THOMAS HARDY AND THE MEANING OF FREEDOM

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ABSTRACT

This is a study of the meaning of freedom in Thomas Hardy's fiction. The first section of the thesis is concerned with the influences in Hardy's thought and view of man and man's position in the universe. Attention will be given mainly to three sources of influence on Hardy's thought.

Darwinian theories of evolution and the secular movement of the nineteenth century and the change they brought about in man's view of himself and his state in the world can be seen clearly in Hardy's personal writings as well as his fiction. His childhood contact with Dorset folk beliefs and superstitions can also be perceived to have a great influence not only on his art but on his thought and outlook as well.

In the second section an investigation in detail of the meaning of freedom in four of Hardy's novels will be carried out. In the novels, man will be seen as essentially free and not an automaton or a plaything of necessity or nature or fate, for example. However, we shall see that man's freedom of action as well as of choice is severely limited but not annihilated by a number of factors working from within and from without man's character. In this, nature both as phenomena and as system plays a great part. Society
with its standards, norms, laws and implied understandings is another contributing factor in constraining man's freedom. Man also has his freedom limited by chance happenings and coincidences that he cannot control.

"Character is fate", quotes Hardy from Novalis, and everywhere in the novels we see characters' destinies linked tightly with their personal traits, unconscious urges and peculiarities of character either passed to them by heredity or formed by early life conditioning or both.

Nevertheless, man is responsible in Hardy's view because he has that essential sense of freedom; and hence that tragic flavour that tinges Hardy's fiction which would have been impossible with machine-like people as characters.
In spite of its being a central issue in Hardy's fiction the concept of freedom has not been comprehensively discussed by Hardy scholars and critics. With the exception of Roy Morrell's *Thomas Hardy: The Will and the Way* and Philip Drew's chapter on Hardy in *The Meaning of Freedom*, the problem of free will in Hardy has, in the main, only elicited scattered hints from his students and critical biographers.

In my study I propose first to show how Hardy's contacts with contemporary science and philosophy and with local Dorset traditions influenced his understanding of the concept of freedom. I shall then proceed to show how this concept showed through his works of art. I have mainly concentrated my investigation on four of his major novels: *The Return of the Native*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, which I found provided the clearest illustration of the interest in the issue. The argument, however, applies to his other works and I have used examples from his other novels, poetry, stories and other personal writings whenever these were deemed appropriate or necessary for a further understanding of the question.
I have relied largely on Hardy's actual writings: the novels, poems, personal writings, letters and reminiscences and journal entries in *Life* which, I take for granted, was largely autobiographical passed under the guise of his wife's authorship.

References to these sources, listed under "Primary Sources" in the bibliography are documented between square brackets in the text. Following is a list of the abbreviations used therein:

**Desperate Remedies.** DR

**Under Greenwood Tree.** UGT

**A Pair of Blue Eyes.** PBE

**Far from the Madding Crowd.** FFMC

**The Hand of Ethelberta.** HE

**The Return of the Native.** RN

**The Trumpet Major.** TM

**A Laodicean.** AL

**Two on a Tower.** TT

**The Mayor of Casterbridge.** MC

**The Woodlanders.** WL

**Tess of the D'Urbervilles.** TD

**Jude the Obscure.** JO

**The Well-Beloved.** WB
Messex Tales, WT

Complete Poems, CP

The Dynasts, DY

The Life of Thomas Hardy: 1840-1928, Life

The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy, Letters

Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings, Personal Writings

The Personal Notebooks of Thomas Hardy, Personal Notebooks
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The question of freedom has been the subject of discussion ever since man has had the leisure to think about himself and his relation to his environment. It is understandable to describe a person acting with a weapon pointed to his head as acting unfreely. It is also understandable to say that a person acting under threat to his or his loved ones' lives or vital interests is acting under constraint. We can also include in this someone who is acting under strong psychological influence, like hypnosis for example. And, though to a lesser degree, perhaps someone who has undergone systematised psychological or mental pressure can also be said to be lacking in freedom.

It may seem strange, however, to question the freedom of an ordinary person acting under ordinary circumstances away from any outside constraint. Yet precisely this is the question which has engaged philosophers and thinkers for ages and continues to do so now and there is every probability that it will continue to do so in the future.
Every age has approached the question of freedom starting from scientific or philosophical data available or from the general temperament of the period, if it is permissible to use this term. To examine this in detail would probably take volumes considering the immense complexity of the matter and the diversity of the views involved. What I hope to do in the following is to give an over-view of the controversy concerning free will, as a necessary prerequisite to understanding Hardy's views of man's freedom and his position in the universe.

In a work of art (in fiction in particular), several other factors besides those mentioned in the original philosophical debate on freedom need to be taken into account. Firstly, a novel should necessarily express its author's views on the matter. If a writer believes in absolute human freedom, for example, this will show in his fiction in the choice of characters and events. We are likely to meet characters who are more or less in control of their feelings and able to participate effectively in the flow of events. Very few accidents are likely to be used in such novels in order to assert human freedom of the will. Man's plans for the future are then rarely affected by adverse coincidences. On the other hand, if the novelist
believes in constricted human freedom his characters would seem controlled by rather than in control of their passions, and the plot would be constructed in such a way as to show man's vulnerability and proneness to unexpected chance happenings. Secondly, the writer's theory of art or how a novel should depict life (or his vision of it) also plays a part adding to the complexity of the freedom-limiting elements and further circumscribing characters' freedom. If he believes, like Hardy did, for example, that a novel should be above all an interesting piece of narrative, his plot is likely to be designed to make use of apparent improbabilities to elicit the interest of the reader. Evidently this will have the ultimate result of putting great restraint on characters with loss in freedom of choice as well as action. Lastly, the point of view of narration and the role of the narrator, with his sympathies with or against characters, are still further complications that should be taken into account.

Freedom of action, as we have seen, may depend largely on the absence of outside circumscribing agents, but can it be that we are not free to think and choose as we wish? If I am acting under threat to do something I do not want to do, I have the consolation that at least in my mind I am
free to choose or think as I like. But am I?

I

"We know our will is free, and there's an end on't", (1) says the oft-quoted statement of Dr Johnson with finality. Having second thoughts on the problem, (or perhaps having to concede something to the argument of Boswell) however, probably spurred Dr Johnson to give a slightly modified version of his belief on freedom: "All theory is against the freedom of the will; all experience for it." (2) So there is not an "end on't", at least on the theoretical level.

Dr Johnson's assertion is representative of a line of thought on the freedom of the will: libertarianism. This line affirms, perhaps depending mainly on observation and introspection, that man is more or less free to choose and decide whatever he wishes. The simplest of all examples to illustrate this is the arm-raising example. I can raise my arm if I wish to do so. It is up to me to raise my arm or not. Following from this, it is up to me to take decisions on all other matters, I feel. Tennyson felt that man, while sharing with all other things in the universe, animate and inanimate, the state of being under the undeviating law of
nature, still had a measure of free will, something of a miracle, he thought, and an indissoluble mystery. (3) At the end of his poem "Despair" Tennyson wrote, "... if one cannot believe in the freedom of the human will as of the Divine, life is hardly worth having." (4)

The main root of the belief in the freedom of the will seems to be the feeling that one in ordinary circumstances of everyday life is free to make his choices. Donald Mackay gives expression to this when he says that the mechanistic brain theory can show that you are heading towards a certain choice but this does not mean that you feel bound to that choice before making up your mind. Mackay argues that in spite of the fact that my choice can be logically predictable by someone who is in full knowledge of the workings of my brain it is wrong for me to believe in the inevitability of a certain decision since I feel options are open to me up to the point I have made the choice. (5)

Going deeper into the question, however, will uncover some problems and reveal that first impressions are not sufficient as a final statement on the freedom of the will. Determinism puts the case thus:

Every event has a cause.
Every human action is an event.
Therefore: every human action is caused.
An event that is caused could not have happened otherwise than it did. Therefore: no human action could have happened otherwise than it did. (6)

If we could not have done otherwise then we were not free in the first place. This is the line of thought which, carried to its extreme, found expression in Laplace's Universal Intelligence, for example:

We ought ... to regard the present state of the universe as the effect of its antecedent state and the cause of the state to follow. An intelligence knowing, at a given instant of time, all things of which the universe consists, would be able to comprehend the actions of the largest bodies of the world and those of the lightest atoms in one single formula, provided his intellect were sufficiently powerful to subject all data to analysis; to him nothing would be uncertain, both past and future would be present to his eyes. The human mind in the perfection it has been able to give to astronomy affords a feeble outline of such an intelligence. (7)

Concerning the freedom of the will, it may be argued that thoughts or personal choices are partly the reasons behind actions, thus making them freely willed. Determinism, however, carries the argument further in saying that our thoughts are caused by our character, which is in turn caused by antecedent events and states outside our control, mainly heredity and environment. Predictability of human actions is the basis of Philosophical Necessity. Philosophical Necessity, J.S. Mill contends,
is simply this: that given the motives which are present to an individual's mind, and given likewise the character and disposition of the individual, the manner in which he will act might be inferred: that if we knew the person thoroughly, and knew all the inducements which are acting upon him, we could foretell his conduct with as much certainty as we can predict any physical event.(8)

This, however, did not prevent Mill from holding belief in the freedom of the will and moral responsibility. Conceding that character is caused Mill argues that one of the effective causes in forming the character is the will to change in the agent. He places great importance on the idea that one is capable of participating in making one's character if one wills.(9) This, however, implies the existence of the will to change, to change ourselves from what we are to what we want to be. It can be seen that it is a very difficult task depending, among other things, on the presence of the will to change,(10) the strength of the urges the agent wants to change, the degree of self-consciousness he has attained, the degree of education that will enable this and the milieu he is living in.

Mill's situation can be described as that of a compatibilist. Compatibilism argues that determinism and free will are not mutually exclusive. It differs from libertarianism in that it admits the causality in man's
actions, and from rigid determinism in leaving a loophole for man's freedom to come through the wall of causality.

Holding that man's character is an effective factor in bringing about required change or taking relevant decisions, compatibilism contends that man's character and actions are caused and free at the same time.

A. J. Ayer contends that constraint not causality is the opposite of freedom. To say that an action is caused is different from saying it is compelled. Compelling eradicates freedom and responsibility but causing does not. (11) This is the position taken by J. S. Mill and George Eliot and which forms the basis of their moral scheme. (12)

Where does responsibility stand in all this? For a libertarian man is responsible for his actions in an absolute manner. A determinist, on the other hand, tends to absolve man of responsibility on the grounds that man, like everything in nature, is just a machine and cannot be held responsible for an action he has not freely willed. A compatibilist, in the middle of the road, grants that man's actions are caused partly by his choices and his choices by his character and his character by heredity, environment and antecedent events, but holds that man is responsible mainly because his character is an effective factor in making his
The question of a Hardy philosophy merits a look in some detail here. There is danger, however, in speaking about a Hardy "philosophy". It is not the in-thing in Hardy criticism nowadays. This exposition is, then, taking the risk of running against the critical trend. The subject of Hardy's "philosophy" was a favourite in the 1920s and 30s, but it has been dethroned by the new Hardy criticism which replaced Hardy the "artist" for Hardy the "philosopher" as a focus of study in Hardy's achievement.

Moreover, the question whether or not Thomas Hardy was expressing a certain consistent "philosophy" in his novels seems to be a strange one. How can one ask if the novels convey a philosophy if the author himself says they do not? Nevertheless I feel perfectly justified in attacking the question on the grounds that Hardy's novels do give a view of life with a degree of consistency. The following will be an attempt at elaborating and justifying the discussion of a Hardy "philosophy".
On more than one occasion Hardy denied that his novels carry a consistent representation of life. A clear example of this is his oft-quoted assertion in the "Preface" to *Jude the Obscure*,

Like former productions of this pen, *Jude the Obscure*, is simply an endeavour to give shape and coherence to a series of seemings, or personal impressions, the question of their consistency or their discordance, of their permanence or their transitoriness, being regarded as not of the first moment. [JO, "Preface", 27]

This attitude is reiterated in the "General Preface" to the novels where Hardy claims that

Positive views on the Whence and Wherefore of things have never been advanced by this pen as a consistent philosophy. [Hardy goes on to claim that he was not attempting a] coherent scientific theory of the universe. [JO, "General Preface to the Wessex Edition of 1912", 428]

Hardy seemed really enraged by persistent attempts by critics to hunt for a "philosophy" in his novels and to expose his novels as showing the "power behind the universe" to be malign and showing God as a tyrant bent upon the destruction of man's ambitions and dreams. In his rather lengthy letter to Alfred Noyes, dated 19 December 1920 Hardy expressed deep resentment at such attempts and his disappointment that people should have such views of his works. Admitting having some sort of "sober opinion" he
went on to defend his stance on the "Cause of Things" that "has been defined in scores of places," and which was that "the said Cause is neither moral nor immoral, but unmoral ...". Hardy, then, justified his choice of names for the "power behind the universe" assuring that that was a kind of literary exercise, a fanciful indulgence, and proceeded to say that he had

even in prefaces warned readers to take them only as such - as mere impressions of the moment, exclamations in fact. But it has always been my misfortune to presuppose a too intelligent reading public. [Life, 409]

Standing against the critical trend of the time concerning Hardy, Virginia Woolf took Hardy's side in seeing that his books had impressions and not a consistent philosophy. Most other critics, while producing Hardy's protests against a philosophical reading of his novels, did not much heed those protests. John Holloway, for instance, after citing Hardy's words proceeded to argue for an understanding of Hardy's novels which essentially comprised a supposed Hardy view of life, man, nature and man-nature relationships, an argument amounting to including Hardy among the representatives of the "Victorian Sage." In a more recent study, Philip Drew categorically affirmed that he did not "detect any significant shift of attitude during
the long span of Hardy's career."(16) It would seem superfluous here to add that almost all the Hardy critics consider his protests as inconsequential or not serious, since they all go on dissecting his novels, characters, and events to argue for their understanding of what Hardy wrote, each time attributing to Hardy a systematic view of life (which most of the times differed from one critic to another). H.C. Webster, E.A. Baker, Roy Morrell, J.I.H. Stewart, Lance St John Butler, (17) to give only a few names, might all differ in one way or another in interpreting Hardy's views, but they were all agreed that Hardy's novels were really expressions of these views.

It should be noticed that what Hardy was, in fact, protesting against was not the opinion that his novels conveyed a consistent view of life, a thing that should commend his novels rather than condemn them; but rather that this view of the novels should dim out other artistic aspects of his fiction, as the case was, resulting in the "nothing but" fallacy of looking at the novels as some kind of metaphysical treatises and nothing else. Another object of his protests, linked with the first, was probably the specific views that critics of the time attributed to his novels. Almost overwhelmingly the novels were seen in the
light of rebellion against God and fate. He was understood as accusing God, the gods or simply the power behind the universe of being malign, immoral and anti-human, a view in direct clash with the Christian teaching of a beneficent Providence, and hence the shock to contemporary readers and critics who dwelt upon the novels with a mixture of awe, distrust and adversity. (18) A third reason why Hardy did not want a systematic view of the universe to be looked for in his novels, is perhaps that in that time of change, deep and drastic, which Hardy lived in, views were changing so rapidly that an artist or a writer would not like to give of himself the impression of being committed to a certain view, however deep his conviction of it may be. In spite of what we know of Hardy's deep rejection of Christianity and his admiration of Darwinism and science, it is perfectly in line with what is known of Hardy's thinking that he did not want to be seen as a one-sided, narrow-minded subscriber to evolution or, for that matter, to any other philosophy. He did not want to be seen as writing novels to support and illustrate a previously held philosophical view of life. He, rather, wanted his novels to be seen as revealing life as he saw it. Still another reason for Hardy's attitude may be the innate shyness and the aversion even to be touched which he felt as a child and carried all his life. He
perhaps felt some sort of terror at being exposed from the interior, at having his innermost ideas, likes and dislikes, and beliefs rendered public. (19)

Moreover, what Hardy called "impressions" were valuable elements in and essential steps on the road to having a "philosophy". In August 1901 Hardy wrote that:

Unadjusted impressions have their value, and the road to a true philosophy of life seems to lie in humbly recording diverse readings of its phenomena as they are forced upon us by chance and change. [CP, "Preface" to Poems of the Past and the Present, 84]

A June 3, 1882 entry cited in Life helps in clarifying Hardy's view of the matter. Hardy wrote:

As, in looking at a carpet, by following one colour a certain pattern is suggested, by following another colour, another; so in life the seer should watch that pattern among general things which his idiosyncrasy moves him to observe, and describe that alone. [153]

What this study proposes to do is just to try to reconstruct, chiefly from Hardy's novels, what must have been his version of man's freedom: to what degree Hardy saw man to be free in life.

Seen in this light Hardy's warning that his novels are seemings and impressions and nothing more should not deter us from attempting to find a view of life in them. But
before embarking on this we should keep in mind that Hardy is a novelist and not a philosopher. As such he is trying to depict life as he has seen it and he is in no way trying to formulate a philosophical system of ideas or to disseminate such a one. Trying to find a consistent view of life in his novels should, then, by no means blind us to the artistic aspects of Hardy's fiction, his insight into the human mind, his imagery, his use of language, his power of characterisation, his dramatic gift and his ability at creating characters and events that would fit in his system of things, to mention only a few. In no way is Hardy to be seen as a philosopher or a propagandist. However, it is a fact that can be substantiated from the novels that Hardy does have a view of life and that this view is illustrated in his works, although sometimes, or perhaps most of the time, with no conscious effort on the part of the writer. Hardy himself admits the plausibility of this suggestion in the "Postscript" to the "Preface" of Jude, "... no doubt there can be more in a book than the author consciously puts there, ..."[30] We can then safely infer with Lance St John Butler that

It may be true that Hardy did not have a consistent philosophy, but it is equally true that in novel after novel and poem after poem he passes opinions on a number of topics which are forthright and echo one another accurately. (20)
If this is not a philosophy consistent enough for a novelist, then what is?

If emphasis in this study is laid on this particular aspect of Hardy's works, namely his view of life and the meaning of freedom in this view in particular, this is chiefly done to throw some new light on it, and should not be understood as considering it his foremost credit (or discredit, depending on how one looks at it). Nor is this study to be considered as belittling his other artistic achievements as a writer.

Inconsistencies, however, do plague not only Hardy's art works but his personal writings as well. So his views should be considered as gropings for truth which were apt to change by the change of moods of the writer. It will be enough here to trace examples of the writer's views on one topic, nature, to see what this means.

Describing the situation just before the fire that devours the Three Tranters' Inn in Desperate Remedies, the narrator refers to the breeze that was blowing with increasing strength in the following manner: "... it truly seemed as if the treacherous element knew there had been a grand opportunity for devastation." [DR, 10, 188] Hardy's
hesitancy in committing himself to a final attitude here is shown through his use of the word "seemed". His inclination to a personification of a cruel nature, however, is enhanced by the word "truly". There is a great difference between the "treacherous element" and the seemingly "offended" nature we encounter in Fanny's trip to the Union House in Far from the Madding Crowd, for example. After dwelling on the hardships the poor girl faces on the road to Casterbridge, the narrator shows how the friendly dog comes to her help in a providential manner. He puts it this way: "Then, Nature, as if offended, lent a hand."[FFM, 40, 280] Here again Hardy's caution in dealing with the subject can be seen in his choice of the expression "as if". This makes looking for Hardy's attitude more difficult, but it should not be forgotten that Hardy was above all an artist trying to convey his impressions and not a philosopher unfolding a systematic philosophical outlook. Between the two extremes of the impressions in the novels, however, stands Hardy's statement in his letter to The Academy and Literature in reply to Maeterlinck's Apology for Nature:

... you cannot, I fear, save [Nature's] good name except by assuming one of two things: that she is blind and not a judge of her actions, or that she is an automaton, and unable to control them ...[Life, 315]
This attitude of seeing neutrality in nature, an attitude based on findings of contemporary science will be seen as Hardy's, more or less, final attitude in the study of his major fiction. Deviations from this attitude I shall try to show as artistic indulgences, personifications or imaginative pathetic fallacies.

Three main influences to be perceived in Hardy's work are Darwinian evolution, the secular trend of the age and the Dorset tradition and way of life. Each of these influences had a great part to play in Hardy's thought and views of life, freedom and art. The effect these influences had on Hardy's thought and views of life and freedom will be discussed in the first section of this thesis. The next point I would like to throw light on now is Hardy's view of art, his "theory of the novel", so to speak: how this was influenced by his early life experiences and the scientific and cultural trends he was exposed to and how, in turn, it affected his practice in fiction.

III

The subject of Hardy's art and the interaction between thought and art in his novels is a massive task which can be the theme of an independent study on its own. But for the
sake of the working purposes of this thesis I think the following exposition should be sufficient.

Hardy's use of chance happenings and improbabilities has been the subject of great scrutiny from almost all his critics. Some find it a weakness in the novels while others simply decline to pass judgement on it. A detailed investigation into some individual coincidences and their significance will be made in due course. I would like here, however, to point out that these coincidences are of a piece with Hardy's artistic inclinations and temperament. His youthful apprenticeship in Gothic architecture with its irregularities doubtless had a great bearing on this outlook. An apology which is put forth in Life in defence of the irregularities in Hardy's poetry can be appropriately applied to his novels with equal force:

He knew that in architecture cunning irregularity is of enormous worth, and it is obvious that he carried on into his verse, perhaps in part unconsciously, the Gothic art-principle in which he had been trained - the principle of spontaneity, found in mouldings, tracery, and such like - resulting in the "unforeseen" (as it has been called) character of his metres and stanzas ...[301]

If we replace for verse, metres and stanzas novels, events and episodes this quotation will stand as an apology for or an explanation of Hardy's novels instead of his verse.
In *A Pair of Blue Eyes* Elfride's earring is lost in a crevice in a cliff at the seashore and she loses hope of finding it. However, one day while she is with Knight, the sun, with a most striking coincidence, shines into that crevice revealing the location of the ring to Knight's eyes. [PBE, 31] In the same chapter the church tower does not come down except when Elfride, going back home with Knight, expresses her feelings towards him saying, "Thou hast been my hope, and a strong tower for me against the enemy." [311] The bizarre tie between John South's life and that of the tree which tyrannised him is another example of the unpredictable in Hardy. When the tree is cut down South's life is terminated as well thus fulfilling his fear that he and the tree would die on the same day. [WL, 14] Another illustration of the "unforeseen" is the strange spell Rhoda Brook has in spite of her will on Gertrude, the new wife of her divorcee. In spite of her attempts to help the poor bride Rhoda's spell proves to be ultimately fatal to all. [WT, "The Withered Arm", 56-81]

Characters' freedom, nevertheless, suffers on account of these improbabilities. The finding of her earring casts a thick shadow on Elfride's relationship with Knight. Facts about her past life, for example, she would have chosen not
to reveal, or to postpone revealing till later, unfold themselves at the most inopportune of moments. The falling of the tower symbolises her coming doom. After the felling of the tree South dies and Giles loses his lodgings. In the case of Rhoda Brook's ordeal we see the bizarre supernatural effect of the evil eye acting in spite of the conscious will of the agent with disastrous results.

A note written in July 1881 further clarifies Hardy's view of the matter. Faced with the dilemma of having to present a plausible picture of real life and an interesting story at the same time Hardy thought that "The writer's problem is, how to strike the balance between the uncommon and the ordinary so as on the one hand to give interest, on the other to give reality."[Life, 150] More light on how Hardy sees art as a depiction of life is shed in the following observation written on August 5, 1890:

Art is a disproportioning - (i.e. distorting, throwing out of proportion) - of realities, to show more clearly the features that matter in those realities, which, if merely copied or reported inventorially, might possibly be observed, but would more probably be overlooked. Hence "realism" is not Art.[Life, 229]
One of the effects of the strange episodes in the novels was that the great interest in them (appreciative or otherwise) helped swamp the realistic aspects of Hardy's novels. And this is justified from what we have seen of how little regard Hardy had for "realism". We have seen how one of Hardy's aims was to "give reality" and he achieves this through a number of ways. Showing that man is largely a product of natural influences is one of these ways. Hardy shares with the realists the preoccupation with heredity, environment and their influence in shaping man's character. Hardy's deep interest in heredity is shown in hints scattered all over the novels and in his personal writings and in poems, especially "Heredity" and "The Pedigree". The subject will be looked into with some detail in the chapter on Jude the Obscure but it is rewarding here to keep in mind the tremendous importance Hardy attached to the concept of heredity as a formidable limiter of human freedom. Hereditary traits, in a sense, mould man's psychological structure and direct his behaviour.

The influence of environment, natural as well as social, is almost as binding for man. This will be scrutinised in the study of the individual novels at some length. I would like, here, however, to draw attention to a
narratorial description of Angel in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* that would show what importance Hardy attached to the cultural environment as an influence in man. Angel is a rebel against many social and cultural norms of his day. He rejects Christian beliefs and the prudery of the higher social circles but, on knowing of Tess's past lapse he retreats to a situation much like that of the circles he is rebelling against. The narrator comments: "With all his attempted independence of judgement this advanced and well-meaning young man, a sample product of the last five and twenty years, was yet the slave of custom and conventionality when surprised into his early teachings."[TD, 39, 290; italics mine] Angel is a product of his education of the "last five and twenty years" as well as of his conventional upbringing and is torn between the ideas and values of the two trends. A great portion of his and Tess's tragedy is due to this dual influence in his personality.

The case perhaps is that Hardy meant to portray reality, but in his concept reality did not mean the common and the ordinary aspects of life only. Hardy, then, was a realist on his own terms which did not always coincide with the predominant "realism" of the time. In his view, the
natural influences in man's life (heredity, environment) mingle with the grotesque and the uncommon to produce the "realistic" interesting picture of life Hardy was aiming at.

Presenting man as a part of nature governed by the same laws that rule in the rest of the world of nature reinforces the ties Hardy's fiction had with realism. With no divine origin, man is seen merely as a product of a process that was going on relentlessly through the cosmos. Man is, then, just a more complicated beast with an over-evolved consciousness and sensitivity not anticipated by the neutral forces and laws that were in operation in man. Hardy laments this over-evolved consciousness as a potentiality for pain. On Nov. 17, 1883 he wrote: "We have reached a degree of intelligence which Nature never contemplated when framing her laws, and for which she consequently has provided no adequate satisfaction."[Life, 163] Seeing the suffering of man, the Spirit of the Pities cries:

O, the intolerable antilogy
Of making figments feel[DY, I, I, v, 77]

This capacity for pain, however, is seen in Hardy to be common to men, animals and inanimate beings. Life reports Hardy's feeling that he "sometimes look[s] upon things in inanimate Nature as pensive mutes."[114] Being a part of
nature, man's freedom is limited by whatever powers that work in nature.

In addition to the freedom-limiting forces operating on man, a character in a novel has freedom limited by whatever artistic standards a novelist has in writing fiction. Hardy was by temperament inclined to a tragic mood which shows clearly through his major fiction. Greek tragedy always had a special fascination for Hardy. In *The Woodlanders* he draws our attention to the drama "of a grandeur and unity truly Sophoclean" that is being enacted in the real in Little Hintock. [WL, 1, 39] In writing "Too Late Beloved" which eventually became *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, we are told, he refreshed his memory on Sophocles. Last but not least, Hardy speaks of Jude's story as a "presentation of particulars containing a good deal that was universal, and not without a hope that certain cathartic qualities might be found therein." [JO, "Postscript", 29] Hardy's stories of people in Little Hintock, Marlott and Marygreen do not conform completely to the Aristotelian standards of nobility and the noble hero falling from prosperity to adversity. His tragic characters, however, (though differentiated from Oedipus, Macbeth and Lear, for instance) do have a representativeness that adds to their tragic destiny linking
it to wide cross-sections of society. Their tragic endings are not narrowed to mere individual misfortunes. The case, then, is that Hardy's characters are, in a sense, bound to behave in the way tragic heroes are supposed to do. They have to be sacrificed to create the tragic effect expected in a tragedy.

Hardy's views of tragedy and how they are fulfilled in the novels will be looked into in the study of the individual novels to follow. However, I would like to point out here two tragic endings that illustrate the point. Giles' death towards the end of *The Woodlanders* can be seen as an unnecessary stroke of fiction-writing designed mainly to add to the tragic atmosphere of the novel, create the desired cathartic effect and produce the Sophoclean grandeur and unity sought after. It is true the episode is brought about plausibly and is prepared for by delineating the temperament of the victim, but this does not argue that things might not plausibly have come to a different ending. That Hardy was not writing pure tragedy can be seen in the concluding chapters of the story which can hardly fulfill the terms of a cathartic ending. If we are after the Sophoclean grandeur and unity that Hardy mentions in the beginning of the novel we ought to stop at Giles' death. The rest can be
sad and pathetic but never tragic. It is as much of an anti-climax as the ending of Tennyson's *In Memoriam* which Hardy criticised in his letter to Henry Newbolt of 16:1:1909. Hardy wrote:

... why Tennyson, who knows so much, should not have seen the awful anticlimax of finishing off such a poem with a highly respectable middle class wedding, is a mystery, when it ought to have ended with something like an earthquake. [Letters, IV, 5]

Tess's destiny, as I shall argue in the chapter on that novel, is another example of a tragic situation that could have ended in a different way. The sad ending of the novel could have been brought about without the tragedy of Tess's hanging for an avoidable murder. We can see thus that Hardy's characters are cast in tragic moulds in a way sure to constrict their freedom. Moreover, while we see tragic heroes of Greek and Shakespearian drama suffering at the hands of gods or the moral order of the universe, Hardy's characters, in the absence of these constricting powers, suffer at the hands of such powers as heredity, crass Casualty, man-made laws and their own temperaments. In the nineteenth-century view of the world, formed largely by scientific findings and secular trends, the old tragic powers are replaced by equally constraining powers.
The role the narrator plays in guiding (or misguiding) us through the novels is another factor in shaping the characters' destinies. For Hardy's omniscient narrator, as for Laplace's Intelligence, both the past and the future of the characters are present. To him, the outcome of their ventures to which they are unwittingly moving is clear from the beginning. J. Hillis Miller describes the position of Hardy's narrator saying:

Hardy's narrator, ..., stands outside the events of the novel in the sense of existing at a time when they have all passed. He looks back on the action after it is over or down on it from a height which is outside of time altogether. He has ubiquity in time and space and knows everything there is to know within that all-embracing span. (21)

It is this foreknowledge, for example, that enables him to comment on Tess's intent to go and claim kin with the Stoke-D'Urbervilles:

If before going to the d'Urbervilles' she had rigorously moved under the guidance of sundry gnomic texts and phrases known to her and to the world in general, no doubt she would never have been imposed on. [TD, 15, 126]

An inkling of what is going to happen in the last chapter of Jude, for example, is given in the second chapter of Part First. Commenting on Jude's sympathy with the worms and the trees, the narrator predicts:

This weakness of character, as it may be called,
suggested that he was the sort of man who was born to ache a good deal before the fall of the curtain upon his unnecessary life should signify that all was well with him again. [JO, I, 2, 41]

And the narrator is not unwilling to impart his knowledge to his readers. This draws Hardy's fiction away from the realistic Jamesian trend which tries to depict life in photography-like precision to give a neutral picture of reality without intrusion from the narrator. The story-teller persona of Hardy's narrator cannot refrain from taking opportunities to comment on events and give clues to what is going to happen. This tends to show characters as lacking in freedom but it does not affect their inner sense of non-constraint, essential for responsibility as we have seen. With his interest in the bizarre and the fascinating in fiction, this persona of the narrator drinks mainly from the Wessex well and derives mainly from the deep familiarity the author had with the superstitions and folk traditions of his native Dorset. Deep into Hardy's unconscious were sunk the ways of the peasantry and their view of life. The numerous entries in *Life* and other personal writings, the occult episodes in the novels and the many allusions to superstitious beliefs scattered in his letters attest to Hardy's unceasing and deep interest in this aspect of life. All this has been distilled into the narrator lending him a

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great potentiality for capturing the interest of the audience with a tendency to inspire awe in an Ancient-Mariner-like manner. The Ancient Mariner - story teller aspect of Hardy's narrator features very highly in the strange improbabilities of the novels in his struggle for Gothic-like effects.

The story teller's part of Hardy's narrator is only one of his facets. A confusing side of Hardy's narrator is the relationship between his story teller and the detached educated observer, the other persona of the narrator. Familiarity with the scientific and cultural trends of the day shows in the novels through the various intrusions and comments the narrator makes on action. Hardy's conscious knowledge of the effects of contemporary science on man's moods can be seen clearly in this comment from The Return of the Native:

The truth seems to be that a long line of disillusive centuries has permanently displaced the Hellenic idea of life, or whatever it may be called. What the Greeks only suspected we know well; what their Aeschylus imagined our nursery children feel. That old-fashioned revelling in the general situation grows less and less possible as we uncover the defects of natural laws, and see the quandary man is in by their operation.[RN, III, 1, 185]

And such passages as this can be seen punctuating all Hardy's novels. This amounts to the creation of another
persona in the narrator which can be considered a complement to the story teller part along the line of Hardy's solution to the problem of the writer to "give interest" and "give reality" at the same time.

