before in English literature. His dying words, rightly observed by Irving Biss, are indeed the grey poetry of modern loneliness. 3. Jude is at once a

1. Thomas Hardy : Jude the Obscure
2. Ibid : P.418
3. The Victorian Novel : Modern Essays in Criticism:
   Edited by Ian Watt:
type and an individual. In Saturday Review dated February, 8, 1896 the commentator observes: "There is no other novelist alive with the breadth of sympathy, the knowledge, or the power for the creation of Jude. Had Mr. Hardy never written another book, this would still place him at the head of English novelists." 1.

Thus, Jude the Obscure is a great tragic novel; but it is so depressing and so contrived that it cannot always command common assent. In this contrivance Sue is perhaps the most critical factor. She is so complex and so exceptional that Hardy did not dare to be as explicit in portraying Sue as he wanted her to be. Hardy's letter to one of his close friends written from Max Gate, Dorchester, dated November 20th 1906 ... 2. has some relevance to it. Hardy confirmed that there was nothing perverted or depraved in Sue's nature. Whatever abnormalism she showed was one of disproportion rather than of inversion; her sexual instinct as far as it went was healthy but universally weak and fastidious. As it always happens with women of such nature, her sensibilities remained painfully alert. Hardy admitted that he could not, however, dwell upon one point concerning Sue's conjugal life with Jude: though she had children, her intimacies with Jude had never been more than occasional, even when they were living together; and the reason for her being afraid of the marriage ceremony was that she would not be in a position to withhold herself from Jude without breaking faith with him.

But remaining uncontracted, she would be at liberty to yield herself as seldom as she might choose. It tended to keep his passion as hot at the end as at the beginning, and helped to break the heart of Jude. He had really never possessed Sue as freely as he desired. In the above mentioned letter Hardy remarked: "Sue is a type of woman which has always had an attraction for me, but the difficulty of drawing the type has kept me from attempting it till now." 1

Dwelling upon Hardy's Sue Bridehead, Robert B. Heilman observed that in each century of modern life, the insistence on the life of reason has become increasingly emphatic, and Sue as the relentless critic of institutions incarnates the ideal usually held up to us in abstract terms. 2. In protest against the so-called rationality of the nineteenth century which was grid and abstruse in all intents and purposes, in the twentieth century there has been the outbreak of some forces which were supposed to be irrational, incredible and unacceptable in the past. Apart from this, another still more impressive modern phenomenon is a growing concern with the threat of intellect to the life of feelings and emotions. Some of the most respected guides of modern thought, such as, Thackeray, Carlyle, Matthew Arnold and many others have given warnings against the arid rationality of the nineteenth century; they have also stressed the need for a reconstructed emotional

life so very essential for the safety of human society and the welfare of mankind at large. Mr. Neillman further observes: "The present relevance of such cultural history is that it contributes to our understanding of Hardy: in Jude the Obscure, and primarily in the portrayal of Sue, he went to the heart of a modern problem long before it was understood as a problem. Yet the 'modern' is not topical, for the problem is rooted in the permanent reality of human nature. Neurotic Sue gives us, in dramatic terms, an essential revelation about human well-being." 1. In this context we should note that the situation of women began to change rapidly towards the last quarter of the nineteenth century. There was the change, for instance, from a subordinate domesticity and victorian repression to the first signs of emancipation, leading often enough to the poignant bewilderment of many a Sue Bridehead. So, while she is an individual figure, she is at the same time characteristic of a moment in recent history. The accuracy with which Hardy has placed her historically makes her uniquely alive and unquestionably modern.

Sue is, however, not altogether Hardy's figment of imagination. She is partly drawn from Hardy's beloved cousin Tryphena Sparks and partly from Hardy's most beloved friend, Mrs. Florence Hanniker. Hardy's letters to her throw interesting light on the subject. These letters written from June 3, 1893 to May 29, 1922, confirm the view that Hardy's early friendship with Mrs. Hanniker contributed to the development

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of the doom-burdened relationship between Jude and his
cousin Sue. Initially Hardy must have his cousin Tryphena
Sparks in mind, but to what extent he wanted to involve her
in the story is merely a matter of conjecture. It is, however,
quite clear from Hardy’s letters to Mrs. Benniker that after
meeting her Hardy certainly modified his plans. No doubt
the cousinship is still there, but the other features which
are only external.

Hardy’s memories of Tryphena at Puddletown from 1867 to 1869
perhaps served to cause Sue’s ‘vivacious dark eyes’, her dark
hair, and her apprenticeship as a pupil-teacher under Mr.
Philecton at Lunsden. In the preface to ‘One Rate Fair
Woman’ Evelyn Hardy and F. R. Philson observe: “Jude’s situation
and feelings, however, are directly related to Hardy’s own
unhappy marriage and his new friendship; undoubtedly the
thought that ‘the one affined soul he had ever met was lost
to him’ through marriage sent him ‘with cruel persistency’
in the second half of 1893 when he was making his final
preparations for Jude the Obscure. She was nearer to him
than any other woman he had ever met, and he could scarcely
believe that time, creed, or absence would ever divide him
from her.”

Hardy invested Mrs. Benniker with Shelleyan idealism, and
this was subsequently transferred to Jude’s impressions of
Sue. He characteristically presented the religious parallelism
in reverse. Sue’s intellect, for example, scintillates like a
star and her views on the First Cause are identical with those of Hardy; again, just as Jude considers Sue 'Voltairean', Anglican Mrs. Hanniker must have regarded Hardy so when he tried to modernise her beliefs. When 'affliction makes opposing forces look anthropomorphous', Sue turns to ritualistic worship in 'the Church of Ceremonies.' Here Hardy seems to have been much influenced by Mrs. Hanniker because she tried to resist Hardy's criticism of ritualistic worship and his scientific outlook. After the tragic death of her children Sue surrenders saying that it is useless fighting against God. Jude protests that they have been fighting only against man and senseless circumstances. Sue admits that she has become 'superstitious'. Her refusal to change makes vehement outburst in Jude. "You make me hate Christianity, or mysticism, or sacerdotalism, or whatever may be called, if it's that which has caused this deterioration in you. That a woman-poet, a woman-seer, a woman whose soul shone like a diamond - whom all the wise of the world would have been proud of, if they could have known you - should degrade herself like this! I am glad I had nothing to do with Divinity - damn glad - if it's going to ruin you in this way!" Jude's outburst is not far removed from Hardy's regret that Mrs. Hanniker had allowed herself to be influenced by ritualistic ecclesiasticism or 'retrograde superstitions'. Thus, Mrs. Hanniker seemed to have contributed more than

1. Thomas Hardy : Jude the Obscure
anyone else to the portrayal of Sue Bridehead. What is still more significant is Hardy's inclusion of 'Florence' among Sue's Christian name which fully runs as 'Susanna Florence Hardy Bridehead'. Indeed, Hardy more than once regretted the conventional views of Mrs. Emmiker, and he was quite sure that they would affect her career as a novelist, even though her command over human nature was good. For Hardy, in his letters to Mrs. Emmiker published in *One Rare Fair Woman*, observed that in order to command attention, a novelist should be at least twenty-five years ahead of his readers intellectually.

Like his Sue Bridehead, Jude is also not wholly imaginative. Apart from Jude's academic frustrations which were supposed to be those of Horace Moule, Hardy also seemed to have portrayed other features of Jude's character from real life. It is interesting to note that while returning from school Hardy once met with a youth who, like Jude, was driving a bread-cart of a widow, a baker like Brasilia Fawley. While driving the bread-cart, the youth was found reading, to the great risks of other drivers in the lanes. This youth asked Hardy to lend him his Latin Grammar. Thereafter Hardy did not meet the youth any more and was unaware of his academic progress. At least the early life of Jude at Marygreen and that of the youth in question bear a close resemblance. Here, we may note that one of the most remarkable facts of the nineteenth century was the rise of the self-educated proletarian like that of the youth referred to. For some of these
men education was primarily a promise of escape from their cramped social position. Again for some others, of course a minority, education approximated to what it meant to Jude Fawley a pure joy of the mind. In dealing with this new feature of the age English fiction was comparatively slow, as it was slow in dealing the life of the working people. From social as well as historical standpoint, Jude stands in between the old fashioned artisan and a modern worker. According to Irving Aoe, "The kind of work he does, restoring old churches, pertains to the traditional English past, but the way he does it, hiring himself out for wages, points to the future." Jude is indeed an achievement of Hardy in the sense that he is at once an individual figure and a type, and this has been made possible by Hardy's balance of sympathy and distance. Out of the materials of historical change, the transformation and uprooting of traditional English life, Hardy has enacted his (Jude's) personal drama. The same also holds true of Sue Bridehead.