Another source of confusion in the role of the narrator may be the interplay between authorial comments and characters' inner feelings and moods. Sue's convalescent impressions about the somnambulistic nature of the First Cause [JO, 3, 351] can, for example, be identified with some of her creator's own ideas on the subject expressed in his personal writings. In an entry dated May 9, 1881 Hardy wrote: "If Law itself had consciousness, how the aspect of its creatures would terrify it, fill it with remorse." [Life, 140] Henchard's feelings about a "sinister intelligence" [MC, 19, 147] hunting him down, however, pose some difficulty. They can be endorsed by the story teller narrator but they have no place in the world of Hardy's educated observer. Confusing characters' feelings with the writer's attitudes can blur very seriously our understanding of the narrative.

IV

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A brief investigation of Hardy's attitudes, announced as well as implied, towards freedom is both necessary and helpful at this stage. Hardy's interest in the subject of freedom of the will can be seen in one of the annotations he made to Paradise Lost. Alongside the paragraph beginning at line 167 of Book Three of Milton's epic Hardy wrote: "The difficulty of reconciling Freewill and Omnipotence very apparent here." Michael Millgate suggests the date of the remark to be some time in the late 1860s or early 70s.(22) This, as we shall see, will reveal that Hardy saw man as essentially a free and responsible agent. Freedom here only means that man's personality is not completely determined by elements outside his control. The case is that man's consciousness of his existence has given him freedom and a potentiality of change which is perhaps the chief differentiation between human beings and beasts. Hence man's responsibility which increases with the increment in man's knowledge and freedom. This has been presupposed in the narrator's comment on Eustacia's evasion of responsibility: "Instead of blaming herself for the issue she laid the fault upon the shoulders of some indistinct, colossal Prince of the World, who had framed her situation and ruled her lot".[RN, IV, 8, 304]
But if one is not wholly determined and not a mere automaton and a suffering machine one does not enjoy full freedom. Strict boundaries are put to one's freedom by laws acting from without as well as from within oneself. Having to live with other people and having to go by communal laws and traditions are obvious limitations to freedom. Transgressing these laws will only bring condemnation, exclusion and suffering. This does not only affect political or social freedom but has a great bearing on the freedom of the will as well. The influences of the community tend subtly to be distilled, internalised and integrated into the character, so that if one wishes to escape condemnation and exclusion one will, in most cases perhaps unconsciously, opt for conformity. This will ultimately lead to the result that in a moment of choice the integrated influences of society will have a great effect on making up one's mind. This may eventually bring about the situation of setting one part of the self against the other. The wish to conform to what society dictates either because of the unconscious belief that it is "right" or because of the desire to avoid a clash with overriding external powers can end up in opposition to personal beliefs or personal fulfilment thus putting a great strain on the individual's freedom. The stories of Tess and Jude are only painful
examples of this border of human freedom. Similar situations can be encountered everywhere in Hardy from An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress to The Well-Beloved.

The constriction nature exerts on human freedom is an equally painful, though perhaps subtler, factor in the human tragedy. Both as landscape and phenomena and as a system, nature plays a great role in man's life. Weather, for example, is a favourite freedom-limiter with Hardy and Henchard's disaster at corn dealings brought about by a curious interplay between impulsiveness and natural phenomena attests to this. The disaster weather causes to Henchard's status and fortunes has a great bearing on options and alternatives open to him. Egdon Heath not only as a symbol of transcendental nature but as real landscape has much to say regarding the destinies of all involved characters and not only Mrs Yeobright, Eustacia and Wildeve who meet their doom on the heath. The laws of nature, especially the struggle for survival and natural selection, also put great strain on man's life and efforts. The attraction between Clym and Eustacia, for example, (the overture of which Hardy describes as "The First Chapter in a Timeworn Drama" [RN, III, 3, 198]) not only diverts Clym from his reformation dreams but changes the course of all
his life. The struggle for survival and for the female finds a clear illustration in the drama in Little Hintock. The struggle between Giles and Fitzpiers ends in victory not for the "morally" better, the more honest but for the "fitter". (23) The case is, then, that nature, far from being the caring mother, is only a conglomerate of laws that severely limit man's freedom of choice and action.

Seemingly inexplicable chance happenings play a great part in man's life in Hardy's fiction giving the impression of a malign fate working its way in man's life. This was good food for Hardy's story teller without being inimical to his educated observer. Hardy's great relish in the peculiar and the unexpected found an outlet in the grotesque coincidences that dot the novels. At the same time they were explained away by his reasoning narrator as mere results of unseen causes. Hardy sees that "neither Chance nor Purpose governs the universe, but Necessity." [Life, 337] In this universe there is no place for the gratuitous. The causes may be hidden from us but they are there without doubt. This, as we shall see, is perfectly in line with the Darwinian view of chance, asserting that what we see as chance is merely the result of unseen causes.
In Hardy's novels chance can be seen as a major freedom limiter, and though the final outcomes of the stories are brought about by natural causes, a lot of action proceeds by what is apt to look like strokes of fate. This doubtless puts Hardy's characters apart from the characters of Jane Austen or George Eliot for example. In the works of Austen and George Eliot characters seem more or less in control of events and elaborately reason their way through life. Late letters, or letters that do not reach their destinations and unexpected encounters (that turn crucial), for instance, rarely have such decisive effects on characters' careers in Austen and George Eliot as they do in Hardy.

Forces working from within man are still more binding. Heredity and early life conditioning are factors that he cannot control but play a great part in shaping his temperament (without annihilating his freedom) in what looks like psychological fate. Unconscious drives that are more often than not irresistible spur man to actions which reason and self preservation, for instance, would not endorse. Facing the consequences of these actions robs man of much of his freedom and cuts his choices strongly. These freedom limiting forces can be seen as the elements of the Will whose equilibrium gives man some opening for freedom in
Hardy's opinion. According to his theory of the Immanent Will, developed to fulness in *The Dynasts*, Hardy sees that

The will of a man is, ..., neither wholly free nor wholly unfree. When swayed by the Universal Will (which he mostly must be as a subservient part of it) he is not individually free; but whenever it happens that all the rest of the Great Will is in equilibrium the minute portion called one person's will is free, just as a performer's fingers are free to go on playing the pianoforte of themselves when he talks or thinks of something else and the head does not rule them.[Life, 335]

Despite the clumsiness and the unsatisfactoriness of the simile used to illustrate the theory one can clearly see that according to Hardy man is essentially free. What binds him is his being a part of the General Will which we can understand to consist of the laws in operation in man's life, social, natural and psychological. At understandably rare moments, however, man can achieve freedom from the constriction of these laws when his will is successful in counteracting the effects of the laws in his soul.

V

Seeing man's freedom thus severely limited and seeing the impossibility of reconciling man's needs created by natural laws with the circumstances that surround him and seeing man's great capacity for pain due to the "curse" of
consciousness that set him apart from other creatures, were probably the roots of the gloom that tainted Hardy's outlook to life and man's position in the universe. Doubtless a temperamental inclination to the macabre and the bleak, peculiar to Hardy's constitution, augmented this gloom to what looked like innate pessimism. As early as 1876 he was aware of sadness engulfing men when he wrote in his diary that "A man would never laugh were he not to forget his situation, or were he not one who never has learnt it."[Life, 112] Inquiring into the causes of sadness in man's life led Hardy to the following suggestion:

It may be questioned if Nature, or what we call Nature, so far back as when she crossed the line from invertebrates to vertebrates, did not exceed its mission. This planet does not supply the materials for happiness to higher existences. Other planets may, though one can hardly see how.[Life, 216]

Hardy admits that he has tried to make his novels happier but could not help it out of conscience and out of trying to be truthful. To John Addington Symonds he wrote on April 14, 1889:

The tragical conditions of life imperfectly denoted in The Return of the Native & some other stories of mine I am less able to keep out of my work. I often begin a story with the intention of making it brighter and gayer than usual; but the question of conscience soon comes in; & it does not seem right, even in novels, to wilfully belie one's own views. All comedy, is tragedy, if you only look deep enough
into it."[Letters, I, 190]

This view of life as something to be suffered spurred him to this peculiar consoling notice he sent to H. Rider Haggard on the death of his son: "... I think the death of a child is never really to be regretted, when one reflects on what he has escaped."[Letters, I, 235] Hardy even had a gloomy appearance about him. A description of his looks by a "careful observer" in 1885, reported in Life, presents Hardy as "one whose mien conveys the impression that the world in his eyes has rather more of the tragedy than the comedy about it."[174]

Taking all this and taking the infinite gloom that engulfs his novels and poems I find it strange that Hardy should protest against critics who found his works pessimistic. He describes as "muddle-mindedness" the views that find his "impressions" sad and pessimistic.[JO, "General Preface to the Wessex Edition of 1912", 428] His "Pessimist's Apology" of January 1, 1902 is an unsatisfactory attempt at clothing his pessimism with common sense and calculated observation. He describes pessimism as "playing the sure game. ... Having reckoned what to do in the worst possible circumstances, when better arise, as they may, life becomes child's play."[Life, 311] Although Hardy
does not say how often he sees "better" likely to "arise", we can judge from his other remarks, from novels, stories
and poems, that chances are very dim indeed. The impression
one is likely to have from Hardy's novels is that it takes a
god to cope with the demands of this life. Man, a dignified
being, is trying with very little hope to hold to his
position and better his life.
NOTES


4. Ibid., p. 156.


9. Ibid., p. 840.

10. Alan Ryan brings up this point in his discussion of Mill's argument: "... either there is already in the agent some element which will lead to his wanting to
change and thus being able to change, or else there is nothing he can do about it." The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill (London: Macmillan, 1970), p. 117.


13. The above exposition obviously cannot do complete justice to a very thorny question that has engaged philosophers and thinkers for centuries but I should deem it sufficient for the working purposes of this study which aims at elucidating Hardy's attitudes towards freedom and his representation of it in his fiction.


17. H.C. Webster, for example, states explicitly in
the first page of his preface for the 1964 edition of his On a Darkling Plain (Chicago University Press), that his purpose was to study the influence of Hardy's philosophy on his art. In spite of the fact that Webster speaks of certain inconsistencies in the novels, his book holds witness to the existence of a "Hardy philosophy". E.A. Baker puts the case more strongly asserting that Hardy's "philosophy precedes and predetermines his fiction. ..." In History of the English Novel, vol. IX (London: H.F. & G. Witherby Ltd., 1938), p. 46.

18. An example of this can be found in the anonymous critic who wrote about Hardy's theology in Tess and was reported in Life.[243]

19. See for example, Lois Deacon and Terry Coleman, Providence and Mr. Hardy (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1966), pp. 20-1. The Life, moreover, tells that as a boy "He tried ... to avoid being touched by his playmates. ... This peculiarity never left him, and to the end of life he disliked even the most friendly hand being laid on his arm or shoulder."[25] In a letter to William Archer dated 15.12.1901 Hardy wrote: "I have a horror of spreading myself before the public ..."[Letters, II, 279]


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23. Fitzpiers, of course, can be considered "fitter" only in hindsight. Because he survived, he is deemed fitter. The concept of "fitness" should take into account not only the individual's capabilities, characteristics and potentials but also the influences of the environment, the interplay between individual traits and environmental effects, and lastly, the results of the struggle. A judgement on fitness (or lack of it) cannot be passed thus until after the outcome of the struggle is known.
SECTION ONE
The impact of Darwin and Darwinism on contemporary thought cannot be overestimated. Even though the theory of evolution had been "in the air" for a long time the publication in 1859 of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* brought about what looked like a landslide in the cultural circles of Victorian England.

The idea of evolution had been tackled by not a few nineteenth century scientists and thinkers. Three names will help to illustrate this. Lamarck (1744-1829) developed the idea of evolution into a plausible hypothesis. His book *Philosophie Zoologique* (1809) was an elaborated landmark on the road to the theory. Charles Lyell (1797-1875) was a geologist with great influence on Darwin himself and on Victorian thought in general. His *Principles of Geology* (3 volumes, 1830-33) paved the way for the Victorian mind to accept the idea of uniformitarianism and gradual development in creation as opposed to the catastrophist outlook of the Scripture. Robert Chambers (1802-1871) came to be known
through his controversial book *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844), which in hindsight, could be considered a forerunner of the Origin. Even in poetry changing values and outlooks could be discerned which constituted a departure from the Wordsworthian romantic view of a benevolent and fostering Nature to what was termed later the Darwinian view of it. Tennyson, for one example, provided a good representation of that trend. This culminated and found ample embodiment in Darwin's Origin.

The book was an immediate success, and with the help of Huxley's propagandism and staunch evangelising of its messages, was claiming converts everyday. On the other hand, it was understandably faced with great opposition from many religious as well as lay quarters, but was eventually able to assert itself on the map of cultural life in the early 1860s.

The new theory was hailed as not only a new scientific hypothesis but also as a new interpretation of life, a new "religion". In this it provided seemingly more plausible solutions for the riddles of the universe, like the origin of man, his relation to organic and inorganic matter and his relations to presumed supernatural powers, than those furnished by the old theological interpretations which had
been under constant attack from thinkers and scientists for their apparent shortcomings and inconsistencies in the view of life.

This inevitably led to Darwinism going out of the confinement of science to other fields of thought as well as everyday life. Evolution was invited to have a say in the problems of not only natural sciences but those of metaphysics, sociology, history, ethics and other orders. This, in turn, gave rise to new ideas and theories related to Darwinism, but to which Darwin could never be considered a subscriber, like Herbert Spencer's "social Darwinism" for example. This situation created the difficulty (of which Morse Peckham was keenly aware, and which confronted every student of Darwin and Darwinism) of having to differentiate between ideas that were truly and originally Darwinian and ideas that owed their births to their authors being influenced by Darwinism, or that were seen to be corroborated by some aspect of Darwinism; between Darwinism, that is to say, and Darwinisticism, to use Peckham's terms.(1)
In the field of ethics we see that Darwinian-inspired efforts called for the application of "natural ethics" in the communities of man. Life in Nature was based on struggle, propounders of this principle said, so should it be in society because man's life should be modelled after Mother Nature. In this concept of "gladiatorial ethics" both capitalism and Marxism found support for their moral schemes. Spencer's principle of "survival of the fittest" fitted in so completely with the notion of natural selection that it was taken up by Darwin and used in subsequent editions of the Origin. Taking this principle of "survival of the fittest" to the extreme, Herbert Spencer called for what he termed "life-ethics" advocating the promoting of the "Fit" and leaving the "Unfit" to face their destiny. This was "tooth-and-claw" ethics in thin disguise.

T.H.Huxley, who proved to be the reticent Darwin's effective mouthpiece on many occasions, refuted this view of evolutionary ethics and called for human ethics to be based on kindness and cooperation, stating that the ethics of the beasts can be no more suitable for human beings in their present stages of development. Man should shed the manners that were necessary for his survival in earlier periods and adopt new ones more convenient for his new position. (2) It
should be noticed here that Huxley, from different convictions and through different channels had arrived at ethical principles similar, in some respects, to those of Christianity; the doctrine of which he had so vehemently repudiated. Darwin is reported to have written to a German sociologist that it had not occurred to him earlier that his theory would have implications on social questions. (3) In fact, Darwin hinted in an ambivalent statement that

A man who has no assured and no present belief in the existence of a personal God or a future existence with retributions and rewards, can have for his rule of life, as far as I can see, only to follow those impulses and instincts which are the strongest or which seem to him the best ones. ... [He will find] that the highest satisfaction is derived from following certain impulses, namely the social instincts. If he acts for the good of others he will receive the approbation of his fellow-men and gain the love of those with whom he lives; and this latter gain undoubtedly is the highest pleasure on this earth. (4)

This sounds slightly ambiguous and paradoxical and may have been the root of the two conflicting attitudes taken by the "tooth-and-claw" ethics propounders, on the one hand, and the "humane" ethics theorists on the other.

The question of Darwinism and religion is a thorny and broad subject for which no clear-cut answers can probably be found. But a brief exposition of different attitudes should suffice for the aims of the present study. Darwin was an
ardent believer until his return from the Beagle voyage. Nevertheless, this does not mean that he lost his faith as a result of his findings in the world of Nature. He was, at first, turned away from religion by the discrepancies he found in the Bible rather than by his discoveries during the journey. (5) These discoveries might have led him further away from religion, but still he preferred to call himself an agnostic rather than an atheist. (6) However, his theory had conflicting influences in different people who supported it. Many felt that science and religion could not be reconciled and that science presented truth while religion gave only myths. "Darwin has disproved the Bible" was a catch-phrase used by schoolboys of the time. (7) Of this view, Huxley was the chief representative, despite the fact that he believed that the Bible should be cherished for the sake of its literary and ethical values. (8) Others felt that a reconciliation between Darwinism and religion is not impossible at all, and that religion can be greatly enriched by the new evolutionary outlook which, they said, gave God a still loftier place in the universe. Asa Gray and Gladstone, for two prominent examples, were of this view. Baden Powell, in his contribution to Essays and Reviews expressed a similar attitude, stating that the Bible was not a book of Physics and that even though truth lay with
science religion remained a necessary aspect of man's life.(9)

In a sense, the gist of the message of Darwinism to man appeared to be that, after all, he was not a fallen angel as the gospel assured but just a more complex form of ape, an animal like all other animals. His difference from other animals is that of degree and not of kind. Knowing what impression this would leave people with, Darwin protested in several places that this outlook should not debase man and reduce his self-esteem but rather stress his achievements in a new light. However, it could not be helped that men were disappointed to see themselves in the situation in which they were put by Darwin and science. They obviously much preferred the previous comfortable niche they thought they occupied in the universe. Man, according to religion, was the high special creation of a loving and caring Creator, who took all measures to make life easy and enjoyable for him on earth. In the new, and, for many, grim picture of science man was helplessly reduced to insignificance and negligibility as seen against the huge space of the universe and the enormous span of history:

The laws are beyond the control of any human being. The whole history of humanity consists of certain changes that take place on a speck of dust, and
occupy only a second of the world's time. All man's actions, all his struggles and efforts,... are void of worth as ... the roll of the pebbles on the beach.(10)

Man is the product of an aimless cosmic process rather than the cherished making of a loving God. Though Darwin said he had envisaged a loftier place for man in the universe, most people could not be brought to agree to this new outlook and felt that Darwin's theory had left man with less value and significance in the world.

Attempts had already been made to dethrone Mother Nature from the seat of mercy, love and kindness, to which she was raised by Paley and the Romantics for example. In Memoriam poses painful questions as to the benevolence of Nature. Tennyson expresses the pain and disappointment of his generation after the romantic belief in a providential Nature was shattered by science:

So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life

... of fifty seeds

She often brings but one to bear.

Disappointment grows more fearful when Tennyson modifies his first observation in the following section,

"So careful of the type?" but no.

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From scarped cliff and quarried stone
She cries, "A thousand types are gone:
I care for nothing, all shall go." (11)

Matthew Arnold, likewise, warned of being deceived by Nature,

Nature is cruel, man is sick of blood;

... 

Nature is fickle, man hath need of rest.

...

Man must begin, know this, where Nature ends;

Nature and man can never be fast friends. (12)

But it was Darwinism that dealt the coup de grâce to the old dream of a loving and caring power in Nature. To Darwin Nature was often "clumsy, wasteful, blundering, low and horribly cruel." (13) Nature was no more to be seen as the oasis of peace and tranquillity but as a battlefield, a forest where beasts, including man, struggled for food and existence. In this forest cruel wasteful Nature created abundance of life only to destroy the greatest part of it in the struggle that ensued for space and food with immense pain and suffering.
However, Darwinism did not banish the concept of God altogether from the universe; but if there was a God, He had got nothing to do with life as we know it. What was conceived to be ruling life is not a personal, loving and caring God who is in control of affairs in the universe, but strict blind mechanical laws that had led to the emergence of man but did not care the least for his welfare and happiness. One of the ideas that Darwinism was out to destroy was that of design, stating that circumstances were created with a special view to suit creatures, and especially man: the beneficent Providence had man in mind in creating everything around him. Teleology had the upper hand in European theology and thought up to the coming of Darwinism which explained adaptation of organisms to circumstances by evolution and struggle for existence, discarding the concept of teleology absolutely. "Man is the result of a purposeless and materialistic process that did not have him in mind,"(14) asserts George Gaylord Simpson. This was a natural corollary of the exclusion of any influence of God in life and the attribution of all influence to the laws perceived by science to be presiding over the world.
Foremost among these laws is the principle of natural selection. So strict (15) is this selection in its mechanism that only a slight advantage in an individual or a species would be sufficient to win it victory and survival, condemning its adversaries to destruction and extinction.

Another force, albeit linked with natural selection, acting in the lives of men is that of heredity. Jonathan Howard states that according to Darwin, "Environmentally induced change in form would, ..., tend to be inherited. Darwin was prepared to extend this argument even to behaviour, ..."(16) However, according to August Weismann (1834-1914) whose works on heredity, we are told, were read enthusiastically by Thomas Hardy, the living organism contains what he calls the germ plasm, which is, unlike the rest of the body, the somato plasm, indestructible. The germ plasm is, moreover, unable to be modified by the action of environment and thus goes on, virtually intact, from generation to generation carrying the characteristics that would make the individual what it is and predetermining (sometimes predestining) its life.(17) In Weismann's views as we can see, heredity had much greater power on man's life since it was not susceptible to change from environment.
Nothing is seen to be left for chance from this angle: everything is governed by rigorous laws with fairly foreseeable results. An ample illustration of this is Darwin's description of the entangled bank, on which he comments:

When we look at the plants and bushes clothing an entangled bank, we are tempted to attribute their proportional numbers and kinds to what we call chance. But how false a view is this. (18)

Darwin reiterated this attitude when he said that it was impossible to conceive this immense and wonderful universe including man with his capacity of looking far backwards and far into futurity as the result of blind chance or necessity. (19)

Yet, accident and chance are not to be banished totally from the Darwinian view of the world. Darwin states that variations went sometimes along useless lines for no apparent reason that can be explained by laws. (20) In this sense man's appearance on earth cannot wholly be attributed to the laws. An element of chance cannot be ignored in explaining the process. Simpson sums up this when he asserts that

Man was certainly not the goal of evolution, which evidently had no goal. He was not planned, in an operation wholly planless. He is not the ultimate in a single constant trend toward higher things, in a history of life with innumerable trends, none of them constant, and some toward the low rather than the higher. Is his place in Nature, then, that of a mere accident, without significance? .. Man did
originate after a tremendously long sequence of events in which both chance and orientation played a part. (21)

In this light, man's consciousness was seen by believers in evolution to be out of context, a blunder on the part of Nature, an unnecessary addition, a superimposition with the result of providing man with a potential capacity for pain and suffering. Man could have probably fared better and more comfortably without his hampering feelings.

This new outlook to man and the man-nature relationship was immensely shocking to a great many thinkers of the age. Morley voiced his deep concern and said he was "distressed by the deterministic implication of Darwinism: if morality is determined by the impersonal processes of Nature, 'what becomes of man's voluntary agency?'" (22) Samuel Butler, himself an evolutionist, opposed Darwin's mechanistic deterministic view of the universe depending on chance and called for giving more importance to the mind and the soul. (23) A.R.Wallace, the co-founder of evolution by natural selection, could not perceive man's evolution as wholly materialistic. He contradicted the Darwinian view by asserting that a spiritual supernatural element could not be dispensed with in understanding man's evolution. The
poignant disappointment felt especially by the younger generations is represented by the disillusioned protest one of them makes against the assertions of science:

[The young man cursed] the rigorous logic that wrecked the universe for me and for millions of others, [that gave] a feeling of utter insignificance in face of the unapprehended processes of nature ..., a sense of being aimlessly adrift in the vast universe of consciousness, among an infinity of other atoms, all struggling desperately to assert their own existence at the expense of all others.(24)

Guenther, protesting against the self-given authority of science to theorise on the origins of life, protests that "If science affirms [a reductionist view of man and life], it is passing beyond its sphere."(25) Almost six decades after the publication of the Origin, Bertrand Russell drew a horrifyingly futile picture of the universe derived mainly from Darwin's book:

That Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of the human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins - all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand.(26)
Morley's concern about the fate of man as a "voluntary agent" reflected a deep and comprehensive fear at man becoming an automaton with no personal free will. With greatly attenuated significance and with his character determined by heredity, natural laws, environment and interaction among these uncontrollable powers man was seen to be left with very little or no freedom of choice. Free will, thus, becomes an illusion and man turns into a plaything for those powers, with no responsibility but with great capacity for suffering. This view, it should be mentioned here, was disputed by those who, depending on man's consciousness of his position, supposed that man could help evolution on in its way. Those include the thinkers who stressed the necessity and possibility of "reform" like Herbert Spencer, Leslie Stephen and J.S. Mill among others. Deep pessimism, however, can generally be seen to permeate works of art and literature influenced by Darwinism regardless of what may be said of the happy note of progress that sometimes is attached to some of Darwin's statements of hope in the future.
Aged nineteen when the *Origin* was published, Thomas Hardy was still in his formative years and was immediately won over to Darwinism. He saw himself to be "among the earliest acclamers of *The Origin of Species*,"[Life, 153] and we know he stuck to Darwinism till the end of his life. In February 1888, for example, we see him referring Dr. Grosart to the "recently published Life of Darwin" among other books for an answer to his question about evil and suffering in the universe.[205] Darwinian themes permeate his writings; and his novels are, in one sense, illustrations of the world of post-Darwinian beliefs.

However, Hardy was aware of the criticism levelled against Darwinian evolution although he seemed not to have had a final attitude on the matter. In August 1893 he had a conversation with Sir George Douglas who spoke of the doctrines of Darwin [requiring] adjusting largely; for instance, the survival of the fittest in the struggle for life. There is an altruism and coalescence between cells as well antagonism. Certain cells destroy certain cells; but others assist and combine.

To this, Hardy's recorded response was: "Well, I can't say."[Life, 259]
In his stress on the importance of loving-kindness in the lives of people and the necessity of shedding violence and hatred, Hardy was taking Huxley's (and presumably Darwin's) side in the question of ethics. He shuddered at the scene of ferocious struggle in Nature and sought refuge in the world of man, where

There at least smiles abound, There discourse trills around, There, now and then, are found Life-loyalties. [CP, "In a Wood", 65]

In the field of religious beliefs Hardy, in countless poems and episodes in the novels, made it clear that what he referred to as God or Providence was either a defunct power which is still clinging in some unrealistic minds, or a personification of the laws and forces governing the universe. His perception of the Immanent Will in The Dynasts is the final draft of his philosophy of the First Cause of which rudimentary images impregnate his novels and show the Will as the sum total of forces and powers at work in the universe. These include and affect human wills, intentions and actions. To Hardy, as to other Darwinians and believers in evolution, man was only another animal, a higher and more complex type, but still an animal. In his "Preface" to Dora Sigerson Shorter's A Dull Day in London,
in 1920 Hardy described the "lower animal creation" as "our fellow-mortals - who are often nobler than ourselves."[Personal Writings, 86]

As for man's place in the universe, Hardy's concept paradoxically depicts man's physical littleness contrasted with the huge universe in time and space; while at the same time stressing man's superiority over inanimate nature and his innate great psychological and mental values. In other words, Hardy meant to show the contrast between the "infinitesimal" life of man and the "stupendous" magnitude of the universe in order to "impart to readers the sentiment that of these contrasting magnitudes the smaller might be the greater to them as men."[TT, "Preface", 29] In a great many episodes and authorial comments in the novels Hardy stresses the cruelty of Nature and sneers at the view that saw in Nature benevolence and care. He also sneers at the idea of providence and condemns dependants on it who refrain from personal efforts for self betterment and achievement. His ridiculing of Eustacia Vye's "Prince of the World", the providence of the Durbeyfields and Sergeant Troy's surrender in front of supposed providential blocking of his efforts at self-betterment all underline Hardy's disbelief in such powers and his insistence that responsibility lies
elsewhere. However, if no Providence rules over the world, strict laws do. Struggle for existence, necessity and the irresistible force of heredity are illustrated everywhere in Hardy's novels. Struggle permeates both the world of Nature and the world of man. The woodland scenes in *The Woodlanders*, where trees battle among themselves for existence, exemplify the struggle in Nature. The struggle between men does not need examples in Hardy's novels, but it is useful to point to the Henchard - Farfrae relationship in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* which seems to be built on the principles of Darwinian struggle. The influences of heredity are best shown in the lives of Tess (whose career is to be seen through the perspective of the ancient d'Urbervilles' legacy) and Jude and Sue (whose inability to coexist in marriage is reportedly due to a deficiency amounting to a marriage curse in the family). The laws of Nature govern men's lives heedless of men's interests and aspirations.

Furthermore, what was seen to be the element of chance in evolution has echoes in Hardy's novels. Hardy's notorious dependence on coincidence (to the point of weakening the over-all structure of his plots and undermining the credibility of his narrative) is not out of
line with the Darwinian concept of life and evolution. Much has been said of the improbabilities in Hardy's novels, but it should be noticed here that although the proceeding of the plots depends to a great extent on these improbabilities, little is made of them in bringing about the final outcome of the stories. This depends, rather, on how characters act and the way things are. The resultant impression of Hardy's works, and especially the novels, is that deep admitted tone of pessimism which goes through the majority of his works lending them a gloomy deterministic outlook.

The novels convey the fears, frustrations, anxieties and the sense of being lost in a huge universe which does not care the least for man's aspirations and emotions. Accepting the implications of the Darwinian view of the world, Hardy's work can be seen as a protest partly against the senseless universe and partly against the view that still unrealistically clings to the romantic picture of the world as a place tailored especially by a caring Providence for man.(27)
NOTES

1. Morse Peckham, "Darwinism and Darwinisticism," *Victorian Studies*, III (September, 1959), 19-40. However, for the aim of the present study of Darwinian influences in Thomas Hardy's view of life it will not be absolutely necessary to differentiate with great precision between originally Darwinian themes and ideas that were linked with Darwinism and had, as such, exerted influence on the Victorian cultural scene.


8. See Harold Y. Vanderpool, ed., *Darwin and*


15. Huxley likens man's situation in life to a chess game:

The chess-board is the world, the pieces are the phenomena of the universe, the rules of the game are what we call the rules of Nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just and patient. But also we know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance ... one who plays ill is checkmated - without haste, but without remorse.

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20. *Ibid*.


27. Darwinism could not, however, eradicate other
deep tendencies in Hardy's mind, tendencies which had formed earlier in life, and which were sometimes unDarwinian in nature. Hardy's "churchiness", for example and interest in rustic superstitious beliefs, among other interests, lingered in his mind and view of the universe. A consideration of these influences, especially the Wessex superstitions, is indispensable in understanding Hardy. However, this will be tackled in a coming chapter.
Secularism is a very elusive subject. It is very difficult to define and discuss because, like all historical movements of thought, it cannot be given definite origins or beginnings conclusively. It is, moreover, comprehensive in the sense that it can be considered the embodiment of the change in man's ideas of himself and the universe which came as a result of deep changes in different orders and disciplines of knowledge. Countless factors, philosophical, religious, social and scientific conspired to cause that radical change in man's attitude towards nature and the world, which has been increasingly coming into attention during the last two centuries, and which we have come to call secular. However, this process has arguably been going on in some form or another since pre-Christian times. The Judaeo-Christian differentiation between the sacred, or the other-worldly, and the secular, or mundane, can be said to be at the root of it.
A subtle struggle followed the establishment of the Christian faith between the new faith based on the vision of the kingdom of God and the Latin this-worldly way of life. Christian traditional teachings with their emphasis on the sacred and the other-worldly and their suppression of the "profane" values came to defeat the dominant Graeco-Roman culture based largely on materialistic down-to-earth views and exulting sensual enjoyment. Hebraism, in other words, with its emphasis on conduct and law, has eclipsed the spontaneous Hellenic view of life based on seeing things as they are. (1) Nevertheless the Latin way did not die and it can be observed to have stayed latent till it came back to life beginning with the Renaissance and reached new highs in the nineteenth century, as I hope to show in some detail later.

It can, moreover, be argued that the struggle between "religious" and "secular" modes of thinking is as old as man himself. But this, of course, depends on how we define "religious" and "secular". This brings us back to the starting point. What does "secular" mean?
This paper cannot and does not claim to be a definitive, or even thorough study of secularisation. It will try to throw some light on how secularism came to influence Victorian thought (and Thomas Hardy in particular) concerning the view of man's place in the world and the extent of man's freedom of will and action. It will be sufficient for the working purposes of this paper to have a bird's eye view of what is termed the "secular" trend in the nineteenth century with special emphasis on the problem of free will versus determinism.

Secularisation has been vaguely and generally defined as the process of de-divinisation of the universe, or more precisely of the human consciousness (2) since secularism cannot accept the idea of God's existence in the universe prior to being driven out of it. To secularism God was simply never there. Even if there were some sort of creator, this creator has never had anything to do with man's daily life. Man, as well as other beings, is governed not by a personal deity but by strict natural laws that are the subject for close scientific and philosophical scrutiny and not for imaginative flights into supernatural realms.
In more practical terms, the "secular" mode of thinking is defined as conceiving the world "in terms of natural causation" as opposed to the way the "religious" mode views the world as a "place of mystery", whose supernatural order is "arbitrary and personal". (3) In this sense secularisation turns man's attention to this-worldly matters and urges him to use his mind to try to make the most of his life on earth since this is most probably his only chance of existence. This view is disputed by hard-line determinists among secularists on the grounds that man, rigidly governed by laws over which he virtually has no control whatsoever, can do nothing to change his lot and must stay still and watch things go on. But more of this later. At present, let us try to have a quick survey of marks of secularisation in Europe.

As hinted earlier, seeds of secularisation in Europe could be perceived to be germinating with the Renaissance. Scientific discoveries helped in showing the falsity of the views the Church held of the universe and in undermining its authority. Moreover, man, as a value, was increasingly gaining interest and respect for what he was worth and not merely as a creature of God. He was coming nearer to the focus of attention of philosophy, art and especially
science. Since a detailed study of Renaissance trends is outside the scope of this paper I shall consider these generalisations sufficient for its purposes. A representative of the trend I would like to stress here is Alexander Pope's recommendation,

Know then thyself, presume not God to span;
The proper study of mankind is man.(4)

In spite of the fact that seventeenth century thought was still largely preoccupied with "God" and "Providence", we see "man" increasingly gaining ground as a subject for study and veneration.

The Industrial Revolution which broke out in England and proceeded to sweep over the rest of Europe was another major step on the road to secularisation. Two ways in which the Industrial Revolution could be seen as such are in helping science prove its superiority over religion and in the urbanisation movement which accompanied it and came as one of its effects. Science, battling with religion for the hearts and minds of men, received strong back-up from the Industrial Revolution which was in a sense one of the results of the advances made in science and technology. It demonstrated what science had to offer to man in the way of comfort and power. Science was seen offering man tangible
means of comfort and advancement while religion was retreating as a creed and a way of life. A necessary corollary of industrialisation was urbanisation and the concentration of huge masses of people in the cities on an unprecedented scale. This, on the one hand, led to deep emotional and intellectual changes in the human psychological structure, and to the inability of the church to cope with the new social situation on the other. John Ruskin, for example, laments the degeneration the urbanisation movement brought about in aesthetical values and criticises "the peculiar forces of devastation induced by modern city life ...(5) As it has been hinted by Harvey Cox, secularisation and urbanisation were deeply attached to each other(6). J. Hillis Miller takes it from there to conclude that the building of cities went together with the disappearance of God from the lives of men.(7) The demands of a busy, exhausting way of life left man with very little time to reflect on his "spiritual" aspects and take care of his religious activities. Moreover, the Church, geared to the pastoral needs of rural and small urban communities, could not come up to new duties necessitated by urbanisation, and large masses of people were left with very little or no spiritual guidance with fatal consequences not only to the church but to religion itself as well.
Hardy was aware of the problems the urbanisation movement was causing as can be seen in his article "The Dorsetshire Labourer". [Personal Writings, 168-91] He was, moreover regarded as an authority on the subject as can be concluded from the letter the Bishop of Salisbury wrote to him asking "for his views on the migration of the peasantry, 'which is of considerable social importance and has a very distinct bearing on the work of the church.'" [Life, 205]

In Europe of the nineteenth century secularism took the form of acute struggle between "free thinkers" and Christianity, its symbols and institutions. England was obviously behind other European nations in responding to secular drives. English thinkers were, for example, studying German higher criticism of the Bible some time after it had been initiated in Germany. Others were working hard to propagate positivism, or the religion of humanity which originated in France much earlier. So a student of secularisation in England finds himself compelled to have a look at the origins of some secular themes on the continent. However, a word of warning is necessary here. What has been said does not mean that secularisation was flowing in one direction only. English and continental thought and science were engaged in interactive cooperation regarding the
struggle with religion.

One major theme that engaged German thought and had great bearing on the advent of secularism in Germany as well as outside it in the nineteenth century was the questioning of the historical authenticity of the Bible. Albert Schweitzer exalted German theology for its achievements, asserting that it "will stand out as a great, a unique phenomenon in the mental and spiritual life of our time." He, furthermore, considered "the greatest achievement of German theology [to be] the critical investigation of the life of Jesus."(8) Serious doubts were raised about the historical authenticity of the New as well as the Old Testaments. Dependent on history to a great extent, Christianity suffered greatly from these questionings and from subsequent criticisms which shattered the simple faith of many Europeans. The true authorship of the Gospels as well as the truth of certain statements and narratives were seriously doubted. Discrepancies found in different versions and the critical consideration of miracles and supernatural events defying reason and scientific proof undermined the authority of the Gospels in the eyes of educated readers. This culminated in bringing the life of Jesus itself under critical historical scrutiny. Many facts
about the life of Jesus were rejected as contrary to the laws of nature; the Virgin Birth, the Empty Tomb, the Incarnation, the Resurrection and "evidences" like walking on water, resurrection and other miracles were thus considered unsubstantiated narratives and rejected as the productions of biased or unreliable witnesses. This exploded the idea of the literal truth of the Gospels and led to the Bible being considered by increasing numbers of people as another book of ancient peoples' mythologies. By applying the myth theory to the life of Jesus, David Frederick Strauss in his *Life of Jesus* denied the historicity of all supernatural elements in the Gospels. Strauss's book had far-reaching influence all over Europe. In England, George Eliot so admired Strauss's book that she took it upon herself to translate it into English. Her translation was greatly influential in pushing the secular cause in England forward. Moreover, Darwin himself is known to have lost his faith partly through being familiar with German higher criticism.

The secular current in Germany aided by English science gave rise to what may be termed extremist materialism. Ludwig Buchner and Karl Vogt represented this trend. Their views amounted to considering matter the chief power in life
and to the negation of "mental" aspects of man, ascribing thought to chemical mechanical processes. The implication of this for ethics was the consideration of man as a mere automaton with no free will, governed totally by the laws that govern matter elsewhere. Moreover, with its materialistic interpretation of history, Marxism perceived man as ruled by irresistible social and historical inevitabilities.

In France secularism was, as in Germany, pushing ahead and gaining ground. One of the features of secularism in France in the nineteenth century was dependence on science and reason to achieve truth rather than on the Gospels. In fact, the Gospels were subjected to scientific scrutiny and critical investigation. The French Revolution with the worship of the Goddess of Reason in place of the Christian God had demolished the authority of the church in France and violently shaken the absoluteness of the concept of God not only among the French but among their European contemporaries as well.

Losing trust in Revelation as a source of truth, Auguste Comte turned to science for a basis of thought and a way of life. He hailed the era he was living in as the
third stage in the development of man, the scientific stage, which superseded the first two, the theological and the metaphysical. Scientific thought, to Comte, excluded metaphysical speculations and "experimental science [was] the only way to truth."(9) Christianity, to Comte, had championed a phase in the life of mankind. This, however, was put to an end by the coming of science, a more reliable source of knowledge. Nevertheless, seeing the need of people for a religion to organise their communities, Comte came up with the religion of humanity where God was replaced by the aggregate sum of human beings, past, present and future. In Comte's system, the idea of theological determinism was replaced by the idea of historical determinism depending on causation and natural laws discovered by science to be governing all things.

Comte's influence on English thinkers was immense. It is perhaps most obviously seen in Frederic Harrison, who can be counted as a disciple of Comte's, and who was a personal friend of Hardy's. But it is also to be found in George Eliot and J.S. Mill among others. George Eliot was an admirer of Comte's religion of humanity built on loving-kindness and the idea of duty. Moreover, we are told, in fact, that Comte received substantial support from
English admirers, foremost among them J.S. Mill. In spite of his differences with Comte on several subjects, and in spite of his great independence, Mill looked up to Comte sometimes as if to a mentor. He was very near embracing the religion of humanity, the idea of which he liked immensely but was deterred by the rigid organisation it necessitated. Mill eyed critically Comte's system which, he saw

...aims at establishing (though by moral more than legal appliances) a despotism of society over the individual, surpassing anything contemplated in the political ideal of the most rigid disciplinarian among the ancient philosophers. (10)

In Mill's philosophy we can see clear traces of Comte's positivism, dependence on reason and experimental science and necessity and repudiation of speculation and myths as bases of thought and conduct. Mill's necessity, it should be noticed, was more rigid than Comte's historical determinism which was tempered by the conception of some sort of providential order for man. (11)

Hardy occupied much of his time between 1870 and 1876 in reading, annotating and copying quotations from various Comte books in their English translations. (12) However, Hardy did not like the optimism that stamped Comte's belief in the necessity of progress, and in The Return of the Native displayed the defeat of optimistic Comtism at the
hands of circumstances and the course of daily life.(13)

Historical determinism received great support from findings in sociology and statistics which discovered the existence of regular patterns in human, individual as well as social, conduct. This warranted, for example, Taine coming up with epigrams such as "Our mind is as mathematically constructed as a watch."(14) Taine, however, protested that his determinism was not incompatible with responsibility. Hardy was familiar with Taine's work, at least with his *History of English Literature*, as can be seen from a reference to this work in Hardy's "The Dorsetshire Labourer" where Hardy was presumably not happy with Taine's unfavourable comparison between English and Continental peasantry. [Personal Writings, 176] Moreover, Hardy personally met Taine on May 20, 1889 and thought of him as "a kindly, nicely-trimmed old man."[Life, 219]

The significance of Renan's *Life of Jesus*, written with love and respect if not deification, was in making a new outlook to Christian origins understood and tolerated, making room in Christian theology for a "Fifth Gospel". And tolerance is supposedly one of the main marks of a secular society.
One of the English Bible critics, William Chilton, in his essay "The Horrors of the Bible", shocked the English reading public by describing the "God of the Christians" as a liar, an adulterer, a murderer, a thief, a debauchee, a tyrant and a lewd, impure, gross and obscene person. In all these accusations he was, he said, depending upon stories, which he produced from the Bible. (15)

From looking at the relationships between Comte, Taine, Mill and Stephen, to take only a few examples, we can deduce that there was some kind of mutual influence between English and French thought regarding the struggle of the secular against the sacred.

Now, to turn to England. We have already had glimpses of how things were going on in England as a reflection of secular drives on the continent. Matthew Arnold commented on the state of secularism in England unfavourably in comparison with the rest of Europe:

...whereas the basis of things amidst all chance and change has in Europe generally been for ever so long supernatural Christianity, and far more so in England than in Europe generally, this basis is clearly going - going amidst the full consciousness of the continental that it is going, and amidst the provincial unconsciousness of the English that it is going. (16)
But it was going surely and steadily in England as well as in Europe. I shall limit my discussion here to a few figures in English thought that had undeniable influence in advancing the secular cause and in shaping the thought of the generation coming to maturity in the second half of the nineteenth century in England, the time of Thomas Hardy's novel writing in particular.

Perhaps the most important single influence in pulling the English away from religion in that time was science. Science, first, in the 1840s, meant Charles Lyell and geology. It meant the uniformitarian view of the history of our planet and the refutation of the Genesis accounts of this history, and discrediting attempts by members of the church to found science on Revelation. In the 1860s Science came to mean Darwin and evolution. It meant the blowing up of the Genesis narratives of creation and furthering the cause of the exclusion of God and the church from man's daily life. It also meant that man was under the control of mechanical laws which were not conscious of his welfare. But all this could have been the subject of secluded study for the educated elite only, and could have gone the way of Lyell's findings, for example, had it not been for the tenacious efforts of T.H. Huxley who was Darwin's "apostle"
spreading his word not only among middle class laymen but among the working classes as well. (17)

English science was a continuation of a tradition of a long line of scientists that fought science's battles with religion. Galileo, Copernicus and Newton were only three of the champions of these battles. Most important for our study, however, is Newton, being firstly an Englishman, and being above that the author of the picture of the universe as governed by strict mechanical laws. Newton (1642-1727), whose secretive interests in Biblical studies and theological problems went hand in hand with his scientific enquiries, was looked upon by his contemporaries as a revealer of the great admirable power of the Maker of the Universe. Not subscribing directly to traditional Christian belief, however, Newton's findings in the fields of light and gravity were used mainly in defence of a theistic view seeing God as a great First Cause kept away from the goings on in the world. This concept of God and the universe was further elaborated and crystallised at the hands of nineteenth century scientists.
Gilbert differentiates between two ways by which science has affected secularism. The first and direct way was by science making moves against theology, and theologians being obliged to respond. This resulted in the secularisation of theology and in it losing the untouchable superiority it had enjoyed. Science also affected secularisation in a deeper way indirectly through appealing to the wider reading public who, owing to advances in science and technology, had a growing tendency to regard scientific knowledge and scientific principles as somehow, surer, more incontrovertible than any other.((18) In fact the public did not care to investigate the crucial questions under discussion and accepted the views of prominent scientists as they were. This spirit of "scientism" helped in diffusing throughout different walks and classes of the society a critical outlook on religion, varying in degrees and enlightenment among individuals and groups.

Another prominent landmark in the retreat of traditional theology from the lives of men was the publication in 1860 of Essays and Reviews. The articles in the book centred mainly on liberalising traditional Christian dogma from "myths" and supernatural effects. One object of the attacks of the essayists and reviewers was the
miracles attributed in the Gospels to Jesus Christ. The glaring way in which these miracles contradicted reason and scientific laws caused the contributors to the book great anxiety and pain. They could not go on subscribing to belief in these supernatural incidents, but at the same time they did not want to shed religion altogether. Baden Powell represented the trend in asserting that miracles were not necessary for the faith and could be done away with. This doing away with "evidences" was necessary, to Powell and the essayists and reviewers, for the survival of pure faith. This was complemented by C.W. Goodwin's feeling that it was wrong to try to reconcile religion with science. Religion simply does not give scientific truths. This has to be confessed and the problem will be solved. The book was received with a mixed response. On the one hand, its departure from traditional Christianity was so obvious that the contributors were dubbed "Septem Contra Christum". On the other, and this can be considered an indicator of the extent theology was liberalised, the writers mostly retained their posts in clerical and allied institutions after the publication of the book. The book had wide influence on intellectual circles and on individual thinkers in Victorian England. Moreover, it was admittedly one of the books that impressed Hardy most in 1860-1 and was the subject of
discussions between Hardy and Horace Houle during their field walks shortly after its publication. [Life, 33]

J.S. Mill was one of the pillars of nineteenth century English thought. His books and views had far reaching influences on other writers and thinkers. Despite his admiration for Comte he had enough originality and independence to differ from him and hold his own personal views. One of Mill's great contributions to the secularising movement was his insistence on liberty. He asked for absolute liberty for the human mind to question every subject and every authority. This would hit not only Catholicism but all dogmas which are built on the authority of God. Owen Chadwick describes Mill's advice as "good enough to demolish, not enough to construct."(19) Indeed, Mill's view helped in undermining the authority of the church and established dogmas.

Mill's stance on religion represented the secular trend which saw in Christianity a redundant creed. Christian morals may be of some use (though this does not mean that Christianity is the only foundation of morals) but the Christian creed was decidedly intellectually unsustainable.(20) Mill's exaltation, for instance, of Marcus Aurelius, who tried to restore Paganism as the
official religion of the Roman Empire, and his stressing of Marcus Aurelius' intelligence and open-mindedness can be considered an indication of how Mill looked at the subject. (21) Furthermore, Mill thinks "it a great error to persist in attempting to find in the Christian doctrine that complete rule for our guidance." (22) Mill believed in a rigid law of causation, necessity, by which events follow each other causally, necessarily. Man's character, to Mill, was partly under the influence of this law: it is caused and so are man's actions. But man, being what he is in complexity of structure, can be an effective factor in the law by willing to change his character. A study in greater detail of Mill's view of free will will be attempted later.

For J.S. Mill Hardy had great respect and admiration. He records that students of his days knew Mill's On Liberty by heart. [Life, 330] Quotations from Mill again are frequently used to illustrate attitudes and situations in Hardy's novels.

Another great secular figure with perhaps more direct influence on Hardy's life, art and thought was Leslie Stephen. Stephen received the orders of priesthood in 1859, but shortly after the publication of Darwin's Origin he lost his faith and ultimately renounced the orders in 1875. He
came to the conclusion that religious systems were unreal, that evidence does not support belief in the existence of God and that religion demoralises society mainly through seclusion and individuality and through bigotry and intolerance. (23) Following Comte, Stephen saw that "Christianity was a perishing species and could not revive," (24) thus rejecting efforts by the Broad Churchmen to maintain that Christianity could develop to be accepted by civilised people. Seeing the necessity of replacing the Christian system of ethics, Stephen devoted most of his remaining years to forming and spreading a system of ethics based on science and repudiating traditional religions and speculative philosophical beliefs as bases for morals. Stephen challenged in particular the Christian ethics and protested against the existence of suffering and evil in the world and questioned the wisdom of virtue and vice, happiness and misery being apparently arbitrarily distributed. Eternal damnation, which was found repugnant by Stephen and other moralists, was one object of Stephen's attacks. He questioned the justice of sending evil doers to eternal punishment who may have been brought up in evil surroundings and so were inclined to evil by circumstances outside their control. Stephen saw in science the only escape from the dilemmas that have perplexed men throughout
history. Stephen's determinism can be clearly seen in his question. Implied in the question of God's justice towards evil-doers is the presupposition that men's characters were made for them by the environment, or at least men's conduct is strongly conditioned by circumstances. Inevitably, the result is a minimising of man's responsibility.

Through his writings, through the close friendship that tied him with Hardy, and through his literary tastes (especially as the editor of the Cornhill), Stephen exercised probably the most direct influence on Hardy. Life admits to the deep mental influence Stephen had on Hardy assuring that "Since coming into contact with Leslie Stephen about 1873, ..., Hardy has been much influenced by his philosophy, and also by his criticism."[128] The literary aspect of this influence is shown for example in Stephen's advice to Hardy on novel writing and criticism.[109] More important was Hardy's business with Stephen as editor in the serialisation of Far from the Madding Crowd in the Cornhill which was a great enriching and enlightening experience for the young novelist. Stephen's rejection of Christianity and his ethical system built on science, also, showed in Hardy's novels. Stephen's choice of Hardy to witness his renunciation of orders in 1675 is a clear indication of the
understanding and the ideas shared between the two men on the subject.

It is worth mentioning here that aversion towards Christian ethics, and especially the concepts of Original Sin and Atonement, was chiefly responsible for the loss of faith of several other writers and thinkers. Howard Murphy asserts that

Prominent among [the factors that led to the alienation of F.W. Newman, J.A. Froude and Mary Ann Evans] was a growing repugnance toward the ethical implications of what they had been taught to accept as essential Christian dogma; and the root of their repugnance was their sense of incongruity between this Christian dogma and the meliorist bias of their time. (25)

To Murphy's list Charles Gillispie is tempted to add John Stuart Mill and Leslie Stephen as critics of Christian ethics. (26)

If Mill was preoccupied with the philosophical dimensions of science and Stephen with its ethical implications, C.A. Swinburne rejoiced in the liberty science granted him from what he deemed divine tyranny. Swinburne lamented the victory of Christianity over Greek and Latin Paganism and the paleness that covered Europe in consequence. He saw in science a liberator of man's instinctual tendencies from artificial moulds of dogma.
Swinburne exalted man as the "master of things." Lionel Stevenson comments on this saying, "This is the positivist 'religion of humanity' imbued with the fervor of a fanatic." (27) Naturally, Greek traces permeate Swinburne's poetry, but this will be discussed in more detail below. Swinburne enjoyed great popularity among the young of his contemporaries. Carl Weber writes that youths from Oxford and Cambridge used to march the streets shouting slogans from his poems. (28)

Swinburne had always had a peculiar fascination to Hardy. In a letter Hardy wrote to the poet on April 1, 1897 Hardy confessed to Swinburne: "I used to read your early works walking along the crowded London streets, to my imminent risk of being knocked down." [Letters, II, 158]

Another figure in the literature of the period deserves to be mentioned here, William Hale White, who wrote under the pseudonym of Mark Rutherford. The atmosphere of his Autobiography and Deliverance is that of confusion, bewilderment and groping for truth. Whatever the final attitude of the writer may be certain misgivings about Christianity are to be discerned in the books. An example is the allusion to the "immorality of the Bible heroes, their cruelty and the cruelty of the God who sanctioned
A more profound criticism of the Bible is the bringing up of the question of "the inconsistencies of the Old Testament history, the impossibility of any reference to Jesus therein,..." Mark Rutherford can, in a limited way, be seen as reflecting some of the main currents of secularism of the day.

In a survey of the secular movement of nineteenth century England, some mention of Charles Bradlaugh is indispensable. In spite of the fact that he could have had little direct influence, or perhaps none, on Hardy's career, his strong presence and his activities, especially through the National Secular Society during the period between 1866 and 1890, could not but have had a great influence on the cultural atmosphere Hardy was living in. However, Life tells that on the 13th of May 1886 Hardy was present in the House at the debate on the Government of Ireland where Gladstone and Bradlaugh were the main debators.
Bradlaugh's election manifesto in 1668, for example, which included a clause stating that Bradlaugh would support efforts aiming at "The abolition of all disabilities or disqualifications consequent upon the holding or rejection of any particular speculative opinion,"(31) a stand strikingly like Hardy's. It is also probable that Hardy sympathised with Bradlaugh in his struggle against the House of Commons in 1880.(32) It is interesting to notice that Bradlaugh in an essay in National Reformer, 30 November, 1890 noted that there had been great progress in the secular cause in Britain.(33) This was manifested in the growing secular societies and the increasing understanding (or perhaps the decreasing misunderstanding, to put it more cautiously) they were met with.

After this survey of some of the secular figures and influences in England in the second half of the nineteenth century mainly, I mean to throw some light on some secular phenomena of the age, how secularism showed through society. Attention will be focussed on three main phenomena. Pluralism and tolerance, falling into disuse of religious institutions and places and the retreat of the public and especially the educated to times prior to Christianity for inspiration.
The established church in England was long the only accepted religious authority with a degree of tolerance to members of other churches. However, with the advent of secularism dissent was becoming more and more apparent and tolerated. It is sufficient here to mention that towards the second half of the nineteenth century the English society was heading, but only heading, towards the phenomena of pluralism, tolerance, coexistence and cooperation between different religious communities. In 1859 we find J.S. Mill in his *Liberty* recording with caution a degree of tolerance reached in England among the different religious groups. (34) The reality of dissent and the increasing tolerance of it find recording in the novels of Hale White. Another powerful illustration is the revival of Roman Catholicism in England under J.H. Newman in the Oxford Movement. One point that should be made here is that although tolerance did not figure dominantly in the relationships between different religious communities first, we can see that the emergence of dissenting movements led to some kind of *status quo* that was later acknowledged with increasing ease and forbearance.

Another secular mark of the English society was the gradual falling into disuse of religious institutions. Alan Gilbert uses the subject of redundant churches to introduce
his study of post-Christian Britain. The deserted churches and what to make of them were the subject, he tells, of a strange exchange of letters on the pages of The Times in the summer of 1976. (35) If the problem faced the English public, then, with such serious dimensions, it, doubtless, had its origins far before that time. That Hardy was aware of the trends can be later seen and he can serve as a witness of the case.

A third aspect that marked the secularisation of the age was the keen revival of Classical interests which very often took the shape of anti-Christian ideals - Greek culture was gaining esteem increasingly. Greek gods were held in repute, Greek heroes were adored and admired and Greek myths were cherished. Mark Rutherford, for example, observes guiltily that "A little Greek mythological story was of more importance to me than a war which filled the newspapers." (36) Richard Jenkyns speaks of George Eliot's incomparable "fervency of enthusiasm for the ancient world." (37) He also perceives that Hardy "was determined to be the Aeschylus of Wessex." (38) For Swinburne Greece was the "mother-country of thought and art and action." (39) Swinburne was fond of drawing comparisons between the Greek and Christian cultures to the great advantage of the first.

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He consistently repudiates Christian ideals, elevating the Greeks to high esteem. He thinks for example of "Athens and Jerusalem as the two rival fountains of light and darkness."(40) This may not be a strange utterance coming from such as Swinburne. But it was strange that a similar attitude should come from a highly self-disciplined Christian like Gladstone. Jenkyns reports that Gladstone's first choice of a day to live in was a day in the times of the glory of ancient Greece.(41) Still stranger is that such an emotion should come from none but the leader of the Oxford Movement, the redoubtable Cardinal Newman who poignantly confesses his passion for Pagan Greece wondering

Why, wedded to the Lord, still yearns my heart
Towards these scenes of ancient heathen fame.(42)

The question of ancient Greek interests in Victorian England doubtless had a complex network of origins and manifestations. It is outside the scope of this paper to attempt an analysis of the phenomenon but I would like to underline one fact here, which is that Christian ethics and ideals did not wholly account for the Victorian way of life, if we may use the term. In their hearts, many Victorians cherished non-Christian, this-worldly attitudes with varying
Summing up we may notice that secularism was the historical movement which tried to de-Christianise European culture and man's consciousness. All notions related to God and religion as known by adherents to religion were banished. Theological determinism was such a notion. It taught that man who cannot escape God's omnipotence or omniscience, has his character and actions determined by God's will. The extreme of this concept took the shape of Calvinist predestination. Now, secularism came, and with the abolishing of the concept of God, did away with this kind of determinism. Determinism, however, emerged in a host of new forms inspired by the science and philosophy of the day. Buchner and Vogt, for example, adopted what may be termed material determinism. Since man is of the same stuff of inorganic matter its laws apply to him as well. Historians and philosophers interested in history spoke of historical determinism. The regular patterns of events in the lives of individuals and communities warranted speaking of fairly rigid laws in men's lives. Scientists spoke about natural laws and hereditarians in the late 1880s and early 1890s came up with what may be called biological determinism concerned with the inevitability of the transferring of
traits from parents to offspring, thus causing the latter to be in a sense, programmed in certain directions and activities. Marx and the socialists expounded social determinism represented in trends in the society unable to be resisted by individuals. Psychological determinism asserts that much of an individual's inner mental traits and his conduct later in life depend to a great extent on the kind of education he or she receives early in childhood. The relationship between the infant and its parents coupled with its inherited characteristics makes lasting impressions on its psychological make-up in a way that makes it possible to make fairly accurate predictions of the general pattern of the individual's conduct later on. More comprehensive, perhaps, than all these was what we may call physical determinism, necessity or causation. Taken in its simplest form, necessity means that every event has a cause. Applied to human conduct it means that man's actions are caused. Causes for human actions can be referred to a host of complex conditions.

This, however, does not mean that rigid determinism excluded all other modes of thought. The Industrial Revolution did emit a note of optimism based on the possibility of progress and advancement with the probability
of happiness and abundance to the masses. This resulted in the idea that the world was susceptible to systematic improvement through a sustained application of human effort and intelligence. (43) However, as we have seen, major thinkers and schools of thought were of the idea that man's freedom was heavily chained and that there was little that man could systematically do to bring about change or "reform". Various laws are taking care of that.

One of the few things clear about Thomas Hardy is his rejection of Christianity. This shows forcefully through his fiction, poetry and personal writings. In this he was the son of his age which witnessed the decline of traditional Christian beliefs in Europe. One of the earliest influences that led to Hardy's loss of faith (because he did have faith and meant to take orders in his early youth) was Darwinism. The theory of evolution had undermined the authority of the Bible making it very difficult for educated readers to retain the simple faith that was common up to that time. Later, Hardy came greatly under the influences of widely varied secular themes, writers and writings. On the emotional level, Swinburne's antitheistic attitudes and pagan poems appealed to the depths of Hardy's soul. Hardy's letters to the poet, his
open admiration to him and the frequent quotations from his poems that punctuate the novels bear strong witness to this. On the intellectual level, however, we find that Hardy was influenced in most of his non-Christian and anti-Christian themes and attitudes by other Victorian thinkers. The influences of Leslie Stephen, J.S. Mill and Essays and Reviews were discernible in his thought and work.

It would be a mistake, however, to consider that Hardy's attitudes to Christianity could be accounted for simply by falling under the impressions of individual thinkers or books. His attitude was far more complex than that. It was the result of countless factors at work in his character. Science and the diversified literary and intellectual scene of Victorian England and Continental influences were doubtless some of the main factors. But a great push towards this attitude was perhaps Hardy's feeling at home with pagan and non-Christian themes. This probably goes back to his Dorset childhood with Dorset folk customs and superstitions which held a fast impression on Hardy's imagination throughout his life. These were, as we shall see in more detail in a coming chapter, Christian only in appearance, and not always so; and retained pagan values, rites and attitudes.
Life and Letters abound with downright straightforward expressions of Hardy's beliefs. At heart, Hardy was more of a Pagan than a Christian. In 1880, visiting France, he comments on a crudely painted statue of Christ putting these words in the mouth of the statue: "Yes, yes! I agree that this travesty of me and my doctrine should totter and overturn!"[Life, 139] Visiting Rome in 1887, Life tells us that he was "more interested in Pagan than in Christian Rome."[190] He had long relinquished his faith in a personal deity when he in 1890 put his case so bluntly, "I have been looking for God 50 years, and I think that if he had existed I should have discovered him."[224] In a letter to Edward Clodd dated Jan. 17, 1897 Hardy wrote: "The older one gets, the more deplorable seems the effect of that terrible, dogmatic ecclesiasticism - Christianity so called (but really Paulinism plus idolatry)."[Letters, II, 143] In 1907 he comments that the days "of the creeds are as dead and done with as days of Pterodactyls,"[Life, 332] a theme that would recur in his novels. His non-Christian attitudes accompanied him to the end of his life. On December 26, 1927, 16 days before his death, Hardy required his wife to read him the Gospel accounts of the Massacre of the Innocents. When she had done so he remarked "that there was not a grain of evidence that the gospel story was true in
any detail."[445]

The novels are, in a sense, illustrations of the secular spirit that stamped the age. Pagan ideals, the defeat of Christianity and the divorce between Christianity and life are themes insistently made all through. I shall choose examples from *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* not because of the want of them in other novels but because I feel *Tess* puts the case so strongly and comprehensively. Comparisons between Christianity and older religions and ways of life are always made decidedly in favour of the latter. To the narrator of the story, for example, "One could feel that a saner religion [than heliolatry] had never prevailed under the sky".[TD, 14, 115] When Angel angers his father by saying that "it might have resulted better for mankind if Greece had been the source of the religion of modern civilisation, and not Palestine", [25, 186] we feel sure it was Hardy's own voice rephrasing a Swinburne conviction that the novelist shared with the poet; moreover, this is the pronounced Hardy position as can be seen in other novels and writings. In not a few situations in the novel Hardy constructs confrontations between Christianity and science, culture or human ideals. In each one of these it is Christianity to give way. Describing the subtle clash
between various feelings inside the parson asked by Tess about her child's destiny, the scene unfolds as follows:

... the dignity of the girl, the strange tenderness of her voice, combined to affect his nobler impulses - or rather those that he had left in him after ten years of endeavour to graft technical belief on actual scepticism. The man and the ecclesiastic fought within him, and the victory fell to the man."

Alec d'Urberville's backsliding after his conversion can be considered symbolic of the decline and fall of Christianity in front of science, logic and the "appetite for joy". Alec's earnest and genuine faith could not stand Tess's (and Angel's) reasoning derived from contemporary secular thought aided by Tess's beauty. Christianity's battle is lost mainly because, as Hardy shows it, it is not a religion of life. It does not represent man's needs and aspirations. These lie elsewhere. Commenting on the state of the mill and the abbey, the narrator deduces that "The mill still worked on, food being a perennial necessity, the abbey had perished, creed being transient."[35, 259] The case is the same with other human impulses than carving for food. The narrator condemns as futile and contrary to wisdom the checking by creeds of the "great passionate pulse of existence" which Angel had experienced at Talbothays.[25, 187] If Christianity is out of pace with life, it is not
strange therefore that churches are not places to go to for many of Hardy's characters. The work folk indulging in dancing on a Saturday night do not feel it was getting too late for them, they could sleep it off in church time next morning.[10, 92] The narrator describes church-going as merely an act of hypocrisy covering the inner desire of flesh to coquet with flesh.[23, 169]

This, I believe, clarifies how Hardy's characters, and presumably, (as can be guessed from his other writings) Hardy himself, feel towards Christianity and Christian institutions. Hardy's description of himself as "churchy" is inconsequential here. Hardy certainly had what can be described as nostalgic moments about "primitive" Christian feelings or beliefs which embellished his childhood. He could have been in love with the artistic aspects of church architecture or church music, or could have been under nostalgic remembrances of childhood experiences with churches, but as far as churches being houses of worship or symbols of religious beliefs, Hardy's sentiments were clearly in antipathy. His calling himself "churchy" was perhaps of the same nature of the Biblical allusions and references that fill his novels. Judging from the frequency of these allusions, one might be led to think that the
writer was an ardent believer only to discover that the exact opposite was really the truth.