Arthur Symons is of opinion that Jude the Obscure is one of the most sexual novels he has ever read. It is, as he says, an immoral novel, because sex itself is always immoral. And Jude the Obscure "is perhaps the most unbiased consideration of the most complicated questions of sex which we can find in English fiction." But this is not perhaps an

2. Arthur Symons: A study of Thomas Hardy (Published by Chas J. Sawyer Ltd: Grafton Houses London) year not mentioned. P. 30
accurate assessment of the novel. For its main theme is not sexual at all; the dominant motive of Jude's life is the fascination for Christminster upon his rustic imagination. It reaches its climax in the pitiless irony of Jude's death within the hearing distance of the University which he loved so much but which could not provide him with a learner's seat in any of its colleges. The sexuality of a man may come in only as a modifying cause, as much as it may come into the life of any serious but healthy man. Saturday Review dated February 8, 1896 observes: "For the first time in English literature the almost intolerable difficulties that beset an ambitious man of the working class - the smokes, the obstacles, the countless rejections and humiliations by which our society eludes the services of these volunteers receive adequate treatment." If, for the sake of argument, we take it to be a sexual novel, even then Hardy does not seem to have done anything wrong, nor does the novel become immoral. For, life really begins in sex and ends in death. Hardy has the courage to tell the truth, the bitter truth, hitherto untold. For the expression of such universal phenomena as sex, marriage, and love, Jude the Obscure should be regarded immortal rather than immoral. According to Illustrated London News dated January 11, 1896, it is manifestly the work of a genius, moving amid ideas and emotions of so large a significance that to most of the fictions, Jude the Obscure appears as a hemisphere to a hemlet.

Jude the Obscure has sometimes been referred to by critics as 'grimy'. Thereupon Hardy in his letter dated November 10, 1896 to a close friend observed: "The 'grimy' features of the story go to show the contrast between the ideal life a man wished to lead, and the squalid real life he was fated to lead...But I must have lamentably failed, as I feel I have, if this requires explanation and is not self-evident. The idea was meant to run all through the novel. It is, in fact, to be discovered in everybody's life, though it lies less on the surface perhaps than it does in my poor puppet's." 1. Thus, Hardy does not quite deny the grimness of his novel, and in Jude the Obscure he perhaps wants to show that grimness is a necessary condition of modern life. For, particularly in modern age it can be discovered in everybody's life. Should any one want to deny it wilfully, it means he is closing his eyes to the truth itself. In this context, Patrick Braybrooke holds: "Of all the melancholy books by melancholy contemporary writers, I believe, that Jude the Obscure is not unlikely to occupy the first place".2.

This brilliant novel dealing with the dead failure, according to Patrick Braybrooke, reminds one of the 'Life of Christ with Calvary' a failure in stead of a success. But when Christ was thought to be a failure, he was really a success. Jude, on the other hand, was thought to have failed, and in every sense he failed. But in spite of his failure, there is

a grand beauty; it is the beauty which is always present when a man or woman fails for an ideal, however miserably he or she may have failed. Jude being at once an individual and a type, the tragedy arising out of his failure implies the tragedy of people whose individuality is too strong to fit into the common scheme and too weak to keep it out of conflict with it. Most of men are content to live safely within the comfortable moral order. But he who aspires to be free from it must take his risk, shall often fall like Jude, and a grim tragedy may be its inevitable result.

Another most common complaint against Hardy is that in Jude the Obscure he finds that marriage often leads to tragedy. Neither has he shown any way out of these difficulties, nor has he any plan for improvement of marriage and promotion of morality. Harold L. Weatherby comments: "when Jude and Sue attempt to live as deracinated moderns, they are unhappy; when they attempt to marry and recover for themselves a place in the traditional community, they are equally unhappy." If the complaint is considered with due solemnity, perhaps Hardy would appear more right than wrong. No doubt an artist is a god in his own world; but being so he has too fine a sense of the etiquette of creation to offer any suggestion to the creator of the actual world; his suggestion may be resented and rejected. Hardy, here, seems to have been quite right in the sense that a good artist always presents things for his readers.
to suggest rather than himself making any suggestion. Further, had Hardy made any explicit suggestion and rung the bell of finality, then his novel *Jude the Obscure* would have been, in Alan Friedman's phrase, a novel of closed form' rather than an 'open form' which is an important mark of modern novels.

Thus, different critics have looked upon *Jude the Obscure* differently and criticised it in different ways. But in spite of them all, they seem to be unanimous about its modernity and Jude the Obscure is undoubtedly a modern novel. Its modernity lies in its dealing with certain problems of modern life: the socio-economic problems of educational opportunities for the poor and the haves-nots; the religious problems of the Church reforms; the spiritual problems of modern unrest, modern introspection, modern melancholy and spiritual isolation; the psychological problems of sexuality and the urge of self-destruction; the ethical problems of naturalistic morality and of moral sanction independent of dogma; the social problems of marriage and divorce; the bio-philosophical problems of inherited family characteristics and of the new will-not-to-live.