Hardy's attitude to Christianity, thus viewed, is perplexing and only an arbitrary and otherwise harmful differentiation between the intellectual and the emotional will explain it. This attitude is lucidly illustrated in "The Oxen". Hardy's childhood belief in kneeling oxen at Christmas remained emotionally alive at 75. In the poem he dreams:

If someone said at Christmas Eve,
    "Come, see the oxen kneel

"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
    Our childhood used to know,"

I should go with him in the gloom,
    Hoping it might be so.[CP, 468]

Hardy's Christian interests clearly lay mainly on the emotional level. On the intellectual level he had great contempt for the supernatural and even ethical aspects of Christianity.
Hardy's rejection of Christianity meant rejection of its theological doctrines. His allusions to a God governing the world and meting justice, or rather more frequently, injustice, should be understood as only symbolic. His persons were obviously acting under "laws" perceived by contemporary science and philosophy to dominate life. Sexual selection, heredity, causation, individual temperament and social norms are the main categories of these laws. Man, who is born essentially free, has his freedom severely diminished by these factors which, from the time of his birth, or of his conception, help formulate not only the way he acts, but the way he thinks as well. Nevertheless, man still retains a sense of freedom of choice, if not of action, which is so confined as to have nearly become an illusion. This will be the theme of chapters to come.

In the following chapter I shall try to have a look at another aspect of Hardy's thought and see how it related to the world he lived in. The superstitious and fetishistic attitudes that show through the novels, short stories and other personal writings are rooted deeply in the Dorset soil, the soil of his Wessex where the population held queer views about Providence and God-man relationships.
NOTES


9. Quoted in Owen Chadwick, *The Secularisation of..."


18. Gilbert, op.cit., p. 57.

19. Chadwick, op.cit., p. 35.

20. J.S. Mill, Three Essays on Religion, cited in


22. Ibid., p. 256.


24. Ibid., p. 184.


30. Ibid.


33. Ibid., p. 219.

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35. Gilbert, op. cit., p. xi.
38. Ibid., p. 309.
39. Ibid., p. 15.
40. Ibid., p. 90.
41. Ibid., p. 69.
42. Ibid., p. 68.
43. Gilbert, op. cit., p. 47.
To understand Hardy's thought and work it is not enough to look into the intellectual background of the age in which he lived and by which he was deeply influenced. His productions show marks that cannot be attributed to nineteenth century science and philosophy but that go deeper in mind and time to the writer's childhood and youth in the Bockhampton cottage where he spent his impressive years. I shall not go as far as quoting psychological fatalists in saying that man is completely programmed from early childhood by his relationships with his family and immediate surroundings, but we cannot deny that Hardy did come under the great influence of a merry, easy-going, music-loving father and a strong-willed, domineering and superstitious mother. Hardy's biographers also reveal that the young Thomas Hardy's image of the world was greatly influenced by other relatives, the most outstanding of whom was Hardy's uncle by marriage, John Antell, who had queer and eccentric ideas about God and God-man relationships. Perhaps foremost among early life influences in Hardy's thought was the
atmosphere of the Dorset community, with its superstitions, primitive beliefs and rural practices, which left lasting impressions on his retentive memory and sensitive psychological make-up.

Thomas Hardy, senior, was a colourful character. In his youth he was known for his gaiety and love adventures. These adventures, coupled with his handsome face and blue eyes earned him the reputation of a womaniser. (1) In his married life, however, he was eclipsed by his strong-minded wife, Jemima, and could not assume the position of decision maker in the house. He was always welcome at local festivities and celebrations as a violin player and dancer. To these festivities his eldest son, Thomas, used to accompany him when his health conditions and his mother's orders permitted. The young Thomas "inherited" these two prominent traits, passivity and love of merriment and music, from his father. The elder Thomas Hardy's "unassertive character" was echoed in the boy's wish "not to grow up, to become a man and take on adult responsibilities." (2) Love of music accompanied Hardy all through his life. He cherished with love the memory of the evenings to which he went with his father for playing, singing and dancing. The indulgent description of these evenings and practices that took place
in them in the Preface to Under The Greenwood Tree, written in 1872, is an evident proof of the great emotional value music had to Hardy. Later, Hardy commiserated with his Michael Henchard in his loneliness on the heath after his downfall where he was deprived of even the heavenly consolation of music.[MC, 41, 299]

Deeper in Hardy's thought was the impression of the mother. Jemima was the dominant figure in the Hardy household. She dictated what was suitable and what was not for the Hardy children. She had great expectations and hopes especially for her eldest, Thomas. It is not surprising, Millgate observes, "that Hardy should once have declared that if he had lost his mother in early childhood his whole life would have been different."(3) Jemima had set the goals for young Thomas, and even though he resented it afterwards, he could not extricate himself from the network of the aspirations he had inherited from her.

More relevant to our discussion however, are Jemima's views of life that we find echoed in her son's thought as found in Life and other literary works. Millgate again sees that Jemima

had inherited in full measure the ancient pessimism of the rural poor, their perpetual imagination of disaster, and she kept it alive with a diet of
sensational tales ... . The devil played an active role in Jenima's morality and fate stood waiting with hand uplifted to knock down all human aspirations ...(4)

It is strange how this dark view is to be encountered everywhere in the novels. It fills the Durbeyfield household and is to be found with Susan Nunsuch on Eddon Heath. Most impressively representative of the trend, however, is Sue Bridhead in her lapse after the death of her children.

It may be most useful here to remember that Hardy had declared as his own his mother's attitude concerning man's freedom and chances of happiness:

Mother's notion, & also mine: That a figure stands in our van with an arm uplifted, to knock us back from any pleasant prospect we indulge in as probable.[Personal Notebooks, 6-7]

This figure in the van takes a host of different forms in the novels. Sometimes we find it represented among other forms in Natural Law; at others in senseless circumstances, fate and meaningless chances; at others still in the traits of one's own character and deep urges of the soul. In this light we can see "mother's notion" as an important key to understanding Hardy's thought and art. This understanding is perhaps at the root of the fatalistic pessimistic
interpretations Hardy's works have been subjected to. However, even what may be pessimism and fatalism did not prevent Jemima Hardy from attempts at forwarding her and her children's chances in life. This makes clear the attitude that even though everything may be predestined one should, nevertheless, do one's best to achieve happiness, in spite of the fact that there is little hope for one's efforts to succeed. This is human nature, after all, and this is the case of much of Hardy's fiction.

Another figure in Hardy's early life, who apparently had a part to play in forming his views and directing his thoughts, this time outside the immediate circle of Bockhampton, is his uncle, John Antell. Antell was not mentioned once in the Life, but both Robert Gittings and Michael Millgate in their biographies of Hardy dwell on the curious relationship that tied Hardy with this peculiar Puddletown cobbler relative of his. Gittings informs us that Hardy lived with the Anteils in his boyhood and was deeply attached to them and that his aunt Mary (John's wife) took great care of him with sympathy. John Antell was a cobbler of too high aspirations. He taught himself Greek and Latin and science with a view to a higher education but his queer habits, drunkenness and extreme temper were
hindrances he could never overcome. Hardy's epitaph for
Antell in 1878 bears witness to the great admiration the
author had to his deceased relative. He describes him as a

man of considerable local reputation as a self-made
scholar, having acquired a varied knowledge of
languages, literature and science by unaided study,
& in the face of many untoward circumstances."(6)

Antell may have seemed a model for the young Thomas Hardy,
and certainly for one of his most attracting and
sympathetically drawn characters, Jude Fawley. In the back
room of Antell's shop in High Street, Puddletown, Millgate
tells us, Hardy "listened to many tirades on the fundamental
injustice of man's fate, ..."(7) Antell's anger against the
world and its Creator is typical of the bitterness that
tinges not only Hardy's novels but his personal writings as
well.

Hardy's deep and thorough-going interest in Dorset
folkways, beliefs and practices is illustrated everywhere in
his novels, stories and even personal writings and
acknowledged by his critics and biographers. What interests
us here is not the fact that references to Wessex
superstitions were used by Hardy artistically to give a folk
flavour to his novels, nor is it Hardy's conscious role as a
recorder of a disappearing rural way of life, dear to his
heart (important as these two aspects may be); but it is the influence these superstitions and beliefs had in Hardy's thought. In the Preface to *Far from the Madding Crowd* in 1874, we see Hardy contemplating the going of such practices as the divination by Bible and key. He sees that

The change at the root of this has been the recent supplanting of the class of stationary cottagers, who carried on the local traditions and humours, by a population of more or less migratory labourers, which has led to a break of continuity in local history, more fatal than any other thing to the preservation of legend, folk-lore, close inter-social relations, and eccentric individualities. [FFMC, "Preface", 40]

In the "General Preface" Hardy shows his keen awareness of the role of the historian he was playing and assures us:

... I have instituted inquiries to correct tricks of memory, and striven against temptations to exaggerate, in order to preserve for my own satisfaction a fairly true record of a vanishing life. [J0, 422]

Furthermore, Hardy's deep interest in Wessex folkways is underlined in his letter to Edward Clodd dated April 1, 1894. Hardy categorically puts his case:

I may say, once for all, that every superstition, custom, & c. described in my novels may be depended on as true records of the same (whatever merit in folklorists eyes they may have as such) - & not inventions of mine. [Letters, II, 54]

At first sight it may seem strange to say that Hardy, who
was immersed in the scientific and intellectual trends of the second half of the nineteenth century, as we have seen in preceding chapters, should have harboured primitive thoughts derived from childhood experiences with local superstitions. However, I will try to maintain through what follows that Wessex folkways did play a greater role in Hardy's work than merely providing a rural back cloth for the action of his fiction. I will try to show how these beliefs lingered in Hardy's mind and mingled with the more recent influences of nineteenth century science and thought to produce a curious composite view of the universe and man's position in it.

To begin with, we should keep in mind Hardy's deep admiration of Dorset folk which was displayed in his resentment at attempts by town gentility to figure rustics as a lump lacking any form of individuality. This is made explicitly clear in several places in the novels but given due expression in Hardy's essay "The Dorsetshire Labourer", written in 1883. There, Hardy asserts that Wessex peasants have unique individualities as much as members of a London club and that they are not copies of each other as supposed. [Personal Writings, 168-90] This great admiration extended not only to individuals and persons of the county
but to the way of life, language and even to the beliefs spread in the community. Carl Weber notices that in Hardy's early years Hardy "learned to listen attentively to and look understandingly upon, the Dorset rustics. Their speech, gait, habits and ideas became ... firmly fixed in his retentive memory."(8) This fact was, furthermore, dwelt upon by Ruth Firor in her assertion that Hardy "was influenced, not only by the physiognomy of Wessex and a familiarity with Wessex peasant life in its more evident, external features, but also as a profound spiritual sympathy with the land and the people."(9) Hardy's artistic use of Wessex folkways has become a commonplace of Hardy criticism. However, the influence of these ways in Hardy's thought is still largely to be probed.

In an entry dated December 18, 1890, Hardy wrote,

"Mr E. Clodd this morning gives an excellently neat answer to my question why the superstitions of a remote Asiatic and a Dorset labourer are the same: "The attitude of man," he says, "at corresponding levels of culture, before like phenomena, is pretty much the same, your Dorset peasants representing the persistence of the barbaric idea which confuses persons and things, and founds wide generalizations at the slenderest analogies.""

(This "barbaric idea which confuses persons and things" is, by the way, also common to the highest imaginative genius - that of the poet.)[Life, 230]
Hardy has thus projected the narrow Dorset superstition on the widest human scale. To Clodd and Hardy, the basis of superstition is a persistence, that is, a survivor from the barbaric view of life. Judging from evolution we are apt to deduce the fitness of the surviving idea and its viability in face of other extinct ideas. However, in spite of the fact that Hardy showed his admiration for Mr Clodd's "excellently neat answer" to the question of superstition we find him modifying Clodd's statement seriously. Clodd is quoted referring to men "at corresponding levels of culture", in this case, labourers of Dorset and remote Asiatic regions while Hardy insists on carrying the trait to "the highest imaginative genius - that of the poet." This should certainly be seen as an apology for what Hardy saw in common between his view of life and that of the Dorset community.

This study will not attempt a full and profound survey and study of Wessex folk influences in Hardy's thought, as this mainly lies outside its scope; but admitting the importance of Hardy's early and influential contacts with rustic life, and the role these contacts played in his fiction later on, it is deemed necessary to have a bird's eye view of how these influences feature in his work and the
role they played in forming his thought concerning man and his place in the universe.

It is curious how omens in Hardy's novels always tend to be realised. Folk belief attached certain phenomena and occurrences without any apparent reasonable link with either good or bad luck. Needless to say almost all omens in Hardy's fiction were linked with disasters and misery. Nevertheless, there are a few good luck omens heralding good news, like the swarming of bees on Dick Dewey's wedding day in *Under the Greenwood Tree* [UGT, V, 1] and the good-luck-bringer caul in *The Return of the Native*. [RN, V, 7] On the opposite side we see many of Hardy's tragic outcomes foretold by omens which the rustics see and interpret beforehand. Around the time Bathsheba's and Troy's wedding is taking place her maid Maryann breaks a key which is an extremely bad omen foreboding failure and disappointment, which is sure to plague the couple. [FFMC, 33] Likewise, Tess's leaving Talbothays with her bridegroom on that fateful afternoon is orchestrated by the three ominous crows of the cock. Most of the dairy folk feel sure misery was imminent. Sure enough Retty tries to drown herself and Marian drinks herself into a stupor; but these are only peripheral misfortunes compared to what is going to
happen to the bride and groom. [TD, 33]

Divining future events by certain primitive methods or by some kind of magic was also a common practice in Hardy's fiction. Surprisingly enough, these divinations also tend to prove true. A classic example is the midsummer night dance in Hintock. The Hintock maidens take part in this ritual in the hope of getting a glimpse of their future partners in matrimony. Grace, who participates in the dance, can only fall in the hands of Fitzpiers in spite of efforts on the part of Marty and Grammer Oliver to promote Giles' chances. [WL, 20]

Henchard's greatest financial misfortune could be referred to his not acting by the weather prophet's advice. Conjurer Fall is a powerful magician who anticipates Henchard's coming to see him despite that nobody besides Henchard himself knows of the secret errand. [HC, 26] His prophecy about the weather, Henchard learns at dear cost, comes to be true.

Conjuror Fall recalls the other renowned conjuror in Hardy's work, Trendle, who, we are assured, "was no fictitious personage, but had a veritable existence." (10) Trendle looms large in Hardy's story "The Withered Arm". The story, according to Hardy himself, was taken from real life events. [WT, "Preface", 10] Black magic features highly
in "The Withered Arm" and in other Hardy novels, most notable of which is *The Return of the Native*. Eustacia is accused of witchcraft, but witchcraft is used against her with apparent tragic results. The melting of Eustacia's wax figure by Susan Nunsuch coincides in time exactly with Eustacia's tragic flight on the heath on that most terrible of nights. [RN, V, 9]

Very many of Hardy's characters harbour strange fetishistic ideas attaching animate life to inanimate matter. Old South's imaginary dread of the tree as his enemy and oppressor is tragically realised when the tree is felled according to the unwise recommendation of Dr Fitzpiers. [WL, 14] The boy Jude's care for trees and shrubs thinking they could be hurt [JO, 2] is exemplary of other characters' and of Hardy's in particular. Egdon Heath's curious power over the lives of the inhabitants is perhaps the extreme in fetishism in Hardy's world. Almost human characteristics of will and scheming are attributed to the wild stretch of land not only by the persons of *The Return of the Native* but, especially in the opening chapter, by the writer himself. [RN, I, 1] In an entry on May 30, 1877 Hardy declares, "I sometimes look upon all things in inanimate nature as pensive mutes." [Life, 114] This spirit is, no
doubt, to be encountered frequently in Hardy's novels and other literary works. As a matter of fact, so much of nature in Hardy is personified invoking ancient pagan fetishistic attitudes that it sometimes tend to obscure the writer's affiliation with contemporary science and philosophy.

More important as an indicator of Hardy's deep sympathy with and fascination by folk belief are references to superstitions in his personal writings. This finds illustration in the *Life*. Hardy makes a point of recording such trivial incidents that we are entitled to deduce his serious belief in them. The premonitory dream of an architect's that the tower he had built had a fissure in it [*Life*, 46] is such an example. Another is the versified prophecy of a mute woman who suddenly spoke uttering two lines of verse foretelling what proved to be incidents in the French Revolution, dropping dead directly afterwards.[126] Still another example is the prophecy of a conjuror coming true of the death of a certain man.[169] A curious story about the influence of the "evil eye" where a farmer was "over-looked" by himself is reported in an entry dated February, 5, 1888.[204-5] Perhaps the most interesting instance is the detailed record in the *Life* of when Hardy's
dog, Wessex, (dogs being considered excellent ghost seers) "prophesied" the death of one of Hardy's friends.[427-8] These instances make it clear that Hardy was dealing with these omens and divinations more seriously than if they were mere props for action in his stories.

A point that should be made here, is, however, that action in Hardy's novels does not generally turn around magic, divinations and omens, nor is it brought about by them, but is really caused. Tragedies have their seeds in precedent incidents and in characters themselves. The case is probably that Hardy subconsciously or unconsciously had confidence in the powers of black magic and witchcraft to affect the lives of men, a confidence which apparently clashed with Hardy's professed belief in science and scientific laws he deemed to be in control of the universe. This may be accounted for in Hardy's notion of "non-rationalism" which he perceived as "the principle of the universe."[Life, 309] This was Hardy's comment on the meaninglessness of life and the world as he saw them. Moreover, this may help in accounting for the intensely vivid and numerous personifications that were the objects of severe attacks from critics and wherein Hardy was speaking of what he believed of the power behind the universe.

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Hardy's composite attitude may be seen as a conciliation or a compounding of science and magic. As Ruth Firor observes, there are many meeting points between science and magic. Both, for example, exclude from their views of the world, a personal power that may be conciliated and both depend on causation seeing natural laws operating through the world. (11) From this stance we can see Hardy's novels as embodying this view of the universe made up of scientific findings and local traditions.

Hardy's personal beliefs, however, are not our immediate concern here. Whether or not he was a superstitious person at heart is a question that can never perhaps be settled. What matters for the purpose of this study is the persistent and lively recurrence of superstitions and folkways in his art works. Hardy's story teller narrator solves this problem for us. This persona of the narrator (or perhaps of the author as well) was preoccupied by tales of the strange and grotesque and we can refer to him the bizarre episodes and events in the novels that were mainly derived from the Wessex soil and were used to astonish and capture the interest of the audience. The improbabilities this involved and its antagonism to the rational and scientific view of the universe maintained
elsewhere in the novels fitted in perfectly with Hardy's known views on art and fiction writing.

It is evident from the beginning that the Wessex peasantry, as portrayed by Hardy, had the merest nominal relationships with Christianity. Wilkinson Sherren observes that the Wessex peasant "superstitions [are] eloquent of an inbred paganism which the Christian ages have not eradicated."(12) Ruth Firer also observes that "The English peasant is a bit of a heathen at heart. ... The rustic was prone to believe that God might be omnipotent and omniscient according to the service, but not in daily life. ... Nor was Providence always viewed as a beneficent power."(13) Jeanette King endorses this when she says that: "The Christianity which the community professes is a mere veneer for a more deeply-rooted paganism."(14) What the rustics, in fact, saw as controlling the universe was no supreme Will but only "tremendous, inexplicable forces."(15) It may seem difficult to reconcile this view with what Harvey Curtis Webster noticed, that the Wessex peasants held beliefs in a power malignant and capricious,(16) but it should be remembered that this can be understood as representing the emotional state of frustration rather than the cool thinking and observation of everyday life. Frustrated and
disappointed at the hands of what they, at other time saw as natural forces, the peasants would tend to dress the power behind the universe with human gowns of caprice and antipathy. This may also be taken to be the attitude of many a character in Hardy's novels, and arguably the novelist himself. In countless places in the novels we see the characters jumping to blame Fate, Heaven, God or Providence for misfortunes that befall them. In this they are most of the times supported by the author. The Life, moreover, abounds with attacks on the blunders of Nature, the Will, the First Cause or simply, God, that cannot be understood rhetorically but with difficulty, and that in the light of Hardy's explicit denial of his belief in the existence of God, can be understood as attacks on a necessarily conscious (since it takes consciousness to blunder and receive responsibility) power behind the universe. This ultimately amounted to something of the fatalistic spirit of "It was to be"[TD, 11, 101] and the resignation typical for example of Mrs Durbeyfield: "'Tis nater, after all, and what do please God!"[TD, 12, 111] Representing this attitude in Wessex peasantry is also Henery Fray's comment that

Your lot is your lot, and Scripture is nothing; for if you do good you don't get rewarded according to your works, but be cheated in some mean way out of
Acting on this fatalistic surrender to events we see Bathsheba's workmen, for example, refraining from telling her that Troy was in the village before the fateful encounter at Boldwood's mansion.[FFMC, 52] Michael Hillgate sensibly observes that Hardy's fundamental beliefs, ..., appear to have differed little from the instinctive, inherited fatalism of a Tess Durbeyfield - or of a Jemima Hardy - and, as sophisticated by exposure to Marcus Aurelius, they found little difficulty in accommodating themselves to the prevailing pessimism of the post-Darwinian intellectual world into which he emerged in early manhood.(17)

It is obvious then, that rather than shaking off the fatalistic beliefs of the Dorset community that impregnated his mind, Hardy incorporated these beliefs in what he understood from contemporary science and philosophy to be the picture of the world. In this picture man can be seen as a helpless, but worthy, creature at the hands of supreme powers with no view whatsoever to his welfare and happiness. What made the situation still worse was man's keen consciousness of the quagmire he was in and the extreme pain and suffering that this brought in its train. The fatalistic logic of "it was to be" teaches that there is nothing, or little, man can do but wait and watch events
unfolding. Both man's freedom and responsibility become almost alien conceptions to the rural fatalistic ideals.

In brief, we may safely conclude that Hardy's experiences as a boy and a youth in Dorset left lasting impressions in his mind and art. This is the conclusion arrived at by Sherren when he observes that "Mr. Hardy has remained true to his art instincts with marked fidelity to the land of Wessex."(18) Local superstitions and views of God and the universe were greatly influential in moulding his beliefs. The local view of natural laws and forces which Hardy must have embraced as a youth almost coincided with what he understood of scientific theories he came to admire later; and the frustrated view of a malignant power behind affairs in life that was spread in the Dorset community and could have been at the root of the pessimism that was displayed in his writings was fitted in with that perception. This certainly helps explain the resignation that characterises many of Hardy's persons when matters come to crucial turnings in their lives.
NOTES


3. *Ibid*.


15. Firor, op. cit., p. 305.


"THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE"

The lamentation for the loss of the "zest for existence" of ancient civilisations which resulted from the discovery of the quandary man is in runs all through The Return of the Native. The "view of life as a thing to be put up with" [III, 1, 185] is not uniquely Clym Yeobright's disease. The whole novel can be seen as an illustration of this malady which is eating into the highest species of animals, man. In an idealistic dream world man loved to think of himself as a free creature: free to choose, free to act, and free to live his life the way he liked. That was, also, how man used to think when he was under the illusion that he was a special creature of a loving God to whom he was directly and personally responsible. But all that began to shake with the advances man was making in knowledge: knowledge of himself, his history and his surroundings.

At the root of the new dark outlook was firstly the painful weaning man had to undergo from the loving all-powerful cosmic force he thought was supporting him,
and, then, the crushing feeling of helplessness against newly discovered senseless laws that were found to control his life. The "defective" natural laws fell short of the view of the orderly universe civilised man had in mind. The bitter struggle for survival that was found to permeate life shocked the "more thinking among mankind"[I, 1, 34] in the post-Darwinian world. Brutality and ensuing pain dominated life in all its degrees of complexity. The Return of the Native gives a sample of the "pain" in the world of nature (1) which is strongly suggestive of the pain of the struggle elsewhere, namely in the world of man. In the new post-Darwinian view man felt he had lost greatly in dignity and significance. After the glory man had enjoyed in past views, theological and otherwise, it had become possible to think of "the arena of life" and "the sense of bare equality with, and no superiority to, a single living things under the sun."[III, 5, 222] With the narrator of The Return of the Native we go as far as seeing Clym (man) as of "no more account in life than an insect."[IV, 5, 285] However, pain and the sense of tragedy grows with the growth of consciousness. Man suffers most because of his uniquely sentient position in the universe. By a most fatal blunder (2) on the part of nature, man was endowed with unique consciousness which was not (yet) matched by the state of
the universe. This was a painful divergence between the insentient universe and the sentient man, who, for all his worth, dignity and potentiality for suffering, was in the grip of mechanical laws and forces which, while preserving the image of freedom for him, really controlled his actions and his fate in a subtle manner.

This "new consciousness" will, according to The Return of the Native, not only bring about a departure in the view of life, man and his relations with his surroundings and aesthetic ideals but will result in a shake-up in the psychological structure of man culminating in man even acquiring "new" facial features and expressions. The old standards of beauty of the bright and the joyful common in earlier civilisations were giving way to new standards in harmony with the sombreness of the moods of the new consciousness.

The novel painfully draws the limits of human freedom and responsibility. It abounds with references to natural and supernatural powers that are seen to control man's actions and fate. Nature, Heaven, Chance, providence, God, the gods, the Supreme Power, fate, the Prince of the World and the First Cause are all names of agents that are held responsible for man's tragedy, sometimes by the characters
and sometimes by the narrator himself.

I shall try to approach the problem of freedom and responsibility in the novel through three channels: Characters' attitudes; explicit authorial comments; and actual workings of the plot, the author's selective representation of everyday life events.

All major characters at one stage or another in the novel make known their conviction that God and fate, among other forces, are responsible for their misfortunes. Their attitudes towards this, however, differ from one character to another. Some choose the way of mutiny and rejection and others prefer the silent submissive way. The rebels who lament their helplessness against the tyrannical Supreme Power, it is noticed, are utterly destroyed at the end of the day; while the tolerant and long suffering who resignedly accept their lot go on to lead a subdued sad life.

It is characteristic of the fatalistic mood to throw all responsibility on the shoulders of an external power, God or Fate. This was what Gloucester, for example, did on the self same heath of Egdon. Hardy in his "Preface" to Tess of the D'Urbervilles quotes Gloucester from King Lear.
to show that it had been the custom with the inhabitants of the Wessex region from olden times to protest in this manner in the face of divine injustice,

As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods;

They kill us for their sport. IV, i, 38-9 [TD, 28]

This finds ample echo in Mrs Yeobright's cry in Eustacia's face in their quarrel on the heath, "God has been unjust to me in letting you insult me."[IV, 1, 256]

Consoling his beloved, Eustacia, in her misery, Wildeve (who has Thomasin for a wife but still sticks to his hope to win Eustacia back and never quits his attempts in that direction) more than once accuses the fates of cruelty against her. She, in her turn, feels she has "nothing to thank them for."[IV, 6, 289] Her resentment, furthermore, shows in her admission of defeat in the game she sees as going on between God and herself, "0! God ... You have beaten me in this game - I beg you to stay your hand in pity."[V, 3, 334] On another occasion she protests poignantly,

How I have tried and tried to be a splendid woman, and how destiny has been against me! ... I do not deserve my lot! ... 0, the cruelty of putting me into this ill-conceived world! I was capable of much; but I have been injured and blighted and crushed by things beyond my control! 0, how hard it
is of Heaven to devise such tortures for me, who have done no harm to Heaven at all! [V, 7, 357]

Eustacia's feeling is in essence the same as Henchard's superstitious belief that a mysterious power was chasing him. Destruction proves to be the doom of the protesters at the end. The stubbornness of the strong-willed, "those with strong feelings and unusual characters" (3), in the words of Lawrence, in their mutiny and in their attempts to have their own way with life, brings them disaster. Eustacia and Wildeve, with whom the symbol of Promethean fire is linked from the beginning meet the "wrath of the gods", as Prometheus did in the Aeschylean tragedy. The storm on Egdon surely recalls that other terrible storm which Prometheus faced where

... all the winds' blasts
dance in a fury one against the other
in violent confusion: earth and sea
are one, confused together: such is the storm

that comes against me manifestly from Zeus
to work its terrors. 11. 1084-9. (4)
On the other hand, the moderate and the submissive among the characters should not be thought to be ignorant of the quandary they are in. They know the reality of their situation but they have realised the futility of resistance and given up vain protests. While acknowledging that the fiasco of her and Wildeve's first marriage attempt "was nobody's fault"[I, 5, 66] - which is perhaps another way of saying it was fate's - Thomasin resignedly accepts her lot. Not a word of protest passes her lips against her husband's infidelity or death, for example. In his announcement of renunciation, Clym expresses his belief that "the gods and fate" are responsible for his misery. But all the same, he lets it be known he will not revolt against them in the "high Promethean fashion" of his wife.[IV, 2, 265] Moreover, we are told Clym "did sometimes think he had been ill-used by fortune".[IV, 1, 382] At the end, by what looks like a mixture of miracle and knowledge of the heath, Clym and Thomasin are saved from the dangers of the apocalyptic storm night on the heath to pursue their realistic careers.

It may seem strange to notice how the opinions of most of the characters converge in considering God or Fate as an essentially capricious anti-human power. We have seen how Mrs Yeobright and Wildeve, for two, explicitly attached
injustice and cruelty to God and the Fates. It is in Eustacia's mind, however, that the most bitter thoughts against God are to be found. Taking the young embittered woman as authority, God would seem a vengeful personage bent upon thwarting people's aspirations and destroying their dreams. Eustacia sees God as an all-powerful opponent who, unprovoked and with great bitter irony, goes about subduing and destroying his human rivals with what is shown as resembling sadistic pleasure, more of an anti-Providence than anything else.

This anti-Providence brings back to mind characteristics and traits of Greek deities with their anti-human tendencies. Persistent references in the novel to Promethean rebelliousness and resistance enhance this impression. The Christian God is but the nominal divinity of the piece. What is perceived to be presiding over the universe from characters' protests and (as we shall see) from authorial comments is some kind of power with Greek deity characteristics of cruelty and whimsicality (5) rather than with Christian God ideals of love, care and justice.
This image is, moreover, more in line with the view of "Wessex" lore that, as we have seen, played a great part in moulding Hardy's thought in his impressive years; and whose view of Providence as arbitrary and whimsical was mostly non-Christian in essence.

Three different and somewhat contradictory authorial attitudes emerge from a close reading of the narrator's intrusions in the novel. Firstly, we see the author standing by his characters, defending them against the tyranny of the Supreme Power, absolving men of responsibility, picturing them as sport things for a capricious Heaven that distributes favours and contumely not on any particularly moral or logical basis. At the hand of such a capricious, captious anti-Providence man endures a slighting "alternation of caresses and blows."[I, 7, 89] Commenting on an ironic situation, we hear the voice of the narrator loud and clear, "... Providence is nothing if not coquettish."[II, 3, 138] Whatever term is used for the power behind the universe may be understood figuratively. Hardy's announced disbelief in any divine supernatural power does not need restatement. To him, "Heaven", for example is nothing but a "convergence of natural laws."[I, 7, 91] In this light we ought to read his comment on responsibility
for the woes of men,

Human beings, in their generous endeavour to construct a hypothesis that shall not degrade a First Cause, have always hesitated to conceive a dominant power of lower moral quality than their own; and, even while they sit down and weep by the waters of Babylon, invent excuses for the oppression which prompts their tears.[VI, 1, 382]

The main protest here is probably against those dreamers of men who bear their woes with a feeling of inferiority to a supposedly morally higher divine power. The statement, moreover, is an explicit indictment of some form of oppressive (therefore conscious) First Cause.

Hardy's First Cause is something of an enigma. Whether it acts really consciously and bears responsibility, or is just a haphazard convergence of natural laws has been an open question which has occupied Hardy scholars and students ever since the publication of the novels. A discussion of this question will be attempted later, but the concern now is with delineating the narrator's other attitudes in the novel towards responsibility.