The story, as presented by Hardy, tends insistently towards physical and spiritual uprootedness, separation and isolation. In a larger context Jude and Sue represent forces running counter to each other - one a 'chaos of principles', the other 'tossed about with aberrant passions'.
Except the short-lived happiness of Jude and Sue, their shuttle-like action in most of the scenes is a reflection of the unrest and torment, 'the strange disease of modern life', their over-taxed heads and 'palsied hearts' which, in addition to Hardy, were rightly foreseen by Matthew Arnold. All these scenes have been knit together by Hardy with the help of symbolism and parabolic patterns. The rabbit caught in the gin is the nodal point; it symbolises the plight of the cousin couple. There is the recurrent pig-imagery for Jude, but what is most significant for him is the Christminster imagery. The city of light finally turns to be a place of dubious illuminations; while its lonely alleys serve to increase his sense of isolation. And it is only in the shadows of the past that Jude can find his comfort, if comfort he really wants to find. In *Jude the Obscure* Hardy attempts a new kind of novel, moving towards the drama of inner conflict, and deliberately economising its scenic effects. Background features also tend to be increasingly symbolical, artistic patterns, realism and 'personal impressions' do not always cohere at all points; nevertheless, *Jude the Obscure* because of its multiple modern elements can lend us an absorbing interest.

Further, the auto-biographical elements of *Jude the Obscure* may also categorise it to be a modern novel. In spite of Hardy's denial, *Jude the Obscure* contains far more of Hardy's views and feelings than *A Landless* which he was reported to have described as most autobiographical of
all his novels. Apart from Jude being a church-mason very much like Hardy, his theological views and classical studies are also almost the same as Hardy's. Again, the photograph of Sue as a girl recalls that of Hardy's cousin Tryphena Sparks. Maybe that none of the events of the story was taken from Hardy's life. In this sense Hardy may be correct. But on the other hand there can be little doubt that many of the thoughts and feelings which entered into certain scenes of the novel, particularly his oblique reference to 'matrimonial inadequacy', are sufficient to emphasise and explain the frustrations of his childless union with Emma Gifford.

Jude the Obscure, according to Irving Howe, "is Hardy's most distinctly 'modern' work, for it rests upon a cluster of assumptions central to modernist literature." 1 For, in the present age men wishing to be more than dumb cerebres must live in permanent doubt and intellectual crisis. For such men, to whom traditional beliefs are no longer available, life has become inherently problematic. In course of years they must have to face even more than the usual allotment of loneliness and anguish. In their cerebral development they run the danger of losing those primary appetites for life which keep the human race going. Such a courage, if at all to be found, consists in readiness to accept pain while refusing the comforts of certainty. Hardy was possibly excessively thin-skinned,

1. The Victorian Novel: Essays in Criticism
   edited by Ian Watt
and so he could feel as such. Apart from expressing 'the ache of modernism', the novel also plays a part in the modern transformation of marriage from sacred rite to secular and thereby pointing to the problematic relationship between the opposite sexes. Therefore, that *Jude the Obscure* brought an attack upon Hardy was not quite unexpected. For Hardy has threatened his readers not merely in their opinions but in their deepest unspoken values; the first is forgivable, but the second is not. Alan Friedman observes: "At the outcry of moral outrage which accompanied the moral shift in the shape of experience, Hardy left off writing novels; but having already turned the stream, he left it running in what became the direction and channel of the twentieth century." 1

In fact, Hardy's deepening scepticism and modernism may be rightly attributed to the influence of Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann in the 1890s and to the impact of Ibsen and "The notorious Parnell case" in the 1890s. These sources gave Hardy 'permanent doubt' and 'intellectual crisis' that afflicted him while he was really writing *Jude the Obscure*. Here, Hardy finds himself gradually turning a cosmological novel into a psychological one. The reasons are not far to seek. He began his career in the late 1860's with the image of a man decisively shaped

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by Darwin. But that image underwent a radical change in the nineties under the influence of Freud. While Schopenhauer, Von Hartmann and Ibsen made Hardy sceptical, Freud made him psychological. Its result was that Hardy took shelter under the shadow of the new kind of psychological fiction which was brought about under the influence of Freud. "The new developments in fiction", observes Ian Gregor, "were to take many forms, but one great fictional achievement of the twentieth century comes directly from Hardy: where 'Jude' ends 'The Rainbow' begins." 1

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