It may seem difficult to reconcile the view of an immoral responsible First Cause with Hardy's rebuke of Eustacia's escapism and defeatism. When we hear the narrator's censure of Eustacia laying the blame on some...
"colossal Prince of the World"[IV, 8, 304] forgetting her share of responsibility, we have the right to question the novel's consistency in distributing shares of responsibility.

A direct comment (albeit precedent to the one referring to the Prince of the World) divides blame equally between accident and indiscretion in the case of Eustacia:

The gloomy corner into which accident as much as indiscretion had brought this woman might have led even a moderate partisan to feel that she had cogent reasons for asking the Supreme Power by what right a being of such exquisite finish had been placed in circumstances calculated to make of her charms a curse rather than a blessing.[IV, 3, 267-8]

A close reading of this protest, nevertheless, reveals so deep a feeling of compassion with the victim that amounts to an indictment of the cruel irony of the "calculation" of the Supreme Power - Anti Providence to subdue an innocent, though indiscreet, creature through what seemed her blessing. Her charms are turned into a vulnerability rather than a credit.

A composite attitude we are likely to come up with may be that although the narrator condemns petty shortcomings in his characters he tends to sympathise with them and partially acquit them of responsibility. Obviously the
characters' failures to deal satisfactorily with reality are not ignored and their attempts at evading responsibility are laid bare, but it is made clear that in no way are they to be held completely responsible. More often than not they are shown to be "more sinned against than sinning."

Hardy's characters are perhaps free mainly because they have the sense of freedom and the feeling that they are taking decisions against adverse circumstances. In this light, we can see Hardy as a necessitarian and a compatibilist in the sense J.S. Mill and George Eliot were. (6) This version of necessitarianism would assert that even though every effect has a cause and man's character and actions are caused man is not under compulsion. Cause and compulsion are not the same thing. This leads to the logical conclusion that man is responsible for his actions as long as he feels he is taking his decisions freely. Hardy's people's decisions seem to be freely taken, and thus they are morally responsible. They are morally responsible in as much as their characters are free and their decisions are not taken under compulsion by external and/or uncontrollable agents. To explain this intricate network of responsibility I shall try here to have a close look at three central episodes in the novel: that of the failure of
Thomasin's and Wildeve's first marriage attempt; that of Mrs Yeobright's sending the ill-omened guineas to Clym and Thomasin and the ensuing misunderstandings between herself and Eustacia, ultimately leading to Mrs Yeobright's ill-fated visit and death; and that of Clym's letter to Eustacia on the fateful night towards the end of the novel.

The novel opens with a curious scene. A young woman, Thomasin, who is supposed to be coming back from her wedding ceremony, is sleeping her tired way back in a redleman's van. By and by we learn that there has been a mistake in the marriage licence which rendered the completion of the marriage ceremony on that day impossible. This is one of the pregnant mishaps that beget many misfortunes: the wedding is delayed indefinitely and Wildeve's romance with Eustacia is rekindled and everything is messed up in a series of misunderstandings and secret schemes. The first impression one is likely to get from this coincides with what the bride - victim asserts, "It was nobody's fault". In this sense we can see the whole episode either as an unhappy coincidence or, if we are inclined to include a malign supernatural power in our consideration of the world, a joke from an ironic fate. A deeper reading of the situation reveals serious below-the-surface complications.
The couple's first attempt at getting married a year before was thwarted by Thomasin's aunt who forbade the banns, whereupon her fiance, Wildeve, became involved in a passionate but curiously swinging love affair with a fiery passionate beauty of outlandish origin, Eustacia, who eventually tires him with her coquetry. It is thereafter in a fit of love-tiredness that he decides and attempts carrying out the marriage with Thomasin. Although apparently perfectly sincere in his attempt, Wildeve has been held responsible for the invalid licence and the abortive wedding. Derwent May hints at Wildeve's muddle over the marriage licence arising from subconscious desires and doubts. [RN, "Introduction", 21] "Coincidences" are sometimes not coincidences at all. We cause them. It so often happens that we unconsciously cause coincidences to happen because we deeply and unconsciously want them to happen. [7] In a moderate compromise, J.I.M. Stewart refers responsibility to both bad luck and unconscious urges. [8] In neither explanation, however, - pure bad luck or unconscious motives - can Wildeve be held totally responsible for the failure. A key question to be asked here is whether Wildeve could have done otherwise. Taking the nature of unconscious, therefore irresistible, drives into consideration one can deny Wildeve's responsibility, legal...
as well as moral. Unconscious drives tend to constrain greatly human freedom of choice. This unhappy incident causes great complication in the plot later on with tragic consequences.

An even more unhappy series of coincidences with more tragic results are deployed in the episode of Clym's and Thomasin's guineas. On the night of the wedding of Clym and Eustacia, Mrs Yeobright thinks of sending the legacy of one hundred guineas to Clym and Thomasin. The money is to be divided equally between the two. Mrs Yeobright entrusts Christian Cantle with this assignment. Instead of setting about doing his job directly, he is lured to try his luck at raffles. Tempted by his win there, he gambles with Wildeve and loses to him all Mrs Yeobright's money. Broken-hearted, he tells Wildeve the truth about the guineas. Reddleman Venn, who is eavesdropping, hears only half of the truth; and thinking all the money belongs to Thomasin, appears after Cantle's departure, gambles with Wildeve and wins back all the money. Naturally, Wildeve and Christian, guilt-ridden, keep the whole affair in the dark and Venn delivers the whole sum to his former sweetheart. Receiving a note of thanks from her niece and nothing from her son, Mrs Yeobright decides to enquire into the case. At that
time, Mrs Yeobright has arrived at a decision to make it up with her son and daughter-in-law and is about to pay them a visit. Before embarking on this, however, she asks Christian what he has exactly done with the money. She learns from him the half truth that he has lost the money to Wildeve; and coupling this with what she already knows of the past affair between Wildeve and her daughter-in-law deduces that Wildeve must have given the fifty guineas to Eustacia without Clym's knowledge. This prompts her to go about her intended visit but with a different spirit now. Her bitter encounter with Eustacia on the heath includes exchanged accusations and deepens the misunderstanding. Later on, and in spite of the deep misunderstanding Mrs Yeobright decides to make a move towards reconciliation. Her visit across the heath is in extremely oppressive hot weather which exhausts her. She sees the figure of a furze-cutter, her son, ahead of her, entering his house. Clym, exhausted from his hard work on the heath, falls deeply asleep almost instantly. By a strange coincidence Wildeve is paying his ex-sweetheart a secret visit. So it is a great embarrassment to Eustacia when she knows her mother-in-law is at the door. The visitor sees Eustacia's face at the window pane. Hearing Clym shouting "mother" in his sleep, and thinking he will answer his mother's knock,
Eustacia does not answer the door. Away goes Mrs Yeobright broken-hearted and indignant. On her journey back, she meets the boy Johnny Nunsuch whom she tells the story of her suffering. She is stung by an adder and is later found dying by her son who, in his turn, has decided to pay her a conciliatory visit. Mrs Yeobright's death is a great shock to her son who receives contradictory reports about her feelings towards him before her death from the redleman and from Johnny Nunsuch. He comes to know the whole truth about his mother's death for which he holds his wife responsible. This leads to a deep schism between the couple after which Eustacia leaves the house for her grandfather's.

Now where does responsibility lie in this tragedy?

Evidently, Mrs Yeobright's choice of the apparently unreliable Christian Cantle to do the job of delivering the guineas to Clym and Thomasin can be considered an error of judgement. However, in defence of the poor matron it should be said that her intention is to express good will towards her estranged son and his wife. Furthermore, the job she assigns to Christian is not in principle a hard job involving delicate judgement and acute mental awareness. No moderate observer can say she could have envisaged under any probability the outcome of her choice. Christian's
unexpected meeting with the raffle team provides the first clandestine turning along the way to tragedy. His ironic winning at the raffle can be considered the second. However, he can be considered completely responsible for his gambling with other people's money, in as much as someone like Christian Cantle can be held responsible. It is too easy here again to speak of Mrs Yeobright's initial responsibility, but again it should be remembered that the situation is unforeseeable. We cannot ask Mrs Yeobright to be able to predict the outcome of her choice, it is clearly outside human ability to look into the future. And this, again, is a rigorous restraint on man's freedom. The situation has arisen from completely unexpected accidental encounters and incidents. "Fate" is given another chance to put matters right by the appearance of the "providential" reddleman who wins back the guineas. Unfortunately, however, "Providence" is defective - Venn learns only half the truth and only half justice is done, and all the money goes to Thomasin with fatal results. Mrs Yeobright's meeting with Eustacia on the heath is the expression of mutual bitterness and the vent of the two women's anger; otherwise, it is inconsequential as far as the outcome of the tragedy is concerned. A long series of improbable happenings, then, turns Mrs Yeobright's visit to her son's
cottage from the intended course of conciliation and good will. But for Wildeve's ill-timed visit to Eustacia everything could have changed. But for Clym's murmur during his sleep Eustacia might have managed to open the door, and this she was apparently willing to do. But for Mrs Yeobright's seeing Eustacia's face at the window, she might have felt less bitter. But for the old woman accidentally meeting the boy Nunsuch, her resentment towards her son and his wife's part in the tragedy would not have become known to Clym. It is again too easy here to hold Wildeve and Eustacia responsible for Mrs Yeobright's death considering the guilty secret visit Wildeve was paying Eustacia, but it should be kept in mind that neither Eustacia nor Wildeve could have foreseen the issue of the situation. The situation was very subtly out of their hands. We can consider the lovers responsible for unwise, ill or immoral conduct or for breaching established codes of matrimonial loyalty, but not for Mrs Yeobright's death. However, if Eustacia and Wildeve are not directly responsible for Mrs Yeobright's death they hold indirect responsibility mainly because they have committed a major breach against the norms and traditions of the community they are living in, thus causing a dangerous situation to arise affecting them and those who are around them.
In spite of his stress on characters' responsibility in 
*The Return of the Native* Ian Gregor agrees that the episode of Mrs Yeobright's death is tragic and gives the impression of Fate and malevolent universe, and goes on to say,

The central moment in the scene occurs below the level of wakeful consciousness -- when Clym, dimly roused by the knock on the door, stirs in his sleep and murmurs, "mother". Eustacia hears this murmur, concludes he is awake and will answer the knock on the door. It is from her misinterpretation and her failure to check on her impression that the tragedy arises.(9)

The situation is so delicate and involves such fine shades of responsibility that it is impossible to give a final verdict easily. Interpreters who hold Wildeve and Eustacia responsible are justified (but only partly): Eustacia should have behaved differently. But could she? It cannot be ignored that Eustacia is firstly embarrassed by her mother-in-law's visit, displaying a sense of guilt, and, therefore, a live conscience. Secondly, she would have, I presume, promptly opened the door had it not been for Wildeve's ill-timed visit. Thirdly, I feel strongly that had she not heard Clym murmuring in his sleep calling his mother, and sincerely believing he would open the door himself, she could have managed, or tried hard at least, to open it herself. We cannot realistically, I feel, ask Eustacia to check on her impression or we would be asking...
her not to be herself or we would be forgetting the tense nature of the situation. Only critical hindsight could ask Eustacia to check on her impression. She does not have the intention to turn the poor mother away. In this sense, she, along with Mrs Yeobright, is a victim of circumstance.

Happenings in this isolated sense, do not, nevertheless, warrant the conclusion that a malign power is working to fulfil a predestined end, as many have seen. A discussion of this issue, however, will have to consider a more comprehensive view of events, motives and characters. This will be attempted later.

The episode of Clym's letter to Eustacia on the night of her disastrous flight throws more light on the subject. After the quarrel between Clym and Eustacia following Mrs Yeobright's death, Eustacia leaves for her grandfather's house. News spreads of Wildeve inheriting a large sum of money from a wealthy relative. In her great distress Eustacia reaches an agreement with Wildeve to fly away with him to Paris, fulfilling Eustacia's old dream. However, expecting some conciliatory move from her husband, Eustacia leaves her final decision hanging and asks Wildeve to wait for a signal from her. Clym, in his turn, is waiting for Eustacia to make the first move. However, when this move
does not come he takes the initiative of writing himself. His messenger, Fairway, however, does not act promptly enough. The letter reaches Captain Vye's house after Eustacia has supposedly retired to bed. The grandfather, not knowing the critical urgency of the missive and thinking his granddaughter is asleep, leaves the letter on the mantlepiece for her to read in the morning. Completely unaware of the letter, and with a sense of bitterness, Eustacia goes on with her plan and goes out to meet Wildeve. In the meantime, Susan Nunsuch is shown melting a wax figure of Eustacia stuffed with needles repeating the Lord's prayer backwards. In the violent storm that is roaring outside, the meeting between Wildeve and Eustacia does not take place. After a series of curious encounters on the heath we have Wildeve and Clym standing near the weir where they hear the fall of a body in the water. Wildeve's rash attempt to save Eustacia's life ends with the death of both. Clym's more reasonable, but still not fully so, attempt is also a failure and nearly ends with his death too. It is Venn's plan that saves Clym's life and recovers the bodies of the two fugitives.
The first suspect here is Clym. He should have acted more promptly. Derwent May refers the tragedy to "one of the unhappy traits of Clym's. This is a trait he shares with both his mother and Wildeve: a proud reluctance to take the first step in initiating or improving a relationship, ..."["Introduction", 20] I feel that May has done neither Clym nor Mrs Yeobright full justice. We have witnessed how Mrs Yeobright, in spite of her wounded pride and the insults she feels she has faced from Clym and his wife, tries to make things up with the young couple. The episode under study now shows how Clym, contrary to what might have looked to him a better judgement, writes to Eustacia.

Here, as in the episode of the unopened door, and as in the episode of Henchard's lie to Newson in The Mayor of Casterbridge, Hardy seems to be giving conflicting messages both with and against the character so that a final verdict is almost impossible to give easily. The reader finds himself in an uncomfortable situation, confused whether to indict Clym (for his delay in writing) or acquit him (on the grounds that he does write at last and on the grounds of not being aware of the dire circumstances consequent upon his delay, which are impossible to predict, again). A character
more firmly in the grip of passion (a Jude or a Fitzpiers, for instance) would have acted more promptly. But not Clym.

Fairway's forgetting the letter at first makes of him a second culprit. Letters in Hardy are wont to be late or never reach at all. Tess's letter to Angel is perhaps the arch example. Clym's letter can be considered an example of Hardy's "loading the dice" against his characters. In this light, Clym's letter not reaching its destination can be seen as a "stroke of Fate". It is a "second chance" given to and lost or wasted by "Fate". However, considering Hardy's professed rationalism, this can be seen but as the product of senseless circumstances. Either way, it results in abating characters' responsibility.

As for Eustacia and Wildeve, a superficial reading of the episode is likely to result in the impression that they are "served right". They are intent upon committing a major breach of established ethical and social norms, let alone the offense they are going to give to others, especially Clym and Thomasin. Eustacia and Wildeve can be held indirectly responsible for their doom in another sense. The wish to die, the unconscious (but sometimes too conscious) self-destruction impulses, (10) plays a decisive role in bringing about the sad end. For Wildeve, conscience pangs
and remorse resulting in indiscriminate rashness must have done the job. In the case of Eustacia, however, things are more complicated. She, herself, early in the novel, is aware of her gloomy nature. "It is in my nature to feel [gloomy]", she says to Wildeve, "It was born in my blood, I suppose."[I, 6, 86] Sympathising with her, the narrator asserts that "she knew [gloom] too well for her years."[I, 7, 90] Her gloom is augmented and complicated by her unfavourable stay on what looks to her the adverse heath, her "Hades", and her high life dreams of light and enjoyment. The Schopenhauerian wish to die and the wish not to have been born, we are to encounter in almost all Hardy's major characters -- and even in Hardy himself -- was there in Eustacia.(11) The mockery of fate, the reduction of her charms to a source of vulnerability, and the frustration of her hopes, leave her with the conviction that "death appeared the only door of relief if the satire of Heaven should go much further."[IV, 3, 267] Eustacia's death, like Henchard's for that matter, is left an open question: is it a direct act of self-destruction, a suicide or an indirect, unconscious act towards self-annihilation? Either interpretation, however, involves strong urges to take vengeance on oneself and others. No detailed useful information is given about the childhood of either Wildeve
or Eustacia; nor are their early family relationships discussed, but from data given after the opening of the action in the novel we can form a fairly accurate image of their inner impulses and psychological make-up. The deep frustration, conscience pangs, offenses done to others previously and the apparently unnatural situation of what must have looked like an elopement drive Eustacia either to suicide or suicidal negligence. In this light we can see that Eustacia's death cannot be a mere accident (as previously observed, we sometimes "cause" accidents because we unconsciously want them to happen). Given information about Eustacia's mood (not to be forgotten here is her attempt to get hold of her grandfather's pistols) and her fair knowledge of the area she is going to cover seems to exclude the possibility of her falling in the weir as the merest accident. She has been living on the heath too long to fall accidentally in the weir. Her scanty preparation for her dangerous trip, moreover, can be considered wilful suicidal negligence, taking the surrounding circumstances into account. Moreover, the childlike desire to cause repentance in surrounding grown-ups by inflicting harm on oneself may have been unconsciously acting in Eustacia. We need not here stress the fact that Hardy's deep insight into the workings of the human mind did not have to wait for
Freud and the psychoanalysts to understand and explain man's actions and deep unconscious motives. Once again we see with Hardy how man's conduct is governed by irresistible drives, irresistible mainly because unconscious and unknown to the agent.

One important point remains to be discussed here. What is the role of Susan Nunsuch in all that? The care with which Hardy relates details of Susan's Black Magic practices makes it impossible to ignore them off-hand in a study of the distribution of responsibility. This, of course, is inconsistent with Hardy's announced rationalistic beliefs, but it should not be forgotten that Hardy's understanding of life was not only derived from scientific sources. Again this can be read as an artistic indulgence on the part of the writer meaning to create a symbolic situation illustrating the intensity of the imbroglio. Or it can be seen as an historiographic act of recording practices of the writer's beloved county which were passing away. But the narrator's insistence on displaying such practices with forceful attention, coupled with what is to be gathered from other novels and stories and from what is known about the writer's deep interest in "Wessex" superstition that we have already seen, warrant serious questioning of the effect of
burning Eustacia's figure on the outcome of her venture.

This is likely to leave us with a gloomy impression of man's freedom severely limited by adverse supernatural agents. The case here may be that the writer was giving expression to subconscious beliefs -- and "there can be more in a book than the author consciously puts there"[JO, "Postscript" to "Preface", 30] -- which he found himself harbouring in spite of dominant rationalistic and scientific tenets he found himself unable to resist believing in. Hardy's narrator's stance as story-teller, imbued with the author's interest in the occult and the astonishing, was wont to see things through the eyes of the Wessex peasantry. This persona of the author can be traced back to the early childhood influence of his mother which apparently he could not shake off in spite of deep and broad contact with the scientific trends of the day. He seems rather to have cherished it perhaps as an artistic peculiarity which, nevertheless, deeply affected his outlook.

From the foregoing we can see that man, according to Hardy's novels is essentially free. However, defining freedom is showing its borders. This freedom is, then, seen to be severely constrained by several agents, supernatural as well as natural. We have seen how the characters and
their maker accuse God, the gods, Fate and Heaven, for example, of acting against man. We can take characters' protests literally even though they should not be considered mouthpieces for the author. Authorial comments, nevertheless, pose more serious difficulties. They can be interpreted on two levels: they can be understood as expressive of deep un- or subconscious beliefs in supernatural powers instilled into the writer's mind early in life, or they can be taken figuratively to mean the sum total of laws and forces governing men's lives.

Again, the contradictions, which may seem mutually exclusive, should perhaps be referred to the Hardy narrator, who had to fill both the role of conscious rationalist living in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and the part of the story-teller with childhood-instilled superstitions enhanced by reading Classical tragic works and the desire to astonish and be astonished.

Nature plays an important role in the plot. In the sense of landscape, geographical features and climate, nature is a decisive factor and a limitation on man's freedom. The heath is presented as, to an extent, engulfing and controlling life on it. In this meaning the heath can be seen as an embodiment of the power of nature. The
livelihood of the entire heath community is dependent on its meagre products. Mrs Yeobright is killed by exhaustion from her visit across the heath in the extreme oppressive summer heat and by an adder's sting, another agent from nature. Wildeve and Eustacia also meet their doom in a storm in a weir on the gargantuan heath. Seeing into such episodes, perhaps, has led John Holloway to conclude:

That human life, and indeed human consciousness itself, is wholly subject to the control of nature is something which the people in Hardy's novels illustrate everywhere."(12)

Holloway sees Hardy's nature not as a neutral force but as an effective force controlling man's life adversely. Likewise, D.F. Bratchell sees in Hardy's novels the "clearest expression of the malevolence of nature ..."(13)

Holloway and Bratchell may be justified in their understanding of Hardy's nature on the basis of the strong effect nature is seen to have in the novels and from impressions to be gathered from comments and judgements that impregnate the novel and can clearly be seen as protests against the Wordsworthian Romantic view of nature as a motherly caring force. But even though the fatalistic undertones of certain descriptions, comments and episodes in the novel may be seen to carry the notion of a consciously
malign nature, these can be understood figuratively. It is clear that Hardy does not believe in nature as a benevolent providential power in the way common a few decades before him, but it is not unequivocally clear that the novel shows an actively vicious nature acting in man's life. Certainly nature puts severe limits on man's freedom of action, and to a certain extent, of choice; but in justice to Hardy it should be noticed that nature in the way Holloway and Bratchell saw it in his novels can be understood as symbolic of the human predicament or as an artistic indulgence on the part of the writer. Nowhere in the novels can we find positive malignity attached to landscape, not even in the scene on the Cliff-Without-a-Name in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. It is more on the safe side to conclude that nature in Hardy's novels can be seen as a great limitation on ultimate human freedom but not as a consciously malign force.

A perhaps more powerful influence in man's life, linked to "nature", is that of what can be called "Natural Law". Natural Law permeates all living things. It is the sum total of instincts with which man is imbued. The greatest of these instincts, and with which Natural Law has come to be 'equated, is the sexual drive. It is the means by which sexual selection acts. The sexual urge in Hardy's novels is
a tyrannical force to which every individual is invariably subjugated in order to fulfil the aims of nature. The tyranny of this force lies mainly in that it acts irrespective of the individual's better judgement, and more often than not, contrary to his higher interests. Attraction to the "beautiful" rather than the properly matching is another of the unfortunate "blunders of nature", so to speak. The blind irresistible law that draws lovers "as surely as two streams in one vale" [TD, 20, 156] does not care the least for their interests and their dreams. It works ruthlessly towards one aim, survival of the species. The beautiful female attracts the most promising males with pain and suffering for the other less charming females. Only one male will get his prize with anguish again in the other males. Then, because the match is not based on reason, differences in character will surface plaguing the lovers's lives in their turn. This, I feel, can be seen as a crude sketch of many, if not most, of Hardy's plots. The classic and most obvious example is the Jude-Arabella case, which will be discussed later; but the tragedy looms large in several other novels.
Stephen, Knight and Lord Luxellian are all attracted by Elfride's blue eyes to the pain and suffering of all. Natural Law pulls Elfride in the direction, first of Stephen, then Knight but only Luxellian is able to get her. Natural Law draws Bathsheba to Sergeant Troy against her better judgement and higher interests to the great suffering of her other suitors: Oak and Boldwood. The Law has been at play linking Troy and Fanny Robin but when another woman, more attractive than Fanny appears in Troy's life, his love diverges in the direction of the latter with tragic results for Fanny and her still-born child, Oak and Boldwood. Anne Garland prefers the brighter and more attractive brother to the worthier, more consistent and sensitive. The narrator comments:

Youth is foolish; and does a woman let her reasoning in favour of the worthier stand in the way of her perverse desire for the less worthy at such times as these? [TH, 40, 324; italics mine]

The novel answers loudly and clearly: no. Barbara Hardy puts the case in more direct terms stating that Anne's and John's constancy and sensitivity made them better matched than Anne and Bob. The irrationality of woman's instincts, however, is to blame in the bad match. [TH, "Introduction", 29] Lady Constantine and Swithin are also bound by a consuming love against reason and social norms. The lovers
are destroyed in the clash between the laws of nature and society. The Sophoclean drama in Little Hintook is essentially one of bad matches again. The pure love of Giles and Grace is overtaken by the daring "remorseless Jehovah of the sciences,"[WL, 17, 147] Fitzpiers. Natural Law again brings catastrophes to all involved in the tragedy. Marty who silently loves Giles who is devoted to Grace, Giles who loses Grace to the less worthy Fitzpiers, Grace who loses her amorous husband to Mrs Charmond, Fitzpiers who is a slave to his roving passions and Mrs Charmond who loses her life in the love struggle between her old and new lovers, all suffer at the hands of the tyrannical instinct. This makes it clear how sexual selection acts not on behalf of the worthiest and the ethically best but for the "fittest", the most fascinating and attractive. Moreover, it does not act on behalf of the individual, but on behalf of the species in general. The result is suffering equally for the choosers, the chosen and the abandoned.

Another great force that plays a clear and great role in shaping man's course of life is his relationships with his human surroundings. Man, who is seen by some as a social animal, cannot naturally live alone. Sharing life
with others in a certain location and time evidently means individuals' freedom will be limited. Limits on individual freedom are likely to increase in rigidity and complexity with the growth of the community. Communal beliefs and currents of thought, especially religious and economic, invariably affect the individual's life in its entirety. They are important factors in moulding one's way of thinking from early childhood and put great limits on one's behaviour all through his life. By laws and social norms and standards and by the subtle inter-individual and inter-familial understandings (or misunderstandings), the "others" are continually intruding on one's private life, thoughts and behaviour. The story of Tess Durbeyfield, for example, illustrates the more public side of the matter: how unfeeling laws and wide social standards conspire to crush an individual's aspirations and very life. On the other hand, The Return of the Native deals more with the subtler, more private side of it. The relationship between Clym and his mother is a prime factor of the plot. Being the only child of the poor widow, Clym is everything in Mrs Yeobright's life. He is, in a sense, her prize possession and she has every desire to invest him and in him. She tries relentlessly to fulfil in him her dreams of well-being and fortune. When he returns from Paris with a craving to
reform his fellow heathmen he is the disappointment of her
life. When he tells her he wants to marry Eustacia she must
have felt she has lost everything forever. The subsequent
bitterness on both sides proves fatal to mother and son. He
is not blind to what he has caused in her. His dream at the
time of her visit and his murmuring "mother" is an indicator
of his deep and great remorse and inner agitation which
affects his entire life-course afterwards. The delicate
Clym-Mrs Yeobright consanguinity, the model for which,
Michael Millgate notices, is, to a great extent, the
Thomas-Jemima Hardy relationship,(14) is an important
element in Clym's character and decisions even when he is
rebelling against its grip on his soul. On the other hand,
Clym's stay in Paris and exposure to the philosophical
currents of the day can also be counted among the outside
world influences that were ultimately integrated in his
inner self directing his sense of life, decisions and
actions.

If nature and society put great limitations on Man's
freedom, they still act mainly from outside the individual.
"Character is fate," quotes Hardy from Novalis in The Mayor
of Casterbridge,[HC, 17, 137] and in The Return of the
Native this proves true too for Clym and Eustacia.
The poor "Queen of Night" has passions and desires fit for a "model goddess" but not for a "model woman". The ordinary woman proves too weak for those passions; and at last the "human" gives way to the "godly" and the body breaks down under the stress of the "flame-like" soul. [I, 7, 89] Her uncontrollable desire to be loved pushes her in the direction of Damon Wildeve, the most accomplished man on the heath, but when a seemingly more accomplished one appears she is spurred to scheming to get rid of the first lover and get hold of the more promising one. Sexual selection is evidently at full swing in the case but we cannot ignore the pressing innate needs of the passionate female. Although not essentially vicious or selfish by nature, the girl finds herself through her strong passions and desires in opposition to almost everybody around her. At the end of the day, the sharp clash between reality and Eustacia's unquenchable desires, uncompromising pride and burning passions proves tragically fatal not only for her but for almost everybody involved in her unfortunate story.

On the other side, Clym's self-denial, foiling Eustacia's consuming self-indulgence, proves to be an equally passionate and controlling obsession. To his idealistic intellect life is meaningless if spent in
pursuing personal welfare and egoistic ends. Self-sacrifice and burning oneself to light the way for one's community, to his over-sensitive mentality, give life its meaning. From the clash of Clym's unswervable missionary passions and Eustacia's unrelenting dreams stems the final tragedy. In this light we can perceive that the couple's life-courses are doomed to serious failure if not destruction by their very characters.

This can be seen as part of the rapport between the tragic character and its destiny in the tragedy Hardy is picturing in the novel. Eustacia's fiery soul and hot passions that do not make suitable ingredients for happiness because of their great deviation from human normality, constitute her inescapable "tragic flaw", inescapable because they are part of her identity. The case is symmetrically opposite with Clym. His mind, which is not "well-proportioned"[III, 2, 191] is probably suitable for heroes but not for happy men. It is fit for a Paul, as Eustacia has observed,[IV, 6, 290] a figure in a book, in a Bible but not for Clement Yeobright, an ordinary man in painfully living contact with common people.
The very constitution of the personality is largely both formed and directed very early in an individual's life. Hereditary influences in one's features, traits, and behaviour have not gone unnoticed either in society or in literature. "He takes after his father," or "it is in the family", are expressions used to denote the passing of certain biological as well as psychological features from generation to generation. Moreover, a child's personality is conditioned to a great extent by the kind of relationships he holds with his parents and other persons in his immediate surroundings. The convergence of these biological and psychological influences results in what may be figuratively called "psychological fate". Hardy, whose works display the effect of heredity, anticipating perhaps the findings of August Weismann in the 1890s, shows great understanding of the constraint imposed on man's freedom by this powerful agent. Psychological fate acts mainly through hereditary effects and through early childhood relationships and perceptions. Even though we do not see heredity in the foreground of the action in The Return of the Native, as we see it in later novels, it is nevertheless there. Hardy's choice of Eustacia's Greek parentage may help in explaining her pagan passionate nature. Her love of high life, light and enjoyment may have also been derived from her musician
father. Both effects converge to give her the love of her life and the obsessive irresistible hate of the scanty heath which ends in her death. Moreover, her mind is filled with images from childhood with her father, the thriving bandsman, with scenes of gaiety and fun. The yearning for such scenes is both her raison d'être and her doom, in fact, her perpetua. Clym, moreover, is reported to have "inherited some of [his] very instincts from [his mother]."[III, 2, 193] His mother, however, accuses him of taking after his father, "I suppose you will be like your father; like him, you are getting weary of doing well."[III, 2, 193] We have also seen how Mrs Yeobright has been an influential factor in forming Clym's character and how their relationship has played an important role even in his adulthood in his decisions and actions. This is only superseded by motives he developed by the education he acquires from his studies in Paris, and secondly by his overwhelming love for Eustacia. Hereditary effects in Hardy's people, that will be discussed in greater detail in our studies of the stories of Tess and Jude, show how a person can be in a sense "programmed" by his very genes, "germ cells" as they have come to be called and known by Hardy in the 1890s.
Talking of psychology, we cannot ignore the effect of unconscious impulses in man's life. These tend to be the resultant effects of one's character and the reflection of situations and circumstances on it. They, in a sense, dictate one's actions in an irresistible way. Lapses of memory, speech and action are indicative of one's deep unrecognised drives. They are, more often than not, more effective than conscious wishes and desires because they are not subjected to the judgement of reason and common sense.

The episode of Wildove's mistake over the marriage licence is the most obvious example of how these lapses affect one's life-course. The admittedly unwise impulse which the parson in the beginning of Tess obeys in telling John Durbeyfield result in the destruction of the family. [TD, 1, 33] Hardy's preoccupation with the great effect these impulses have in constraining man's freedom is to be seen from his entry dated February 16, 1882,

Write a history of human automatism, or impulsion — viz., an account of human knowledge, showing how very far conduct lags behind the knowledge that should really guide it. [Life, 152]

Another limitation, of a secondary nature, to human freedom is that enforced by causation. I do something, and unwittingly, I have started a chain of events I can hardly
break. My future actions are, thus, to a large extent, dependent on what I did or have done. I shall certainly retain my freedom of choice but the options open to me will be severely narrowed down. Foresight is a great help in man's struggle of life, but how is foresight acquired? Experience is the most likely source of wisdom, but second chances are not often granted by circumstances so that one can make use of wisdom acquired by experience. Moreover, it is in the nature of man and things that foresight is more often than not, superseded by passions and impulses or experience is not enough to deal with renewed and varied hardships of life. New elements are always introduced and man finds himself unable to make use of past experience. It is true that effects follow causes but you can never be sure of holding all the causes in order to predict the outcome accurately. Hardy's novels show that it almost takes a god to fare well in life. Human beings with their shortcomings and inherent deficiencies are not well provided for for happiness in our kind of life. (15) Inability to foretell future events consequent upon our actions makes of us slaves or prisoners of our actions or severely limits our future freedom of choice. Unwise or not fully informed choices and decisions prove disastrous to almost all the major characters of The Return of the Native and they have to face
hard if not impossible situations stemming from their actions and choices. Southerington rightly observes that

Hardy's plot would seem to stress that the catastrophe is caused by the consequences of personal failure among the principal characters. ... Consequence is the most powerful force in depriving us of our freedom.(16)

A last but not least element in limiting man's freedom, that would appear to stand in opposition to other factors already discussed, is that of chance. Chance is the inexplicable and unpredictable factor in action. Hardy's notorious use of coincidences, which was discussed earlier, earned him much abuse and criticism. The effect of these coincidences in the plot is so significant that it deserves independent discussion but in the limited scope available in this present study I shall restrict the enquiry here to the effect of coincidences in man's life and freedom of action as it appears in the novel. Coincidences are chance events that do not show any apparent causal connection. Hardy's use of improbabilities weakens his plot and tends to show his characters as victims of malicious fate. We have seen how isolated coincidences could be explained one way or another, but the overall impression one is likely to form from the cumulative effect of adverse coincidences following each other and Hardy's heavy reliance on them is that men
are not masters of their destinies. It may be useful here to remember that while chance is apparently inexplicable it is only so because we do not know the real causes behind events all the times. According to Darwin chance or inexplicable elements play a great part in the process of evolution. Nevertheless, chance in that process is referred to real causes that were, as yet, incomprehensible. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge* Hardy makes clear his belief that "each [phenomenon] is known to have its accounting cause."[11C, 29, 216] This is a key to a further understanding of Hardy's coincidences. It squares out oddities and improbabilities that plague Hardy's novels with his rationalistic view of life, but it does not rule out unseen and supernatural factors in the lives of men. Darwinian evolution, likewise, does not rule out supernatural divine presence in the universe but concerns itself mainly with explaining the material side of it referring the problem of chance to as yet incomprehensible causes.

In the tragedy on Egdon it may be a justified feeling that adverse chance happenings are nothing but arbitrary judgements of a "Supreme Power". After all, this is what they look like. But what kind of Supreme Power?
This is the question in Hardy. Is it a supernatural agent or mere natural laws? Is it a sentient force or just blind mechanical forces? Is it only "Crass Casualty" or a God "powerfuller" than man? Hardy is obviously at pain to pass his consciously rationalistic interpretation of life; but I feel it is hard to resist the temptation to deduce from the novel a mixture of unconscious mechanical forces and some form of conscious supernatural presence of superstitious - Biblical nature. The first element in the mixture derives mainly from Hardy's conscious observations and studies; the second perhaps stems from the writer's not just conscious Promethean desire to have a tyrannical supernatural force as God-opponent. (17)

Making odds meet we may plausibly conclude that even though man is essentially free to choose and act his freedom is restricted by powers that act from outside as well as from inside his character. The Supreme Power, then, may be considered the sum total or the master coordinator of these powers — an Immanent will in formation.

It is curious to notice that Hardy's novel does not have villains in the traditional sense of the word, let alone the Victorian sense. In the classical realistic tradition to which Hardy's novels mainly belong, despite the
writer's criticism of realism, it is customary to find characters who win readers' contempt, dislike and ill-wishes. We may find more to sympathise with in one character than the other in The Return of the Native, but no one of the characters is displayed as a villain in the sense we experience in other novels. This does not generate, as commonly with other novelists, just from a feeling of intimacy with character and from revealing the character's feelings and the letting the reader into its inner world, but rather from a minimising of its responsibility. Both Eustacia and Wildeve are shown to be well meaning, ordinary people. They are, however, put into such cruel circumstances through external powers and seemingly irresistible unwise courses of actions that the reader feels they cannot be reasonably considered completely responsible for the misfortunes that befall them and other characters. We tend to understand their motives and sympathise with their problems and hardships because we feel they are not totally to blame in the tragedy. We are led to feel rightly that they could not "help it" and they were governed by forces greater than their human capabilities.
E.A. Baker goes to the extreme when he says that The Return of the Native "is a confutation of free will. Man is represented as the helpless plaything of invisible powers, ruthless and indifferent ..." (18) However, free will, we feel, is there, and this is attested to by the choices the characters make. We feel that the "invisible powers, ruthless and indifferent" do not annihilate free will, though they limit it severely and constrain man in a tragic way.
NOTES

1. Clym, impressed by the sight of the heath, thought "There was something in its oppresive horizontality which too much reminded him of the arena of life, ..."[III, 5, 222, ] The description of the "suffering" of the young beeches and the little finch in the next page makes clear the "human" nature of the suffering of even insentient beings in nature. The fact is that struggle and pain permeate the worlds of both man and nature.

2. Hardy often speaks of "blunders" of nature and the Prime Mover, for example. This may lead to the conclusion that he believes in the presence of a conscious power in the universe, since to blunder presupposes consciousness. In other places, (Life, 149, for example) Hardy states his belief that the Law is unconscious. This certainly carries the danger of inconsistency; the problem, however, will be tackled later with more detail.


5. In spite of the fact that the Greeks’ vision of their gods and god-man relationships underwent changes through the years, it is remarked that the Homeric (and for that matter, the Aeschylean) concept of gods as merely a separate class of beings who could do whatever they liked with their subjects, mankind, and who were not necessarily of a higher moral calibre than men, remained the dominant idea in Greek religion concerning the characteristics of the deities and their relations with men. The “unbridgeable gulf” between immortal gods and mortal men gave the gods the “right to act as cruelly and capriciously as they cared.” W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and their Gods* (London: Methuen &Co. Ltd., 1950), p. 121. For greater details on the subject, see for example the same book, p. 39 and pp. 118-21

6. In his *System of Logic*, Mill distinguishes between two views of freedom of character:

The affirmative opinion is commonly called the doctrine of necessity, as asserting human volitions and actions to be necessary and inevitable. The negative maintains that the will is not determined, like other phenomena, by antecedents, but determines itself; ...

I have already made it sufficiently apparent that the former of these opinions is that which I consider the true one; ...” Vol. VIII of *Collected Works* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press and Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 836.
George Levine, in "Determinism and responsibility in the Works of George Eliot," PMLA, 77 (1962), 268-79, discusses the common grounds between J.S. Mill and George Eliot concerning necessity, freedom and determinism. Even though George Eliot would perhaps not like the word necessitarian used to describe her attitude, she is seen to believe in some form of causation principle that is very much like necessity.


10. Karl Menninger in Man Against Himself shows how man, due to mainly unconscious drives resulting from mistakes, previous offenses to others and pressing conscience pangs, can act contrary to his interests and even to the instinct of survival, exposing himself to great harm or suicidal situations. In the coming study of The Mayor of Casterbridge I shall have a closer look at self-destructive
impulses in man and how they appear in Hardy's novels.

11. Even though *The Return of the Native* was written long before Hardy supposedly became familiar with Schopenhauer's thought, he was preoccupied with the wish not to have been born, not to grow up and the wish to die. *Life* tells that in his childhood, Hardy came to the conclusion that he did not wish to grow up. ... Yet this early evidence of that lack of social ambition which followed him through life was shown when he was in perfect health and happy circumstances.[16]

His contact with the works of Sophocles and the conviction that not to have been born is best and to die early is second best deepened this feeling in him. Hardy deals understandingly and sympathetically with his characters suffering from this perverse wish. Michael Henchard and Jude Fawley may be the most obvious examples but the spirit permeates all the other major novels as well. A more detailed discussion of the problem will be attempted later.


15. *Life* reports Hardy as saying that "This planet does not supply the material for happiness to higher existences. Other planets may, though one can hardly see how."[218]


17. "Map", the oft-quoted poem, was written twelve years prior to the publication of *The Return of the Native*. Even though it denies belief in the existence of a supernatural being in control of the universe, it expresses the strong preference on the part of the writer to have a tyrannical "vengeful god" who

Had willed and meted me the tears I shed
to having the senseless "purblind Doomsters" governing his life.

CHAPTER TWO

"THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE"

As in *The Return of the Native*, in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Hardy was trying to show man's predicament in the universe along the lines of grand classical tragedy. The interaction between plot and character is unmistakably structured on the basis of classical drama with a character's destiny strongly linked with a tragic flaw the character suffers from. In an entry dating from the time of writing *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Hardy gives his views of tragedy: "It may be put thus in brief: a tragedy exhibits a state of things in the life of an individual which unavoidably causes some natural aim or desire of his to end in a catastrophe when carried out." [*Life*, 176] This finds clear illustration in the story of the mayor of Casterbridge, and his *peripeteia* certainly recalls Aristotelian tragedy. Characters, especially Michael Henchard, gain universal dimensions; and are at the same time themselves, ordinary human beings, and patterned symbols of man in his struggle with incomprehensible powers in the universe. Parallels have been drawn between Henchard and Oedipus and Lear, for two
examples. Moreover, the pattern of action in the novel is likened to that characteristic of classical drama in its cyclical movement and patterned stages. Furthermore, the tragedy of the mayor is a portrait of the universe as seen by the powerful mind of a sensitive writer. The Mayor is a work of art conveying the author's impressions about man and his position in the universe, and the following is an attempt to approach this view from the angle of freedom and responsibility. However, an understanding of the novel, I feel, should be based on a clear understanding of the character of Michael Henchard.

"Character" is a key word of the novel. It appears in the subtitle: "A Story of a Man of Character." At one stage in the novel Hardy finds himself quoting Novalis, "Character is fate".[17, 137] The whole novel can, moreover, be seen as the development of Henchard's character and its part in his rise and ultimate downfall. We can, then, clearly see that the word "character" is strongly attached to Michael Henchard in a way that makes it obligatory to understand the workings of Henchard's morbid mind in order to be able to get a clear understanding of the novel and Hardy's views.
Michael Henchard dominates the story completely and relegates to second place all the other characters and their interests. Like a mountain he towers over the people of Casterbridge. We think of other characters mainly in terms of their relations to him. In spite of his deficiencies we take him and his interests to our hearts not only because most of the narrative is given through his eyes, making him familiar to us, but mainly because we feel he is a worthy person. Not an angel and not a devil, he is a man with a mixture of natural tendencies towards good, yearning to success and selfish impulses. He is both human and superhuman at the same time. He possesses the natural human urges but in such strong thrusts as to make him vulnerable to falls and misfortunes.

Is Michael Henchard, then, a psychological case or a legend? No doubt his psychological build-up provides adequate matter for a psychologically oriented analysis. However, his adamant struggle against vast adverse powers and his ultimate defeat and crushing at the hands of these powers lend him legendary dimensions comparable to those of Classical tragic heroes, like Oedipus or Lear for example, and make of him an embodiment of man's quandary in the universe. (3) What concerns us at the moment, nevertheless,
is not that legendary aspect of this powerful character but the human side of it. I shall try to deal with his psychological aspects and analyse his impulses and his innermost tendencies in order to be able to understand his fate and how it was worked out and to determine where responsibility truly lies.

If most of the attention in this study is focussed on Henchard, this is not because other characters are void of significance, but it is because Henchard's character is the most interesting and the most carefully delineated. It is in it that we find the freedom-limiting factors most clearly at work. Other characters, doubtless, display Hardy's insight into human psychology and illustrate, in some of their situations and attitudes, man's vulnerability and precariousness in the universe. Jopp, for example, suffers at the hands of Henchard's moodiness. Abel Whittle suffers still more because of Henchard's tyrannical bad temper. Lucetta faces a very difficult situation in getting caught between two lovers, one of whom is the overpowering Henchard who holds her secrets and threatens to disclose them to her husband. Elizabeth-Jane is perhaps in the most awkward situation of all. Her relationship with Henchard as his step-daughter has hardly been established when he surprises
her by telling her that she is his real daughter. Almost instantly, his behaviour towards her undergoes, what is to her, an inexplicable shift, and she is treated with either utmost indifference or utmost callousness. However, when rapport between the two has been established with sympathy and compassion she is surprised to find that Henchard is not her real father after all; and what is worse, she discovers he has lied to her real father who came to claim her. She is so deeply unnerved and unsettled by her experience with him that she cannot bring herself to do what is supposed to be in line with her personality, to forgive him and let bygones be bygones when he comes to beg her forgiveness.

Hardy was not the sort of novelist to stay away from his creatures. He did not draw his characters coolly and from an outsider's point of view. He rather seemed involved in his characters and dealt with them as real human beings. This is made obvious in his comments on such characters as Tess, Jude and Sue in his talks and letters to friends, critics and reviewers as well as in his actual drawing of the characters and authorial asides in the novels. Furthermore, several of his major characters are observed to have been derived from mainly autobiographical data with intimate feelings and details from the inner life of the
writer or from the lives of people he knew so well. In the case of Henchard, Michael Hillgate has observed that the mayor has been left childless, a case so keenly felt by Hardy himself. Moreover, Hillgate also notices that Hardy had far more admiration for Henchard than such as Farfrae, for example. It seems clear that Hardy meant to draw Henchard as a big character in greater-than-life dimensions. In this he is successful and Henchard looms so large as to eclipse, sometimes totally, the other characters of the story.

In drawing Henchard's character Hardy, furthermore, seems determined to create an essentially lovable personage that would gain the reader's sympathy in spite of its points of weakness and misdeeds. A strongly felt aspect of Henchard is his essential generosity or kind-heartedness. He is not a wicked or a vicious person. Even though his goodness is of the fitful type and he sometimes gives in to selfish and vengeful impulses his essential goodness keeps him from going all the way in the path of wickedness. This is shown, for example, in his bitter remorse and the stupendous vow he makes after his drunken blunder at the opening scene of the novel. It is further illustrated in the moral obligation he feels he has towards Lucetta and his
backing from his attempt to reveal her secrets and destroy her happiness. It is, furthermore, displayed in the deep and largely disinterested attachment to Elizabeth-Jane towards the end; not to mention his generosity to Abel Whittle and his mother during his prosperous years. It is undeniable that he makes mistakes but this is perhaps what makes him convincing to readers as a real man, keeps him away from melodrama and earns him the reader's sympathy and compassion.

His emotional life is rather more on the unusual side. His offering his wife for sale in his intoxication implies that he values material success in life greater than love. In his love affair with Lucetta in his Jersey days he is more of a recipient of the poor, lonely girl's love and, later, wonders how she could have loved him in spite of his undeserving of this love. In their intimacy, Henchard tells Farfrae about his affair with Lucetta and wonders, "Heaven knows why [she cared], for I wasn't worth it."[HC, 12, 104] This tends to show he does not fully understand love and human emotions. His return to Susan after her reappearance in his life stems more from a moral sense of having to redeem a mistake than from love or passion. His fervid attempts to regain Lucetta come more from his acute jealousy
and need for self-realisation than from love. His swinging relationship with Elizabeth-Jane after his discovery of her real parentage underlines his lack of passionate love and his need both for possession and self-sacrifice. A curious point to ponder here is his relationship with Farfrae. In its first stages it shows Henchard as devoted completely to this relative stranger. His generous offers and his revealing to him the shameful secrets of his life and his skeletons in the cupboard show that he is tied to Farfrae with a bond stronger than mere friendship. Dale Kramer suggests that Henchard presumably had feminine tendencies towards the Scotsman who saved him from an embarrassing politico-economical situation upon his arrival in Casterbridge. (6)

The emotional attraction Henchard feels towards Farfrae shows through his monologue outside the Three Mariners after his meeting with Farfrae there. Upon hearing the sweet singing of the young Scotsman Henchard exclaims: "To be sure, to be sure, how that fellow does draw me! ... I suppose 'tis because I'm so lonely."[8, 65] It is also illustrated in the bitterest of moments that pass between the two men. At the end of their fight at the hayloft after Henchard has overpowered his rival and Farfrae lies at his
mercy, Henchard confesses to Farfrae: "God is my witness that no man ever loved another as I did thee at one time. ... And now — though I came here to kill 'ee, I cannot hurt thee!"[238, 279] This, if true, would help to explain not only his coolness in love but, in its deviation from socially standardised norms, his great remorse and self-destructive tendencies also.

That Henchard is strong-willed and determined to have his way is something that is illustrated everywhere in the novel. His terrible oath not to come near drink and his keeping of it for the long twenty one years is an attestation of this. His violent rebukes, and sometimes bullying, of his workmen, Whittle, Jopp and even Farfrae, to mention only three, and his ardent attempts at revenge on Farfrae later are also illustrations of this aspect of him. Henchard, Ian Gregor suggests, can be seen as one of "Those who seek to impress themselves on the universe, to lay violent hands on time, to forget that man is the slave of limit ..."[MC, "Introduction", 18] Henchard's obstinacy and strong-headedness is an eminent factor in his destruction and shows the fragility of man's position in the universe. It is clear that Henchard is not able to learn the lesson of renunciation. Up to the end of his life he has tried to
"lay his hands on time" and to have his own way with the world. His last, though feeble attempt in this direction is his determination to keep Elizabeth-Jane at all costs which leads to his lying to Newson. Renunciation proves to be the trick with Elizabeth-Jane who becomes "familiar with the wreck of each day's wishes as with the diurnal setting of the sun", [25, 194] and who learns to make the most of "rare moments of gaiety" in the drama of life. But not for Henchard.

At one moment in the novel, we have the narrator describing Henchard as "this man of moods, glooms and superstitions." [35, 257] Belief in superstitions may seem out of place with Henchard's strong individuality and single-mindedness. But such is human nature that strong-willed persons do sometimes harbour secret beliefs that they would be ashamed of owning in public. Letting us into Henchard's mind, Hardy tells us that Henchard "could not help thinking ... of some sinister intelligence bent on punishing him." [19, 147] This is the accusation levelled against Hardy himself perhaps partly because of the great understanding he shows of this kind of mentality. Hardy shows his insight into such morbid personalities in his dealing with the weather-prophet episode. The episode
itself is not essential for the plot, and could be done away
with were it not for its help in illustrating the
superstitious attitude and the dilemma facing modern man.
Faced with scientific discoveries and advances in cultural
fields, man still finds himself unable to explain the
universe satisfactorily, and finds life controlled, more or
less, by incomprehensible powers. This is why man,
sometimes unconsciously, finds himself believing in things
he would not admit of his belief in in the light. Not
wanting to bring to the light this weakness of his, Henchard
sets about his journey to the weather-prophet most
secretively. One marginal point to be mentioned here and
that may throw some light on the narrator's beliefs is the
weather-prophet's strange ability to know his visitor's name
and purpose before the visitor has even opened his mouth.
Stranger still is the coming true of his prophecy. It seems
here that the narrator has more confidence in the prophecy
than Henchard himself had with tragic results to Henchard's
social and financial status. Didactically read (and this
may or may not be applicable to Hardy who thought of himself
more as an artist than as a reformer), the episode looks as
if the narrator was saying: this is the end of him who is
unwise enough not to act by the weather-prophet's saying.
If this is not directly in line with Hardy's rational
thought, it surely can be attributed to his story-teller for whom it is not to be considered strange to indulge sometimes in deducing moral lessons from events.

The episode of the weather-prophet makes clear a characteristic of Henchard's which is made insistently all through the novel. His quick action upon what seemed fair weather shows his quick temper and impatient nature. The impulsiveness which has accompanied him all through his life proved disastrous not only for his financial prospects but for his whole life. His action upon his drunken impulse loses him his wife in the beginning. His deep trust in Farfrae has been largely built on sudden impulses and not upon reasoning reflection. His relation with Elizabeth-Jane is in great part built on impulses. His efforts to convince her to take up his name, his discovery of her real parentage and his subsequent change of attitude towards her are all results of his spontaneity and are not based on conscious reasoning. His determination to reveal Lucetta's secrets and his change of mind at the last moment are also built on irresistible sudden impulses. One of his blunders in determining to quarrel with and kill Farfrae is also intensely impulsive in nature. Perhaps the clearest illustration of Henchard's quick temper and spontaneity is
his lying to Newson about Elizabeth-Jane towards the end. Immediately after his shameful act he regrets it and runs after Newson to put it right, but it was too late. The narrator wanted to underline this aspect of Henchard's when he commented that "... the momentum of his character knew no patience." [27, 204] Impulses in the case of Henchard are again great limiters of freedom. They, most of the time, are pushing Henchard contrary to his higher interests. Furthermore, they play an important part in determining the future course of action in an adverse way. Unwise, irresistible and unconscious urges tend to condition one's future behaviour in a way to make of one's actions endeavours to put right past mistakes.

A person who can be described as cool-tempered and deliberate perhaps enjoys more freedom in taking his decisions in that he is allowed by his temper the chance to debate views before deciding on a course of action. On the contrary, a quick-tempered person, like Michael Henchard, for example, will, by virtue of his very temperament, not have this valuable chance of debating before deciding or acting. Theoretically, such a person should be able to exercise self-control and oppose his tendencies to act on impulse, but whether he is, in practice, able to do so or
not will lead us to discuss the whole issue of freedom of the will and the ability of the agent to change his character.

Perhaps the greatest of these impulses in Henchard's case is the self-destructive urge. Freud was quoted in a letter to Einstein saying that "... it is useless to try to eliminate the aggressive tendencies in man."(7) Tendency to aggression is presumably an innate thing that man retains from his long struggle for survival. It may have taken new civilised shapes, but it is still there. Civilised morality and life in a community where cooperation is indispensable strongly repudiate aggression and try to sublimate it but the tendency can never be suffocated. From the clash between the innate desire and the necessities of social life arises an inner conflict which often ends in directing destructive urges to the agent itself, especially if the conflict is accompanied by circumstances unfavourable to the agent's super ego. Everybody carries within himself an unconscious wish to harm or kill. Naturally this wish is directed towards outside opponents or offenders. When the agent however, is not able to exact his justice on outside forces this wish tends to be internalised with the unconscious intention of killing an alternative of the
opponent or the wish to cause regret in him through self-harm and making him feel he was the cause of the harm. By killing oneself one is indirectly killing the object of his complaint. Suicide also has its roots in a wish to be killed to satisfy an inner sense of guilt produced by an abnormally grown conscience. Moreover, in everyone there is a death-instinct, a wish to die which can be supreme in times of illness or crisis. Suicidal drives are uncontrollable largely because they are results of unconscious inner workings of the mind.

We are justified, ..., in assuming that this [suicidal] method of dealing with life is determined either by some inherent constitutional variation, abnormality, or weakness in the individual or by the acceleration or powerful reinforcement of the destructive tendencies of the personality during the formative period of life. In either case it is apparent that the self-defeating tendencies arose very early in the life of the individual and strongly influenced the entire course of his development in such a way as to overshadow and finally conquer the benign life instinct. (8)

In either case, inherent constitutional abnormality or early conditioning in life, self-destructive urges are extremely hard to recognise and control and are very likely to end up as an important factor in moulding not only one's course of action but his very mental traits as well.
Needless to say, the death wish or the wish not to have been born is as old as civilised man, or perhaps older. Sophocles has given it due expression in Classical times, but it has gained ever-increasing intensity with the increasing complexity of life. Schopenhauer was perhaps the most prominent propounder of the self-annihilation tendency in nineteenth century thought; and Hardy, most probably, found in Sophocles and Schopenhauer supportive material for what he himself had detected in contemporary man and life and presumably in himself. Life tells of how he as a boy felt "he did not wish to grow up." [Life, 16] Hardy carried this desire to his old age. Michael Millgate reports that "In February 1896 [Hardy] insisted in conversation with Clodd that he wished he had never been born and, 'but for the effort of dying, would rather be dead than alive'..."(9)

On the other hand, most of Hardy's novels are, in a sense, illustrations of the death-instinct. The careers and life-courses of several of Hardy's major characters strongly display the self-destructive intent. This is clearly shown in the numerous instances in the novels where we witness these characters, at facing what can sometimes be considered minor difficulties or obstacles, rush into expressing wishes
that they were dead. In her precarious situation, Ethelberta confides to her mother that she wishes she "was well out of it, and at the bottom of a quiet grave."[HE, 23, 175] We have already seen how for Eustacia, at a representative moment of her life, "death appeared the only door of relief if the satire of Heaven should go much further."[RN, IV, 3, 279] Even the mild-mannered Clym, following his mother's death protests, "If there is any justice in God let Him kill me now."[RN, V, 1, 330] Anne Garland also experiences such a feeling and "At moments during [her mother's and Miller Loveday's wedding] ceremony [she] had a distressing sense that she ought not to be born."[TM, 21, 176] After finding out that his astronomical discovery has already been made by some other scientist, Swithin St Cleeve feels his life-time hope was shattered and experiences a "wild wish for annihilation."[TT, 9, 88-9] Perhaps the most prominent and representative of this trend in Hardy's fiction is Father Time's wish not to have been born and his pronounced belief that children should be killed the moment they were born and not allowed to grow up.[JO, VI, 2, 342-3]
The wish to put an end to one's life or to cause injury to oneself appears more dramatically in actions than in words in Hardy's characters. The, sometimes conscious, but more often not, courting of death is an indicator of the violence of the characters' sentiments and the intense depression that engulf them. Elfride is surely tempting death or injury in her precarious walk on the parapet in spite of the coming storm. She ends up with a wounded hand, and it could have been more serious had it not been for Knight. [PBE, 16] Is she trying to punish herself for what she is doing with Stephen and Knight? That is surely a legitimate question to ask. Knight himself does something similar in the dangerous walk on the Cliff-Without-a-Name when he slips and faces death. [PBE, 21] We cannot forget that at that critical stage of his life he is torn between his ideals and previous intentions and the new situation he finds himself in in his attraction to Elfride. Gabriel Oak's negligence in leaving both slides of his hut closed is another example of self-injurious behaviour. Furthermore, Oak's disaster with his sheep can be considered illustrative of the urge to throw up success arising from lack of interest in success coming from a shock or a sense of loss. This deduction is corroborated by the fact that he has not insured the sheep. [FFMC, 5] Troy's party in spite of
insistent warnings of the coming storm and its dangers to the crops that were left in the open can be considered not only as simple-minded negligence but as a plain courting of disaster as well. Moreover, the whole of Boldwood's part in the story can be seen as a case of extreme melancholia. His life-story before the opening of action in the novel is only vaguely related but it warrants the conclusion that he must have been suffering from the loss of beloved ones and self-hate, characteristic of deep melancholia. (10) Acting on the spur of his "wild wish for annihilation" St Cleeve exposes himself to severe rain in an attempt to put an end to his life. [TT, 4] A similar attempt which is successful this time is Giles' unreasonable insistence on staying out in the cold and rain leaving the warmth and shelter of his cottage to Grace. [WL, 41] His wish not to compromise Grace does not suffice as an explanation for this suicidal act. Giles in his turn must be suffering from severe melancholia stemming presumably from the loss of his sweetheart and the dream of his life and from the loss of his lodgings (which, he, in turn, fails to act promptly enough to secure and which can be considered another example of courting disaster). He clearly values his life so lowly that he does not even attempt to save it. He rather acts positively in a way that would make sure he is going to lose it. Angel
Clare's deeply stirred feelings of guilt and conflict must be at the root of his critical sleep-walking which could easily have ended with the death of both himself and his estranged bride. [TD, 37] _Jude the Obscure_ is from one angle the story of a self-condemning couple that ends disastrously for both. A more detailed analysis of the cases in _Tess_ and _Jude_ will be attempted later in the separate studies of the novels.

Returning to Casterbridge we notice that Henchard's life is, in a sense, an embodiment of the self-destruction intent. We know virtually nothing of his life before his opening misadventure at Weydon Priors but his career from that time till the moment of his death provides illustration for the uncontrollable bending towards self-injury, self-torment and self-abnegation. To begin with, his heavy drinking is an example of such conduct. His deep repentance at his drunken misbehaviour at the furmity tent is clearly shown by the terrible vow to keep away from alcohol for twenty one years, which he solemnly keeps. The vehemence with which he returns to alcohol after the lapse of the vowed period shows the great self-imposed deprivation he must be experiencing for the whole length of the period. Moreover, his owning in public the charge of the furmity
woman, instead of simply denying it (with the great probability that the Casterbridgians would rather believe him or that the whole matter would be dropped or neutralised) signifies, in addition to his sense of honesty, an innate desire in Henchard to exact justice upon himself. His swinging relationship with Farfrae also can be seen an offshoot of the deep sense of guilt at what can be considered an abnormal feeling of attraction to a person of his own sex. (11) From this angle, Henchard's attempt at inflicting bodily harm on Farfrae by main force can be seen more as self-humiliation than as punishing an opponent. He has such a critical view of himself that he cannot understand Lucetta's interest in him. In the episode of receiving the Royal Personage Henchard is acting in such a humiliating and self-punishing way that he must have realised at the end his unconscious aim of making a scene of himself. His insistence on receiving the Royal Personage himself in his shabbiest attire cannot be explained except by his earnest desire to draw punishment and humiliation on himself. In this same light we can understand his lie to Newson about Elizabeth-Jane. He seems to be acting in a way designed to bring about his final downfall. The cumulative effect of his misadventures and the self-defeating frustration he feels after the failure of his final attempt
at winning Elizabeth-Jane's favour and "the part of his nature to ... live as one of his worst accusers," [45, 328] dictate his self-effacing will:

"That Elizabeth-Jane Farfrae be not told of my death, or made to grieve on account of me. 
"& that I be not bury'd in consecrated ground. 
"& that no sexton be asked to toll the bell. 
"& that nobody is wished to see my dead body. 
"& that no mourners walk behind my funeral. 
"& that no flowers be planted on my grave. 
"& that no man remember me. 
"To this I put my name
"MICHAEL HENCHARD" [45, 331]

Henchard's strong individuality survives his overpowering desire of self-effacement and can be seen as a witness to the contradictions that the human soul can harbour. In death and complete annihilation the mayor does not forget to "put his name" under his will.

In responding to his self-destructive urges we can clearly perceive Henchard is acting according to the dictate of a power he cannot resist. This is so largely because it comes from inside and is barely recognisable to his conscious reasoning.

We can see thus that Henchard is justified in his feeling that he is responsible for what is happening to him. Waking from his drunkenness the morning after he has sold his wife he feels he has to put right his mistake: "It was
of his own making, and he ought to bear it."[2, 50] Later, towards the end of the novel and when Elizabeth-Jane remarks he seems very lonely he answers, "Ay child - to a degree that you know nothing of! It is my own fault."[41, 298] On his way out of Casterbridge for the last time he compares himself to Cain and confesses deserving the punishment he is getting, "I - Cain - go alone as I deserve - an outcast and a vagabond."[43, 314] It is a harsh kind of justice, self-imposed. In this Henchard is both prosecutor and accused at the same time. He is playing the roles of God and Cain in one action, giving perhaps the message that in the absence of God and a moral universal order he will provide the substitution. He has done wrong and if there is no God to punish him he will undertake the responsibility of punishing himself.

Rather than helping in pointing to where responsibility lies, this tells more of the self-condemnation and the conscience pangs Henchard is suffering from. In this light we should understand the narrator's verdict, "... all had gone from him, one after one, either by his fault or by his misfortune."[41, 299] We can understand his fault here to be of one piece with his misfortune. We rightly feel he could hardly do otherwise. He is acting under what looked like a
coercive agent, only this agent is his own impulsive and tyrannical character. Ability to do otherwise is an essential prerequisite of freedom. (12) Under his circumstances his margin of choice is very narrow indeed. He is to be held responsible in as much as he is not acting under coercion. H.C. Duffin ridicules Dilettante dreamers of Utopian worlds [who] are wont to propound the fatuous generalisation that 'Character moulds Circumstances,' leaving out of consideration the possibility that a previous Circumstance may have already moulded Character. ... You think man is the author of his own salvation, the ruler of his temporal fate? Consider the Life and Death of Michael Henchard, and be still musing." (13)

This sounds exaggerated and extreme but, nevertheless, it helps in explaining why some people act unreasonably contrary to their obvious better interests.

Henchard may be considered by some a puppet of circumstances or a slave of his impulses but I would rather say he is essentially free, and thence his responsibility, but his freedom is severely limited by unconscious unrecognisable impulses that he cannot comprehend or control. I understand here the danger of differentiating between various compartments of the mind, one for impulses, another for decision making and so on. Certainly this is

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not the way things are in life but it is useful to notice how different faculties of the mind interact. Behaviour is the fruit of this interaction. This is what to be understood by "Character is fate". Henchard is not a puppet. He is a free responsible person. The extent of his freedom and responsibility is determined partly by agents at work in his soul: "Character is fate".

However, this is only half of the story. In no way to be forgotten, are the external factors that help moulding one's destiny. In Henchard's tragedy not only character is fate. We can discern a multitude of outside factors that helped determine his life-course and limit his freedom.

Unlike the drama on Egdon where Natural Law and sexual attraction play a great part in forming the destinies of lovers and beloved we see very little of love influencing men's and women's thinking and behaviour in Casterbridge. To begin with, the relationship between Henchard and his wife shows a curious coolness that results in the shameful act at the furmity tent. When Susan reappears Henchard remarries her not out of affection but out of a sense of propriety and a feeling that he ought to put a past mistake right. The money he sends her with Elizabeth-Jane signifies that he is "buying" her again. His relationship with
Lucetta, we can reasonably conclude, is a one-sided affair where the poor woman under passion is lavishing care and sympathy on the receptive businessman who does not understand the nature of her feeling and wonders why she should care for him. Again when he wants to propose to her, it is out of a sense of responsibility towards a woman he feels he has wronged and compromised. Furthermore, his parental relationship with Elizabeth-jane underlines the fact that he is not under the grip of powerful sexual desire, but he is a lonely man in need of compassion and "pure" love, different in nature from carnal desire. This may be referred to Henchard's homosexuality as I have already remarked, but the point now is to show the weak sexual drive in Henchard and not to explain its nature.

Thus we can plausibly argue that Henchard's freedom is but little affected by workings of the Natural Law responsible for so many of Hardy's tragedies. Curiously enough we also see very little of the power of Natural Law in the novel as a whole. With the exception perhaps of Lucetta we see the characters out of the reach of sexual passion.

We see a minimum of the warmth of affection in Susan's part in the auction at the furmity tent and later. Elizabeth-Jane is only mildly interested in Farfrae, and
then not in an expressly passionate way. She who has learnt
the lesson of renunciation looks at the world from an
over-realistic view that seems to have weakened considerably
her urge for enjoyment. As for Farfrae - the fair-haired,
sweet-voiced Scot who has fascinated not only the women but
the men of Casterbridge as well, and who sings the beauties
and charms of a homeland from which he emigrated and to
which he did not think of returning - Hardy, on several
instances, makes it clear that his deep interests lay
largely in business and money rather than in matters of the
heart. He first thinks of Elizabeth-Jane as a suitable
match in marriage for him but abandons her immediately he is
scared out of her way by her step-father. His heart is of
the sort that alters when it alteration finds. He is about
to resume his courtship to her when he finds a better match
in the more beautiful, richer, stronger and more forward and
more passionate Lucetta. No reader of the novel can forget
how Farfrae leaves his bride alone early on their wedding
morning to meet some tradesmen on business transactions.
His grief over her death does not deter him from seeking to
marry Elizabeth-Jane shortly after the passing away of the
poor woman. Lucetta alone, among the persons of the novel,
suffers from the heat of passion and, with her life, pays a
dear price for her desires and liberty. She is attracted by
Farfrae's charms the moment she sees him, and, like Eustacia before her, is spurred into scheming and intrigue to get rid of her old lover and to get hold of the new one. She is the only example of the victims of Natural Law in The Mayor of Casterbridge.

If Natural Law plays such a small part in the story, we can perceive some greater influence for another natural phenomenon in the course of action. The weather plays it foul with Henchard when it unexpectedly spoils his grand entertainment on the day of celebration. The wiser and more careful Farfrae takes due precautions against the foul play of the weather, where Henchard in his enthusiasm to impress forgets about nature and its unpredictable elements and the havoc it can wreak with his plans with the result of shaking his image and worsening his case and mood. Henchard's mistaken calculation after his consultation of the weather-prophet opens the door for such a neutral phenomenon as the weather to affect his life adversely with tragic consequences. It should be noticed here that the tragedy was necessarily coming because of the hero's character and because of other objective factors, we cannot forget further, that it is largely because of his lack of foresight and patience that the weather is allowed to destroy his
fortune; but we cannot be oblivious of the fact that it is through the power of nature, through inclement weather, that tragedy befalls the mayor and shatters his hopes. To an extent, as some would put it, he is the victim of "cruel" nature. But such adjectives as cruel or merciful should not be attached to nature. Nature is neutral in the moral sense. It is only as a limit of man's freedom that nature is to be seen. However, it was through an intricate interaction between inside and outside factors, between character and nature, that the mayor finds himself in the quagmire he is in.

Another aspect of Natural Law, the struggle for survival, for the female and for progeny governs action in the novel to a great extent. The struggle for survival, for sex and food, that permeates nature is dramatically distilled into the battle for which Casterbridge was the field. The bitter competition between Henchard and Farfrae goes along two main lines: business and heart. Henchard enters the battle laden with fatal past mistakes and heavy affiliations and responsibilities and outdated views of life and things deeply entrenched in his soul and mind and with a dangerous impulsiveness that amounts to moodiness and whimsicality. On his side he has his high social position,
considerable fortune and a stubborn determination for struggle. On Farfrae's front we notice his handsome face and sweet voice as strong weapons in the battle for sex; and his shallow emotional attachments to land and people so that he is not hampered by emotional entanglements in his dealing with life; his cold reasoning and his scientific well-planned transactions, and his ability to be satisfied with little steps forward on the road of self-help as aids in the battle for position, prestige and fortune. Henchard cannot overcome his weaknesses and susceptibilities and the strengths and advanced techniques of his rival and ends up losing virtually everything, money, possessions, lovers and friends. The struggle for the female ends up with a clear victory for the younger and the more handsome; but following that, as is not unusual in nature, with the death of the female. Henchard is a loser again in the battle for crops, food. This costs him everything he possesses; and the painful losing of his home and shelter can be seen as symbolic of the crushing defeat he suffers in the struggle.

From this view we can see the situation as a competition for survival along Darwinian lines where new species endowed with characteristics superior to those of existing ones push the latter away from the arena and occupy
their niche. It should be remarked, however, that that is a human version of the scene in the world of nature with other animals. It is true that it is much more complicated and subtler than the beastly struggle: it does not look as ruthless and glaringly violent, it does not lack moments of sympathy, cooperation and help. But it is concluded similarly.

The rules of the game that apply in nature apply also in the world of man. Man is but a civilised animal living under the rules that govern the rest of nature. It is true that man enjoys a greater amount of freedom than beasts do, being endowed with reasoning and consciousness, but it is also true that his freedom seems largely irrelevant owing to the stupendousness of the law governing all beings and to the near congruity of circumstances of man and beast. Henchard, Farfrae and the others seem to be reasoning, free-to-choose people but the options open to them were so narrow and limited that their freedom seems to have become a liability rather than an advantage.

Largely connected with the struggle for food here are the laws of the market.(14) Henchard finds himself in an extremely difficult situation in the beginning because of his bad wheat. Even though he is the mayor of the town the
Casterbridgians do not hesitate to complain sharply of his products, shaking his image strongly. The coming of Farfrae saves him from the corner he is in. The market wants only the best and will not tolerate mistakes and negligence. This is the game of the market and Henchard is a player who has to abide by its rules. His primitive techniques at dealing with the market game largely improve with the new methods Farfrae brings into the game. But Henchard lapses into his old style after Farfrae has left him. He cannot digest the new methods and incorporate them in his way of dealing with people and things. This is symbolised by his ridiculing the new sowing machine Farfrae has been so clever as to introduce into the rural community of Casterbridge. Henchard is a dinosaur who cannot keep pace with the changing environment around him. Abiding by the rules of the game, upon knowing from the weather-prophet there is going to be stormy weather, Henchard takes a big risk in buying huge quantities of crops in the hope of making big profits and pushing Farfrae out of the market. However, upon the prospects of what looks like fair weather Henchard sells heavily with great losses and is himself put out of the game altogether. Here again we see the subtle interaction between character and outside factors leading to the severe limitation of the ability of manoeuvre and
ultimately to the downfall of Henchard. Here again we see
Henchard's inability to adapt to the outside world upon
which he tries to lay his hands. The episode of Henchard's
risk illustrates the situation before the repeal of the corn
laws when the livelihood of the population was almost wholly
dependent on weather and local crops production. Henchard
is only part of the machinery of the world but because he is
living under the illusion that he is totally free and
independent he tries to impose his will on the machinery
with tragic results. This is the curse of the faulty and
illusory consciousness man is endowed with.

Circumstances and chance happenings are also
influential in the formulation of Henchard's career. To
begin with, previous circumstances that Henchard has not had
a hand in, had, in Duffin's words, "moulded his character".
Moreover, during the course of action in the novel, a number
of coincidences occur that would illustrate that character
is not wholly fate for Henchard. Hardy himself felt worried
upon the inauguration of the serialised version about the
oddsities in the novel and wrote in an entry dated January,
2, 1866,

*The Mayor of Casterbridge* begins to-day in the
*Graphic* and *Harrer's Weekly*. I fear it will not
be so good as I meant, but after all, it is not
improbabilities of incident but improbabilities of

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The coming of Henchard and his wife to the furmity tent and meeting the sly furmity woman, that give the action in the novel its direction, can be considered an unlucky coincidence. Another coincidence, an apparently lucky one this time, is the timely coming of Farfrae into town and to the celebrations at the King's Arms. Another arrival that runs strongly against probability is Susan's and Elizabeth-Jane's appearance in Casterbridge at the same moment. Hardy does not provide a satisfactory explanation for the surprising appearance. Thus we see how a series of contrived encounters are deployed to show that man is not his fate's master. Henchard's discovery of Elizabeth-Jane's real parenthood is a chance event that illustrates both the working of circumstances and the reckless character of Henchard. He should have not opened Susan's document till after Elizabeth-Jane's marriage, but seeing the envelop loose, and acting upon a sudden impulse he opens the letter and gets the shock of discovery which conditions his future dealing with Elizabeth-Jane. It is true that Henchard's opening the letter is not a mere coincidence. The loose strings, coupled with Henchard's impulsiveness make sure he would know the harmful secret. The episode seems designed
to make use of Henchard's impulsiveness by putting him in a difficult and tempting situation to show the interplay between his impulsive character and outside circumstances, acting in the direction of narrowing his options of action. One point that should be made here, however, is the improbability involved in Elizabeth-Jane's naming. I feel it hardly probable that Susan and Newson should choose for their daughter the name of Henchard's deceased daughter. But this is a ploy used by Hardy to create the confusion Henchard as well as the reader are to experience. Henchard could have come better off with the bliss of ignorance. But it was to be. Lucetta's coming to Casterbridge is, like Susan's, Elizabeth-Jane's and Farfrae's, not satisfactorily explained. Her coincidental meeting with Elizabeth-Jane in the graveyard is also an unprepared-for ploy to further the action in a certain course. Likewise, Farfrae's sudden appearance in Lucetta's house can be considered a stroke of fate, aided by Natural Law and desire on the part of the female, to take Lucetta away from Henchard's way and to add to his misery and push him deeper in despair.

Perhaps the arch-example of sudden untimely appearances in the novel is that of the furmity woman's coming out of the blue to appear in front of Henchard acting as a
magistrate in the police court. It is not Henchard's job to preside over the old woman's case. However, what can be seen as nothing but adverse fate makes sure that Henchard chair that particular case in the absence of the original magistrate. Hardy makes it seem as if poetic justice is taking place in punishing a wrong-doer; but the feeling cannot be resisted that, taking all things into consideration, Henchard is more sinned against than sinning. The appearance of the furmity woman comes at a very critical moment in Henchard's career to add to his problems and hasten his downfall. It is true that Henchard commits his ugly mistake under the eyes of that woman, but why after more than two decades from among all offenders of the law and order does this particular woman appear in front of Henchard in that particular case? Why is the original magistrate to be absent and why is Henchard from among all others to assume that responsibility? The only realistic answer is "it was to be". Responsibility lies here with senseless circumstances and "fate", fate not in the sense of an ulterior supernatural power but in the meaning of how things are and the direction action takes through the coming together of different elements (including that of character) and their interplay which makes a certain outcome inevitable. Starting from this Lance Butler draws an
equation between fate and fact (15) and we feel that even though there need not be a certain moral order in the universe Henchard is emotionally justified in feeling that "some power was working against him."[27, 204] This is characteristic of the Henchard type of character who, in the absence of any material proof of a universal order, assumes the responsibility of a law-giver and enforcer. This is also typical of many authorial intrusions in the novel which can be seen as endorsing this fetishism of Henchard. Judging from authorial intrusions, Harvey Curtis Webster observes, for example, that this feeling is sometimes shared between Henchard and his creator. (16) Henchard is paying dearly for his mistakes and punishment is far out of proportion with the crime.

Newson's sudden and unexplained appearance is another miserable coincidence, another stroke of fate to deprive the poor man of his last ray of hope. As usual Henchard's impulsiveness prevents him from dealing with this new development realistically. He lies to Newson, regrets this and tries to put matters right but after it is too late. Hardy seems to be trying here to strike a sensitive balance between individual responsibility and outward circumstances. He seems to be trying to make the reader condemn Henchard
but at the same time find excuses for and sympathise with him. Judging from outward circumstances Henchard is once more guilty, but again, taking all things into account we find Henchard a lonely person pushed into a hard corner by irresistible traits of his own character and outside circumstances over which he has no control. Although Henchard's blunder is accounted for by his impulsiveness, the episode is likely to give the impression that perhaps the necessities of the plot and the pattern of action make the course of events look inevitable. Henchard has partly to fill the role of the tragic hero hunted down by nemesis, and to fulfil this he has to lose Elizabeth-Jane's compassion and sympathy in order to able to leave Casterbridge as a "vagabond" and vanish on the heath.

This shows how the pattern of action in Hardy's novels with its quick pace, sudden appearances and reappearances, unexpected occurrences and chance events, both moulds characters's reactions showing how their freedom is limited and provides suitable representation of the author's views of how things in life go on and how people are robbed of their freedom by the events of everyday life. Hardy's characters do not have the leisure or the deliberateness that Jane Austen's characters, for example, enjoy. This
tends to show them sometimes as products of action rather than participators in it. They are often shown to be panting after events and their actions as mostly reactions to incidents that condition them to a great extent.

Chance happenings in the novel are apologised for by Hardy when he refuses to describe coincidences as curious. He asserts that each of what looks like curious events "is known to have its accounting causes."[29, 206] Though this assertion does not completely explain away the novel's improbabilities it can help as a key to understanding what Hardy believes of the cause and effect relationship in everyday life. In *Life* we read that Hardy believed "that neither Chance nor Purpose governs the universe but Necessity."[Life, 337] Necessity defines the relationship between cause and effect as unbreakable. Effects follow causes and this is simply how life runs. Hardy's stance on chance here may seem in opposition to what Darwin said on the subject. Darwinian evolution leaves a wide place for chance in the view of life. However, chance elements in the theory of evolution were referred to unknown factors and laws. And this is precisely what Hardy seems to be saying. Chance does have a place in Hardy's world but only as an inexplicable phenomenon which is known, however, to have its
accounting causes. It is dream-like to think that under normal circumstances fire will not burn or that water will not wet. Those who depend on Providence, miracles or vague powers to put matters right are under fatal illusions. Henchard's destiny in this understanding is nothing but the outcome of a set of complex causes emanating from uncontrollable traits of his character, blind circumstances and external powers. Carrying the argument a step further leads to the discussion of the formation of Henchard's character. J.S. Mill says that "We are capable of participating in making our character if we will." (17) The case, then, commonly is that character is originally made for one. One's ability to partake in making one's character is dependent on one's will to do so. This, in turn, is dependent on a host of factors, some drawn from the agent's psychological make-up and others from his milieu and surrounding circumstances. The degree of self-consciousness is a major factor in the will to change. Henchard's character, then has been made for him and events show that he lacks education and self-consciousness sufficient for creating in him the will for change. This was lacking, that is, until it was too late. His deficiencies and shortcomings dawn on Henchard gradually. He begins to recognise his faults and misconduct but he is shown as
unable to do much about them. When he attains a degree of self-knowledge that would theoretically put him on the right track he has lost the stamina and the will to fight on:

Externally there was nothing to hinder [Henchard's] making another start on the upward slope .... But the ingenious machinery contrived by the Gods for reducing human possibilities of amelioration to a minimum - which arranges that wisdom to do shall come pari passu with the departure of zest for doing - stood in the way of all that.[44, 320]

Henchard can serve as a good example for the young man Ruskin addresses in The Cestus of Aelaia. Ruskin dismisses the idea that experience is likely to bring wisdom and help in forming one's character:

You have "formed your character," forsooth! No! If you have chosen ill you have deformed it, and that for ever! ... "You will know better next time!" No. Next time will never come. Next time the choice will be in quite different things, - you weaker than you were by the evil into which you have fallen, it, more doubtful than it was, by the increased dimness of your sight. No one ever gets wiser by doing wrong, nor stronger.(18)

Hardy then blames "the Gods" and not Henchard for the poor man's predicament. What "Gods" does Hardy really mean? They are certainly neither the Olympian community nor the Christian God for Hardy has long pronounced his disbelief in any divine supernatural power. Hardy's "Gods" most likely include the god of character, the god of weather and the god
of the market, among others. The "conspiracy" of those gods acting from within as well as from without Henchard, with him being unable to control the chain of events the conspiracy has initiated brings about his calamitous downfall. H. C. Webster finds a cruel Immanent Will in the story. (19) The Will is to be seen as the resultant force of powers in action where man's character is but a number in the equation.

The tragedy of Henchard is apt to show Hill's belief in man's capability in changing his character as over-optimistic. In the first place, the likelihood of the existence of the will to change is dependent on such hard and widely-varied conditions that it can realistically be neglected in many cases. Even if it is there, it will have to fight fiercely against elements from within as well as from without the character. Perhaps the most powerful of these are the innermost and deeply entrenched tendencies of the soul. Troy's is an obvious example of how such experiments are likely to end when he decides on self-reformation and begins what he wants to be his new life with planting the flowers on Fanny's grave. His accusation of Providence of thwarting his attempt is, in fact, nothing but a thin mask of his inability to affect the change and
face his bare soul which he wants to change. Furthermore, as we have seen with Henchard, even if the theoretical ability to change were acquired with experience, it is most likely that the attaining of this will will be synchronic with the loss of stamina and the wish for struggle. Butler draws an enlightening comparison between Henchard and other tragic heroes:

Henchard learns the lesson, but it is opposite to the lesson of most tragic heroes. Oedipus, Job, even Lear, seem to find some sort of peace, they learn the folly of pride, power and wealth, and something else appears to be given to them in place of these, a touch of divine pity. Henchard, on the other hand, looks into the darkness and learns only that it is dark and that beyond it there is only more darkness.(20)

I feel this is the essence of what is usually called Hardy's pessimism. From what can be gathered from Hardy's comments on life in his personal writings as well as literary works, Hardy was a pessimist deep at heart and had very little hope, if any, of happiness being able to be achieved in this life, which is the only chance of existence one has got. He advocated pessimism sometimes as a winning game and other times as a way of melioration, but we feel that he was a pessimist deeply at heart and had little hope for melioration. He did not believe that man was capable of attaining happiness. This might be a remnant from his
childhood which he got and shared with his mother from the pessimism and fears of the labouring classes. It was, however, made clear in his commentary on the "figure in the van" which knocks down every attempt on the part of man to achieve happiness. Hardy firmly believed happiness was an illusion, and the endings of almost all his novels are illustrations of this. Even the novels which seem to end "happily" have a dark taint. Didn't Hardy himself make sure his Woodlanders should not be misunderstood when he stated categorically that Grace was not going to attain happiness with her husband? Even Tess and Angel, were they to remain together, were not going to live happily. Perhaps theirs was the happy ending! Happiness in Hardy's novels seems to be epitomised in the illusive ideal woman Jocelyn Pierston was trying to lay his hands on. The three Avicees seem to be different versions of the ideal that man is endeavouring to achieve to no avail. Michael Henchard's relentless pursuit of happiness is just another story in man's struggle for his ideal. The crushing defeat he meets with is, likewise, another one in the long series of disappointments man is to face in this struggle. Henchard's is an embodiment of man's efforts in this direction and his failure is the sure end that is going to loom large at the end of the tunnel: nothing but darkness.

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It may be useful here to remember what Farfrae and Elizabeth-Jane (of whom Butler would hazard to say "she comes closest to a direct expression of his views" (21)) "felt about life and its surroundings - that they were a tragical rather than a comical thing;"[8, 64] This is a reflection of what Hardy has repeated throughout *Life*. An entry in Hardy's words in the book states clearly that "A man would never laugh were he not to forget his situation, or were he not one who never has learned it."[Life, 112] The essential nature of life is sorry and there is nothing man can do about it, or almost nothing. I would not venture to be one of Hardy's accusers of fatalism, but I feel his novels provide very little ground for hope. We have seen how Henchard's life has been a continual struggle for improvement that fails disastrously. It failed because life is what it is and because this is the way things (including character) are. In this, Hardy appears to be talking of his own feeling when he describes the expression on Susan's face at the very beginning of the novel as "of one who deems anything possible at the hands of Time and Chance, except perhaps, fair play."[1, 38] Time and Chance have almost all the cards and man has only to suffer. Although Time and Chance are equivalent to what Hardy in other places calls Fate, God, the gods, the Immortals, etc..., and strongly
give the impression of a personal power, we can understand them as only personifications, as rhetorical ploys to denote neutral elements in the equation of man's life. Then we should expect from them neither fair nor foul play. But the outcome of the human situation shows that there is the greatest possibility that things are sure to end up in a mess. It is true that the world is not custom-made for man but it seems equally true that it is made to frustrate man whose consciousness has so abnormally evolved as to expect happiness and satisfaction from blind circumstances that tend to limit his freedom fiercely. One of the greatest disappointments may be the fact that even experience is useless in attaining wisdom. And even when wisdom is attained, as Henchard's experience so painfully shows, it comes when it is no more of any use.

What, then, can man do alleviate his suffering? The one and single way that seems to be open is renunciation. Life's golden rule appears to be: relinquish all hopes and expectations and you will suffer no frustrations and disappointments. The question remains however if man can give up hope. Hardy's novels say that this is not always possible. Very few of Hardy's characters seem to have learned the lesson of renunciation, and even then it is
least likely to result in any positive alleviation of pain. In many cases the result is still positive pain. We have to consider the stories of Tess, Marty and Giles, for only three examples, to realise the futility even of renunciation. Man is, then, doomed to suffer, with renunciation or without it.

This, I feel, is the deep essence of Hardy's message. Man's freedom is irrelevant as he is going to suffer. Man's freedom is freedom to choose between different ways of suffering.
NOTES


5. Ibid.


8. Ibid. pp. 22-3. In my understanding of the self-destructive urge in man I am indebted to this enlightening book even though sometimes I have not quoted directly from it.


10. For a fuller discussion of melancholia see Man Against Himself, pp. 42-3.

11. Granting that Henchard's homosexual tendencies are not clear enough in the novel and can only be dealt with in some form of conjecture which is, nevertheless, based on certain hints and eccentricities in Henchard's character and behaviour towards Farfrae, they can help as an additional explanation to his deep sense of guilt giving rise to unconscious urges towards self-punishment and self-harm.


14. I use the word "laws" here not in the same sense as the unalterable "law" of nature but as rules of a
game by which players have to abide if they wish to participate.


16. Harvey Curtis Webster notices that "there are times when even Hardy appears to feel a sinister intelligence in control, as when he comments that Henchard's newly gained knowledge of how to live is useless because of 'God's ingenious machinery' for 'reducing human possibilities of amelioration to a minimum.'" *On a Darkling Plain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), reprinted with a new preface in 1964, p. 147.


"TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES"

Tess of the D'Urbervilles is one of the finest expressions of Hardy's "seemings" of life. In it, more than in any other novel, perhaps, Hardy has mixed reality, dream and symbolism to convey his impression. This has made it possible to misread the novel and come up with mistaken perception of what the writer wants to say. An unsympathetic reading of the novel, for example, would make possible attacks on the gross improbabilities in the plot and severe criticism of the too frequent authorial intrusions directly delineating the author's attitudes towards subjects such as nature, fate and religion, among many others.

In order to enter the world of Tess and fully appreciate what the writer wants to say, it is essential to understand Hardy's view of fiction and story-telling and its role.
Hardy would perhaps prefer to call himself a story-teller rather than a novelist, if the definition of the novel was to be narrowed down to the Jamesian concept of it as a tight and well-built work of art with emphasis on outside form and causality in action. Hardy's insatiable interest in the occult, the bizarre and the astonishing is made clear in theory in Life and other personal writings, and in practice in numerous episodes in the novels and the short stories. Conceding that "human nature must never be made abnormal," Hardy sees that "the uncommonness must be in the events."[Life, 150] Hardy believes that "The truth is that in artistic matters, literary & other, you often best keep the rules by occasionally breaching them."[Letters, I, 274; to William Heinemann, Jun 21, 1892] This cannot possibly fit into the clear-cut carefully-built kind of novel Jane Austen or Henry James wrote for example. It must always be borne in mind, Hardy wrote in "The Profitable Reading of Fiction":

despite the claims of realism, that the best fiction, like the highest artistic expression in other modes, is more true, so to put it, than history or nature can be. In history occur from time to time monstrosities of human action and character explicable by no human law which appertains to sane beings; hitches in the machinery of existence, wherein we have not yet discovered a principle, which the artist is therefore bound to regard as accidents, hindrances to clearness of
presentation, and, hence, weakeners of the effect. [Personal Writings, 117]

Bearing this view in mind, the effect of many problems likely to arise in the understanding of the world of Tess will be abated. We find ourselves in front of a huge carpet richly and densely patterned with lines and colours and we are left to follow the pattern in accordance with our special idiosyncrasy.

Coincidences and improbabilities pose some considerable difficulty in Hardy. Taken in isolation, they may be referred to their accounting causes; but there are so many of them that a serious investigation of the writer's attitude is justified. A closer and detailed look at individual coincidences and an analysis of their role will be attempted later but it will be sufficient here to point to different possible understandings of these accidents. They might be taken to mean the author's overstated belief in chance, fate and the meaninglessness of life. This is probably in line with Hardy's views of life to be gathered from the novels and other personal writings. Another reading would criticise Hardy's "carelessness" with plotting. This is also in line with Hardy's theory of the novel: Hardy is apparently being careless with his plots.
But that is perhaps part of his intention. Fed up and greatly repulsed by strict pedantic realism that aimed at depicting every small and trivial detail in incidents, men and things in an attempt to be true to life, Hardy reacts strongly against that current in art and, probably not always fully consciously, finds himself in a defiant mood, aiming at showing traces of carelessness in his plots to undermine the claims of the realists. In "The Science of Fiction" Hardy stresses the importance of penetrating outward appearances and bringing up the really important inner issues, so to speak. He calls for describing what a person really is and not what he looks like for instance. Upon reading Henry James's *Roderick Harry* Hardy wrote on July 9th, 1888: "After this kind of work one feels inclined to be purposely careless in detail. The great novels of the future will certainly not concern themselves with the minutiae of manners." [*Life*, 211; my italics]

In this he is perhaps a descendant of the writer(s) of the Old Testament rather than of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Homeric tradition makes a point of conveying to us as clearly as possible an exact picture of the reality to the minutest detail. The descriptions of Achilles' shield and Ulysses' scar are ample examples of this. The Old Testament
narrative, on the other hand, does away with most details and penetrates outward appearances to the core of things.

The story of Abraham's attempted slaughter of his son can help as an illustration. (2) This presumably is exactly what Hardy wants to do as we can understand from what he clearly states in "The Science of Fiction", and this is in fact, what we witness in Tess. We feel that the writer's main intention is to communicate his impressions and his vision, and that he never cares about unnecessary details. He is after "a sight for the finer qualities of existence, an ear for 'the still sad music of humanity'," [Personal Writings, 137] not after what the senses are apt to show of outward appearances in photographic precision.

In Tess Hardy establishes reality according to his "theory" and transcends the immediacy of details to general human ideals and passions. The heroine, to begin with, is said to have been derived from real life. (3) The use of real places (with fictitious names) which can fairly easily be identified certainly adds to the sense of "reality" conveyed by the novel. Furthermore, faithfulness to human nature and generally accepted patterns of causality in events is perhaps the greatest link between the novel and reality.
In several crucial places in the novel, however, Hardy chooses to keep off details of events or dialogues, opting for a deeper impression rather than a particularised realistic picture. In other words, he opts for "telling" rather than "showing". The rape-seduction scene is dealt with by a rather lengthy comment on Providence and those who rely on it, while, on the other hand, the whole scene is kept in the dark. Nothing again is reported of the details of Tess's relation to Angel of her past misfortunes, except perhaps a few details of how the room looked at the beginning of her story. Still greater we feel the void left by omitting the description of Tess's actual mood and actions while killing Alec. So Hardy is probably more anxious to convey his impressions and inner "realities" than to give a photographic or cinematographic picture of life.

The use of symbols in the story further takes it away from a "realistic" depiction of life. The prick Tess gets from Alec's roses and the gallows depicted by Dairyman Crick by the fork and knife at the breakfast table in the dairy kitchen, Angel's name and harp (ironically used) and the clear correspondence between Tess's inner moods and the surroundings she happens to be amidst (Talbothays, Flintcomb-Ash), to mention only a few, carry the novel from 
the level of reality to that of allegory and symbolism. It is true that with effortless authorship Hardy achieves an almost perfect mixture of the two levels (and the novel lends itself to different levels and modes of reading) but we shall miss a great deal if we take everything in the novel literally. (4) This understanding will prove helpful later on when we come to the discussion of freedom and responsibility in the novel.

The story, furthermore, can be seen as a tragedy partly built on the Aristotelian concept, modified to suit the nineteenth century outlook and the prose form of the work. Aristotle stresses such ideas as the noble hero, poetic justice, and cathartic ending. Moreover, according to *Poetica* the characters should be the finest of their class. Commenting on the choice of common persons as characters for tragic novels, Jeanette King finds novelists who do this "faced with the problem of finding compensating factors for the loss of the (symbolic) values that derive from the hero's identification with the fate of his people." (5) Tess is a descendant of an aristocratic family; and in spite of the fact that her family has come low in the world, she has a straightforwardness, pride and a purity that are representative of humanity in its suffering. So the case is
that if she does not completely represent the nobility she represents a queer mixture of it and of the down-trodden masses - albeit a sensitive, proud and a "purified" version of them. Furthermore, if Tess does not face the gods or a universal moral order, as Oedipus and Lear do, she faces, nevertheless a man-made social order and a universe (though without teleological order) whose forces are bent to torment man. Tess's tragic destiny stems partly from her representativeness of man. In her genuineness, self-sacrifice and endurance she is the pure woman, and in her beauty of body and disposition, the standard woman meant by nature for survival and fecundity. Moreover, Tess's representativeness is not limited to her own time. In 1925, upon the publishing of the definitive edition of Tess, Hardy was reported in the Oct. 24 issue of John o'London's Weekly to have remarked that "in his view the experiences of the heroine could have led to the same issue 'last week' just as much as 'fifty years back.'"[Personal Writings, 248] We are clearly in front of a tragic situation in the wider sense of the word. It is probably useful here to remember one of Hardy's definitions of tragedy included in an entry belonging to a date just after that of the publication of Tess -- October 24, 1892. He writes that "The best tragedy - highest tragedy - in short is that of the WORTHY
encompassed by the INEVITABLE."[Life, 251] The novel seems in part an application of the view.

Furthermore, a sense of freedom also brings the novel nearer to the tragedy. Tess possesses an inner sense of freedom of choice as much as Othello and Lear, for example, do. The inner struggle between telling Angel or staying silent which ends by her telling him at last shows that Tess is capable of taking decisions despite external factors and internal tendencies. She cannot be considered a clock-work automaton determined by laws. Her freedom is limited by numerous factors, as we shall see, but she retains that sense of freedom essential for tragedy. E.A. Baker observes that "Tragedy loses dignity and beauty in the exact measure that it is the play of alien forces controlling the action of a mere pawn."[6] But Baker does not do Hardy full justice when he says that "What most of Hardy's tragedies exhibit is, not the defeat, but the paralysis of the will."[7] It is true that characters' freedom is severely restricted but they are not lacking in the sense of freedom, essential for tragedy.
Hardy looked at the novel as a tragedy in the tradition of the Greek and Elizabethan drama. In a letter to Edward Clodd dated Feb. 4, 1892, Hardy voiced his indignation at the attack Andrew Lang had mounted on Tess and went on to say:

The only clear objection he makes to the novel is that it is a tragedy; and every word he says against it tells with equal force against all the tragic dramatists, Shakespeare and the Elizabethans. [Letters, I, 257]

One of the things that keeps Tess from the realm of tragedy proper, however, is that the heroine cannot be considered fully responsible for a crime against the gods or a universal order. She, nevertheless, thinks at the beginning that she has committed a crime against nature,

Walking among the sleeping birds in the hedges, watching the skipping rabbits on a moonlit warren, or standing under a pheasant-laden bough, she looked upon herself as a figure of Guilt intruding into the haunts of Innocence. [13, 114]

Others in the novel (like Angel, to her grief) see that she has offended social order. Conceding that she has breached a man-made law, the narrator, on the other hand, insists that she has been a pure woman all through. Commenting on her guilt feelings, we hear his voice, "...she was making a
distinction where there was no difference."[13, 114](8) But, then, Hardy was not presumably aiming at high Aristotelian tragedy. We feel that what he wanted to do perhaps was to communicate to us a bitter sense of injustice, cruelty and imbalance in the universe within his own view of tragedy. He was perhaps rather leaning on Aristotelian tragic concepts to produce the tragic effects of his particular view of the world.

Writing in the second half of the nineteenth century, in the four decades following the publication of the Origin of Species and Essays and Reviews, for example, and in the midst of heated religious and cultural debates, Hardy found himself facing a true artistic dilemma. The new outlook propounded by scientists and freethinkers had not completely sunk in yet, and literature (of which the novel is a comparatively recent art) had still to assimilate the full message of science and secularism. Hardy, among (and perhaps more than) other men of letters, had to tackle almost brand new subjects and outlooks with the ancient tools available. Those ancient tools, however, could not have been borrowed easily alone without their ideological backgrounds. Taking into account the literary tastes of the second half of the nineteenth century, which still saw in

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Aristotelian standards the high models for tragedy to follow, one cannot cut off tragedy from the concept of incumbent gods, morally ordered universe and *nemesis*, for example. Nature and natural laws, in the Darwinian sense, do not suffice to fill the vacuum left by the absence of the gods in the universe of the tragedy. They are too impersonal. Nor do necessity and the law of causation. This is why we are likely to come up with discrepancies and seeming contradictions in the novel. Hardy's practice is apt sometimes to look like superimposing one thing on another of an essentially different nature. Hence the invocation of gods and protests against the Immortals while at the same time striving to put through the picture of an orderless Providence-less universe. Groping for some pattern of tragedy that would reflect his age Hardy was perhaps employing the ancient gods for a double aim. The first was to invoke the classical works in which they appeared and the atmosphere that impregnated them. Secondly, he was perhaps implying some sort of resemblance between the effects those gods had on man's life, and the effects of overpowering impersonal laws contemporary science had discovered as ruling life.
One thing in common between the tragic and the scientific visions, however, is man's suffering: at the hands of capricious gods in the case of tragedy and at the hands of senseless laws (and mainly because of his own feelings and consciousness) in the case of science. That common background provided good material for Hardy that was exploited to the utmost, though without completely concealing the essential schism.

Hardy's invocation of Shakespeare as supportive material in the Preface [28] is an attempt consciously made to consolidate the image of the story as tragedy. But in the face of Hardy's strongly pronounced scientific beliefs his protests against "gods" are liable to sound as hollow cries against a vacuum. What saves them from this is to look at them as tragic props allowed in a work of art. Even in this case they are not mere tropes and can be seen to bear a significant message. Hardy's "gods" are laws or forces of nature that govern man's life.

Another important point to be discussed before embarking on studying the meaning of freedom in the novel, and that has a bearing on our understanding of it, is that related to the narrator.
The narrator is by no means the same person as the author. However, he represents the author and can be regarded as a mask worn by the author showing the sum-total of the characteristics the author wants us to see in him as a story-teller.

The omniscient narrator of Tess's tragedy, as can be clearly seen from direct comments and unfolding events, tells the story from a vantage point in the future of the events narrated. Although he tells the events in a chronological order and conceals from us the outcome of the situation until its time has arrived in the normal sequence, he lets us feel that he has got all the details of the story already. From this narratorial vantage point we can see and judge the careers of the characters in their entirety and we can follow the diverse influences in their lives and see how their thought is moulded, their decisions taken and their actions directed. In this the narrator is perhaps meant by the author to be our guide through the world of the novel.

However, we cannot put full confidence in the narrator and sometimes we have to rely on our own judgements for reasonable objective views of the situations. The narrator can come dangerously close to events and persons blurring his (and our) sight in the process. His sympathy or lack of
sympathy for certain characters can greatly affect his judgement of responsibility which is dangerously relayed to us through intrusions and comments that so frequently interfere with action. In the words of J.H. Miller, Hardy's narrator (albeit of another story, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*) is a voice of Hardy invented to tell the story for him; or, to put this another way, the narrator is a personality created by the tempo, diction, and tone of the words Hardy chose to put down on paper. (9)

Moreover, into this narrator are instilled the un- or sub-conscious attitudes, beliefs and preferences of the author that tend sometimes to confuse our view of things and might do harm to the consistency of the work. As we have seen, more careful writers tend to guard against these slips and to present their work in an immaculate manner as they consciously planned it and wanted it to appear. However, this is not the case with Hardy who seems to have meant to be careless with his plots and to give the impression of the traditional story-teller with powers to capture the primitive vulnerability of the audience to astonishment. (10)

"Midnight came and passed silently, for there was nothing to announce it in the valley of the Froom."[37, 272] Thus in a once-upon-a-time tone the episode of Angel's somnambulistic adventure begins. Suspense is built with
every word, description or piece of narrative. "Was he going to drown her? Probably he was. The spot was lonely, the river deep and wide enough to make such a purpose easy of accomplishment."

The narrative goes on with thrilling suspense to a still higher pitch with Angel laying Tess down in the coffin and himself lying on the ground. In the story-teller's attempt at holding our astonished curiosity, the educated observer part of the narrator does not forget to explain the inner psychological reasons behind Clare's behaviour,

Under the influence of any strongly disturbing force Clare would occasionally walk in his sleep, and even perform strange feats, ... Tess saw that continued mental distress had wrought him into that somnambulistic state now.

Another danger with Hardy's narrator is the great confusion in "voices" resulting from Hardy often mixing his narrator's voice with those of the characters so that one cannot always distinguish with clarity and decision between what the narrator is saying and what the character is thinking. At other times, the differences in the inconsistent tones of the narrator's voices are apt to mislead in the understanding of the narrative. Reading the authorial intrusions we are sometimes at a loss as to who is
addressing us, the primitive story-teller or the educated person conscious of the latest trends in science and philosophy. (11) The dual persona of the narrator, that of the story-teller/Ancient Mariner and that of the educated observer, can be seen in the commentary on the rape-seduction scene. The nineteenth century secular observer wonders "where was Tess's guardian angel?" and ridicules the providential explanation of things. This voice, however, gives in momentarily to the fetishistic superstitious story-teller, "One may, indeed, admit the possibility of a retribution lurking in the present catastrophe." So when we come to what "Tess's own people" say we have three points of consciousness that might mislead rather than lead us in our understanding of the novel. When we see how the villagers' interpretation of the cock crows, was realised we are entitled to ask which "voice" of the narrator was acting. I feel that Hardy's narrator is probably a person much like Angel Clare, capable of putting mistletoe branches under wedding beds while at the same time denouncing the belief in supernatural powers. This attitude, however, is not out of the world of the Hardy of "The Oxen" or "Hap" for example. It is useful, then, to be aware of the role of the narrator in the novel and keep ourselves at a distance and not to mix him with his creator.
or originator or with characters whose story he is relating.

To return to Tess. In fact Tess seems not only the central figure in the book but its very justification. In his letters and personal writings Hardy spoke of Tess as of a real person, a thing that had not happened with respect to previous characters; and even spoke of his "love" for her. This is mainly why I have chosen to concentrate my attention on the character of Tess in this paper. Another reason is that since she is the most fully delineated person in the story and, to a great extent, the centre of consciousness through which the story is related, freedom-limiting factors are most obvious in her thought and action.

One of the most painful things in the novel is the impression derived from its subtitle, "A Pure Woman". For a pure woman, a non-sinner, as it were, to meet the destiny Tess is to meet, the universe must be a horrible place to live in. She has not, like Eustacia, with whom she shares a rich sexuality, given callous offense to anybody; on the contrary, she is prepared to sacrifice her welfare (and her life at the end) for the sake of others. Unlike Eustacia, propriety and dignity, and even conformity, count highly with Tess, before her inner selfish desires. If Henchard's tragedy stems from his being a "man of character", what is
the justification of the tragedy of the pure woman? If Henchard has the tragic characteristics of pride, ambition, and of putting worldly progress above empathy, and suffers because of this, why does Tess suffer?

To create the "pure woman" Hardy lavishes on Tess beauty of body and sweetness of disposition that help in winning over readers' hearts to her and in sharpening the sense of pain and indignation at her fate. (12)

The first impression we get of Tess in the May-Day dance is that "She is a fine and handsome girl." (2, 39) Her beauty is, however, not only of external features. It is described as having a distinctive "eloquence" about it. This eloquent beauty is stressed consistently all through the story, and is shown to have survived all sorts of hardships and misfortunes. On her trip to Flintcomb-Ash she has to wear old clothes and cut her eye-brows to protect herself from unwelcome attentions of passers-by. (42) At Flintcomb-Ash in spite of her harsh living and working conditions she retains her attraction, which is probably the main cause behind Alec's backsliding.
According to Natural Selection Tess's beauty should be considered an asset in the battle of life: for survival, sex, progeny and position. From this perspective Tess is to be deemed one of the Fit, or perhaps even of the Fittest, not only to survive but to enjoy fulfilment and progeny as well. But as it often happens in human life, beauty turns out to be a burden and a liability, leading more often than not (to judge from Hardy at least) to misery, misfortune and, in many cases, death. This is perhaps because human life is governed not only by the simple laws that reign in the rest of nature but are greatly complicated by laws and norms men and women develop for their living together. In this Tess is not out of place in Hardy's novels. Elfride's beauty attracts her three admirers but brings her only woe and death. Eustacia's physical beauty earns her the love of the finest men on the heath but brings her suffering and death as well.(13)

Moreover, in addition to her eloquent beauty, Tess enjoys a rich sexuality which is symbolised right from the beginning by the red ribbon she is the only girl at the May-Day dance to wear.(14) Later, at Talbothays, in her walk through the unweeded garden, absent-mindedly attracted by Angel's harp-playing, Tess appears to be desire incarnate.
She is caught in the web of desire, and the deep emotional state she is in is clearly of a sexual nature. The state of the garden can be considered a reflection of her condition.

The garden is full of juicy grass which sent up mists of pollen at a touch; ...[and] weeds whose red and yellow and purple hues formed a polychrome as dazzling as that of cultivated flowers. [Tess] went stealthily as a cat, ...gathering cuckoo spittle on her skirts, ... staining her hands with thistle-milk and slug-lime, and rubbing off upon her naked arms sticky blights which, though snow-white on the apple-tree trunks, made madder stains on her skin; thus she drew quite near to Clare, ....

[Angel's notes'] harmonies passed like breezes through her bringing tears into her eyes. The floating pollen seemed to be his notes made visible, ...

Everything in the garden bears the sign of deep sexual passion. In the lush symbolism of the scene involving the senses of smell, touch, sight and hearing are rendered the heroine's innermost emotions and yearnings.

Turning to Tess's inner characteristics and distinctions we find that Tess is endowed with a keen sense of responsibility, courage and clear-sighted realism. This is made obvious quite early in the story. Talking with her mother on the discovery of their aristocratic origin she asks her mother whether the news will bring them any
This brings her into sharp contrast with her dreamy parents. Her objection to her father going to the pub to recruit strength for his midnight journey enhances this impression. When her mother goes to fetch the doubly intoxicated husband at Rollicker's and stays there, Tess takes the situation into her hands, sends her brother to fetch the truant parents, then goes herself to fetch all three. When her father and mother, after reaching home, resume their conversation on their favourite topic, Durbeyfield's aristocratic origin, Tess keeps reminding them of the beehives that have to be delivered by the midnight journey. When her father, furthermore, as expected, proves too drunk to take the beehives she undertakes the responsibility of the difficult job herself. Under the sense of guilt that she has killed the family horse she accepts her mother's suggestion to go and "claim kin" with the rich d'Urbervilles in an attempt to alleviate the suffering of the family. Even after what she looks upon as her shame and sin she is able to recover and begin life again with a renewed zest and learns to live unaided with her misfortune.
Essentially a sensitive creature, Tess is acutely aware of what others say or think about her and endeavours to embody the communal beliefs and ideals of conduct in herself. Her father's blunder in front of the girls at the opening scene causes her immense embarrassment and her dancing mates' laughter brings her to tears. Overhearing Angel's brothers' harsh comments on her unnerves her and makes her give up her last hope of getting in touch with the Clare family. Paradoxically her sensitivity to the suffering of others is displayed in her breaking the necks of the dying pheasants to release them from pain.

Another characteristic that endears Tess to readers and helps in realising the ideal of the pure woman is her tremendous endurance and long-suffering. Hardy seems clearly determined to rally the reader's sympathies towards the heroine to the utmost. In this case he is successful in spite of his verging on melodrama in many situations. Single-handedly, she is pictured to have borne the brunt of her "sin" and eventually overcome it. Her long suffering at Flintcomb-Ash bears witness to her endurance and ability at facing overwhelmingly antagonistic situations, sticking to her ideals and principles. What makes things more difficult for her is that she is fighting against temptation all the
time. Alec's amorous overtures offer her an easy way out of her suffering but she is determined to remain loyal to her cruel husband. Only extreme poverty and the ghost of hunger hovering over the heads of her mother, brothers and sisters bring her down in the end. In this Hardy is probably trying to minimise her responsibility in the readers' eyes. We can deduce that Hardy is essentially sympathetic to the heroine's suffering and that he means to recruit readers' sympathies by devising unbelievably difficult situations for her to tackle. (15) Tess's long suffering, moreover, both endears her to readers and adds poignancy to her tragedy.

A quality that sets Tess apart from many a Hardy tragic character is renunciation. She does not try to "lay her hands on time". Neither does she have aspirations to high and glamorous life. She chooses not "to chew quite close" [FFMC, 8, 89] and in this she shares the attitudes of Thomasin, Elizabeth-Jane, and Oak but does not enjoy the fruit. Looking into her relationship with Angel will make this clear. At Talbothays, resisting her flaming desire for him, she does her best to divert his attention from herself to some other milkmaid. Later on, when Angel decides they should part after their ill-omened wedding night she agrees to his conditions without the slightest resistance. The
narrator comments:

If Tess had been artful, had she made a scene, fainted, wept hysterically, in that lonely lane, not withstanding the fury of fastidiousness with which he was possessed, he would probably not have withstood her. But her mood of long-suffering made his way easy for him, and she herself was his best advocate.[37, 278]

Her encounters with Alec at Flintcomb-Ash and later at Kingsbere set her in sharp contrast with Eustacia. Tess is offered high life enjoyment and riches, as much as, and probably more than, Eustacia, but chooses to be loyal to her principles and to the husband who has parted from her cruelly. Eustacia on the other hand, cannot resist and surrenders to the temptation of wealth and glamour and the prospect of getting away from the heath, her Hades. Moreover, Tess shares with Clym his passivity and non-rebelliousness. She accepts her fate without protest. At Flintcomb-Ash, she and Marian "worked on hour after hour, ... not thinking of the justice or injustice of their lot."[43, 310] This shows that Tess possesses a high degree of self-consciousness and that she is greatly in control of her desires and impulses, and not the opposite.
We can deduce from the foregoing that the causes for Tess's tragedy are much more complex than a yielding to simple inner desires and impulses. In the following I shall try to detect some of the forces that can be held responsible for limiting Tess's freedom and for her tragedy.

The portentous afternoon cock crows on Tess's wedding day can be seen as symbolic of a message of suffering to come. As such, suffering would probably come from a source ulterior to man, the cock crows can be considered as omens from a supernatural force. This seems the only justification of the cock crows in the story. Saying that in inserting this bit of folk superstition Hardy is aiming at recording the folk beliefs of a vanishing way of life does not do the passage or Hardy's imaginative powers full justice. Neither does taking them as mere artistic embellishment of the rural scene which will leave them a superfluous superimposition on the course of action. Here, I believe, we have Hardy enlisting his story teller's capacities in delivering a complex message portending woe and misfortune. The prophetic crows are realised in Retty's attempt at drowning herself and Marian's drinking bout. And worse is still in store for the bride and groom. The uncommonness in this, however, it should be noticed, is
perfectly accounted for by causality. Retty's and Marian's
behaviour and what happens to Tess are perfectly explicable
by their characters and by antecedent events. But a dry
explanation like this will make the cock crows redundant.
To Hardy, they are an artistic way of delivering a message
from a power behind man, a power in control of man. In
this, as in the breaking of the key in Far from the Madding
Crowd, Hardy, or rather his story-teller, is borrowing from
the superstitious explanation a symbol for (the likelihood
of) suffering to come.

Setting aside the controversial references to the
absent Providence of the seduction scene [11] and the sport
of the President of the Immortals [59, 420] we see very
little of supernatural interference mentioned in the story.
Forces limiting Tess's freedom can be roughly grouped under
two titles: heredity and environment.(16)

It is perhaps best to begin with the implications of
the allusions to Providence and its role in the novel and
the Aeschylean phrase before proceeding to discuss the
naturalistic factors.
The scene of the rape-seduction provides an excellent occasion for Hardy's narrator to intrude and voice his attitudes towards traditional Providence and waiters on it. In a bitterly ironic manner he accusingly asks, "... Where was Tess's guardian angel? Where was the providence of her simple faith?" and volunteers to answer, "Perhaps, like that other god of whom the ironical Tishbite spoke, he was talking, or he was pursuing, or he was in a journey, or he was sleeping and not to be awaked." Hardy brings Tess's story near the tragic situation in suggesting a solution for the dilemma of seeking a justification for Tess's seduction:

One may, indeed, admit the possibility of a retribution lurking in the present catastrophe. Doubtless some of Tess d'Urberville's mailed ancestors rollicking home after a fury had dealt the same measure even more ruthlessly towards peasant girls of their time. But though to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children may be a morality good enough for divinities, it is scorned by average human nature; and it therefore does not mend the matter.

As Tess's own people down in those retreats are never tired of saying among each other in their fatalistic way: "It was to be." There lay the pity of it.[11, 101-2]

The potential tragic motif is, therefore, aborted for the sake of a scientific explanation. In keeping with his irony on the providential guardian-angel and fully aware of the nineteenth century audience familiar with the scientific and
cultural trends initiated by down-to-earth scientists and freethinkers, Hardy dismisses the idea of divine retribution and ridicules the fatalism of Tess's people and throws the question anew in the face of philosophers looking for an order in the universe. It is clear that an answer is not given, but it is equally clear that according to the narrator, no providence is to be looked for in the universe. Responsibility lies elsewhere.

If responsibility does not lie with Christian Providence, does it lie with the Greek President of the Immortals? Hardy's Aeschylean phrase started a storm of criticism in his own day and continues to be a source of discussion and controversy. Unlike the "colossal Prince of the world" [RN, IV, 9, 304], the President is referred to by the narrator and not by a character trying to escape responsibility. (17) Upon the publication of Tess, the book's theology (of which the Aeschylean phrase is an aspect) earned the writer bitter criticism and charges of perverse belief. Life reports a critic's comment that "Hardy pictures an all-powerful being endowed with the baser human passions, who turns everything to evil and rejoices in the mischief he has wrought."[243] Hardy was greatly indignant at the charges levelled against him, and though his answer
(reported in Life, again) was not posted, it showed his sharp bitterness at what he thought a deliberate malicious misunderstanding of his art, stating categorically that all references in the novel to supernatural powers should be read rhetorically and as artistic ploys, "(a method not unusual in imaginative prose or poetry)",[244] to heighten the effect of the narrative.

The Aeschylean phrase certainly recalls Greek tragedy, something which Hardy perhaps is doing intentionally in an attempt to add to the tragic effect of the story. The phrase thus viewed should not pose any theological or philosophical problems. I feel that the problem is likely to arise from mixing the different modes or tones of comments in Hardy's narrative, a thing, however, he is to be held partly responsible for. Thus the phrase can be considered an instance of where the two personalities of Hardy's narrator are acting at the same time. His story-teller is tempted to make the comment invoking the influence of supernatural powers in man's life. His educated observer, on the other hand, well versed in Greek culture, and finding enough resemblance in the tragedy at his hands to those of Greek literature, and consciously wanting to strengthen the image of his story as a tragedy,
takes the opportunity to make that comment. But granting
that the phrase is an artistic ploy to highlight the
heroine’s tragedy, it nevertheless carries a content message
which is largely in line with Hardy’s views. The "god" of
the novel, so to speak, is, like the "god" of The Return of
the Nasty: more of an anti-Providence than anything else.
In this it recalls the Aeschylean and Homeric Greek deity of
whimsicality and indifference rather than the Christian God
of love, mercy and justice. The ironic use of the word
"justice" in Hardy’s comment carries exactly this meaning,
while the word "sport" in the Hardyan addition to the
Aeschylean phrase conveys the callous moodiness and
carelessness of supposedly a Greek deity rather than the
justice of the Christian concept.

It is of course unwise to go against the writer’s
assertion that the phrase is just rhetorically meant and
that it does not carry his philosophy. The writer could not
have by any means been alluding to an existent deity with
the characteristics usually attached to what is called the
President of the Immortals, in whose existence he has announced his disbelief.
However, I propose to argue here (hoping to be in line with Hardy's assertions) that even though the President of the Immortals is only a figure of speech, it can, nevertheless, be considered a representative of the aggregate powers and laws controlling life, which tend, in the final analysis, to have an effect on man's life comparable to that of the reported Immortals.

Coming down to Marlott from Olympus we find Tess Durbeyfield's life governed mainly by two sets of factors. The first consists of those imposed by outside powers with the effect of narrowing Tess's freedom and options; and the other consists of elements emanating from Tess's own character including inherited and acquired motives.

This does not fully convey the state of affairs in the reality of the novel. The dividing of freedom-limiting factors into external and internal is made only to facilitate the study; and the constant interaction between "outside" and "inside" factors is liable to show the division as arbitrary. But the division, provided that the interaction is taken into account, will prove helpful in arriving at a better understanding of the problem of freedom and responsibility.
Outside pressures, both from individuals and institutions, has a great effect on Tess's freedom and life in general. Tess's mother's wishes are orders to her. In spite of the fact that Tess is far more advanced in education and understanding than her mother, the parent-child relationship which usually holds the child as a recipient of parents' orders and instructions is apparent in Tess's example. However much the child is, or feels himself to be, ahead of parents in understanding, he still looks up to them for guidance, and thinks that they somehow have got a wiser, fuller view of things. This is, of course, instilled into the child's mind from early childhood, and therefore can very rarely be shaken off. Against her better judgement Tess goes to claim kin with their rich "relatives" in deference to her mother's suggestion.

The responsibility of Tess's mother in Tess's misadventure at Trantridge cannot be overlooked. She certainly holds the responsibility for Tess's ignorance of the facts of life. Hers also is the responsibility of sending Tess to claim kin with total strangers unarmed with necessary knowledge. She should have been able to envisage the situation consequent upon that. Tess does not fail to realise her mother's portion of responsibility, belatedly,
and asks her, "Why didn't you tell me there was danger in men-folk? ... I never had the chance of learning in that way, and you didn't help me!"[12, 111]

Alec, with all coarseness, intrudes into Tess's inner world and violates her freedom in a brutal way that shapes the whole course of her life. Alec's spell over Tess brings her at the end of the day to live as his concubine against all her wishes and yearnings. The element of economic pressure plays a part in this, but this will be discussed later.

While Tess is meditating whether to tell Angel of her past or not she writes to her mother for guidance and goes by her counsel for some time before changing her views. Being away from her mother doubtless helps Tess in breaking her spell over her mind. But being near Angel brings Tess under his spell. During the happy months at Talbothays Tess looks up to Angel as a mentor or as an idol. His wishes become orders to her. Trusting in his superiority of reasoning and understanding, Tess accepts his decisions without the slightest resistance. Even in his absence and during her suffering she does not seriously question the rightness of his decisions until it is too late. This shows how Tess from cradle to grave has been under considerable
influence of one or the other of those who are around her. A certain trait in Tess, an inner susceptibility and readiness to acquiesce, doubtless augmented by outside pressures on her mind, seems to be mainly responsible for this. And in this she is partly to blame, but a fuller discussion of this will be attempted later in the study of Tess's character that helped shape her fate.

Perhaps greater than the influence of individuals in Tess's life is that of the society en masse, in the form of general beliefs, codes and laws. The subtle relationships and understandings that govern the community enslave Tess and greatly narrow her freedom. The communal tradition that what happened to her at Trantridge is sinful has a great bearing on her thought. We have to mention here, though, that the Marlott community does not behave in a way to make Tess's life more difficult after her return from Trantridge. She is able, however, eventually to overcome her feeling of sin but not the deep-rooted social regulation that haunted her. To her great misfortune, her lover "with all his attempted independence of judgement ... was yet the slave of custom and conventionality when surprised back into his early teachings."[39, 290] In this curious situation, Tess is all victim while Angel is both victim and persecutor:
victim as individual, a man in love, and persecutor as embodiment or slave of the establishment. This shows how established codes of conduct tend to limit one's range of options in sometimes a very coercive manner. Tess is finally defeated by the establishment and crushed for trying to do what she believes is the right thing to do in killing Alec and exacting her version of justice. British law has its way with Tess. Deviations from the path of the community and taking the law into one's own hands can not be tolerated and Tess pays her life for ignoring this fact. (16)

However, the episode of Alec's murder, I think, calls for a deeper investigation. The murder does not seem to fit in completely with Tess's character. Tess could have simply left Alec's room and gone with Angel. There are so many alternatives open to Tess that it looks strange that she chooses to do what she does against all common sense and proper reasoning, traits that are stressed in her character all through. That she wants to "kill the situation" (19) does not explain the situation either. It is true that Tess is in a very tough situation but surely murder is not the likely way out, especially for a sensitive, realistic young woman like Tess. In a comment on the novel, Hardy stated that "The murder that Tess commits is the hereditary
quality, to which I more than once allude, ..."(20) I feel this explains the matter, but rather vaguely. The hereditary cause for the murder is not well prepared-for and although we know that Tess is a child of the d'Urbervilles and that she is tied to them with strong hereditary bonds but the motif of murder in the hereditary spectrum is not appropriately clarified before the actual murder or before Hardy's comment on the issue. I feel strongly that the tragic and emotional pattern of the novel more than anything else has pushed action in this direction. Tess has to be sacrificed to produce the tragic effect necessary for the novel to highlight the meaninglessness and disorderliness of the universe. Hardy could have perhaps provided a more plausible but less spectacularly tragic end to the novel (and still be in harmony with his line of thought) by making Tess leave Alec and go to live with Angel unhappily ever after. Hardy here seems to be operating with self-imposed restrictions as to the meaning of tragic effects he desired to raise. In a comment on the novel Hardy wondered:

You ask why Tess should not have gone off with Clare and live "happily ever after". Do you not see that under any circumstances they were doomed to unhappiness? A sensitive man like Angel Clare could never have been happy with her. After the first few months he would inevitably throw her failings in her face.(21)
Hardy must have felt he had succeeded in agitating the intended sentiment when he was made to feel as a criminal by the tears of the lady who told him she had wept bitterly over Tess's fate. (22) This shows that the freedom of Tess, the character, in addition to the contributing factors that limit man's freedom, is also, constrained by the writer's views of what a novel should be like. (23)

Coupled with social pressures are economic conditions. It is hard to separate economic pressures from the whole of the general situation but in the story of Tess we can clearly perceive that Hardy is consciously as it were weaving an economic thread in the web of the general condition to show to what extent financial problems can be considered contributors to the limiting of man's freedom. Were it not for the killing of the horse, the greatest means of obtaining the family subsistence, Tess might find it unnecessary to go to the d'Urbervilles after all. The family's dire economic circumstances seem to have a coercive effect on Tess's acceptance of her mother's wish. It should be noticed however that poverty is not God-sent. It is partly of the making of the unrealistic parents who take greater interest in celebrating the "good" news of their aristocratic origin than in arranging for the work of the
family to be done. In their fatalism, passivity and unrealistic dreaminess lies perhaps the greatest share of the blame. Thus we see how different factors of the situation, personal responsibility and senseless circumstances, are interacting to prepare for the final catastrophe.

Tess is shown to have fought heroically against inauspicious economic circumstances almost all her life. After a brief period of relative ease at Talbothays there came harsh subsistence-level conditions at Flintcomb-Ash. Her father's death leaves the family without a roof over their heads. That is one of the main contributors to Tess's fall. She certainly would not sell herself the way she did were it not for extreme untoward economic conditions. The financial element, in the last analysis, however, is part and parcel of the social fabric which is, in turn, a reflection of human nature. Were it not for cruel-hearted greedy landlords the family could retain their direly-needed house. Were it not for the selfish purposes of opportunistic financially-privileged people the family could obtain the necessary help without having to sacrifice the freedom and honour of the eldest daughter.
From this angle we can see the novel as an indictment of man's cruelty to man and the lack of loving-kindness. This carries the novel to a tragic level where we witness the weak and the less-privileged fighting against not man-made laws or codes only but against the cruelty and greediness innate in human nature. This is perhaps one of the things Hardy meant by saying that "in his view the experiences of [Tess] could have led to the same issue 'last week' just as much as 'fifty years back.'"

The abundance of malignant coincidences in the novel (as in other Hardy novels) is likely to give the impression of a malicious fate actively involved in thwarting people's aspirations and crushing their careers. Taken individually the coincidences can be explained away, albeit with difficulty and contrivance, but, en bloc they represent a curious aspect of Hardy's art and views of the world that calls for investigation. As a matter of fact they (coincidences and improbabilities) have not failed in attracting attention and interest from different critics and students of Hardy, each from his point of view; but I find it useful here to discuss the problem of the coincidences from the point of view of their effect on man's freedom.
A very unhappy accident, the death of the horse in the crash with the mail carriage, initiates the action of the story. Although the accident can be referred to Tess's sleepiness, we can in no way hold Tess completely responsible for the accident. In a delicate balance here Hardy creates a situation where character is to blame on considering circumstances from outside, but is to be acquitted if we take into account the real conditions. Hardy is putting his reader in a difficult situation. It would seem common-sensical and reasonable to hold Tess liable. But doing this would seem mean if we consider the circumstances surrounding the event.

A similar event -- that of the murder -- rounds off the story and the answer of the British law to the dilemma is made clear. The question Hardy is putting forth is perhaps which side we would prefer to take: law and order or compassion, understanding and tolerance. It is clear from the tone of the novel that Hardy has chosen the side of the weak, the down-trodden and the misunderstood, and is asking his reader to sympathise and take into account the circumstances at work limiting character's freedom. From this angle, it cannot be considered carelessness on the part of Tess that causes Prince's death and the misfortune of the
family.

Neither is it carelessness or negligence that carry Tess from Queen of Spades "frying-pan" to Alec's "fire".[10, 96] It is likely to seem a bit contrived, however, to have Tess go through the toils of that Saturday and to make her the target of the Queen of Spades' anger out of all the party in order to bring up the justification for her flying away on Alec's horse and her feeble below-the-level-of-consciousness state he returns to find her in. Add to all this her ignorance of the facts of life which proves fatal. The pattern of action in the episode, coupled with the tone of the comment that followed it make clear the narrator's insistent attempt at rallying the audience's sympathies for the cause of the "pure woman". Furthermore, it shows how what can only be called chance is acting in a way to rob character of its freedom.

Another difficult situation, for the reader as well as for the character, is the episode of Tess's letter of confession to Angel. From what we know of Tess we expect her to do something in the way of informing Angel about her past misadventure. In fact we wish her to do so to live up to her image of purity. At the same time we fear that this may alienate Angel. At last, Tess does not disappoint us,
the audience, and writes the letter of confession and pushes it under the door of Angel's room. By a very strange coincidence the letter goes not only under the door but also under the carpet where it settles: an extremely unlikely situation, resulting in Angel not getting the letter and the confession in it. It is true that Tess discovers the reality of the letter going under the carpet and of Angel's not receiving it, and it is true that she should accordingly have acted to make sure of the information getting to Angel before wedding day, but the situation is so awkward and complicated that we cannot easily condemn the poor girl and indict her for the outcome of it. Moreover, we should not forget that Tess has tried to tell Angel of her secret but it was he who puts her off, leading her, and perhaps the readers as well, to feel that he, considering his great love to her, might not hang great importance on the news after all. Taking all things into consideration I feel that what Hardy wants to say is perhaps that we cannot in human sympathy indict the poor pure innocent girl for the complicated situation she finds herself in through senseless circumstances. I am not sure that Hardy would agree to or endorse Roy Morrell's comment that "...if Tess could bring herself to write the letter of confession, she could have made sure Angel received it ..."(24)
That, of all the people in the vicarage, Tess is to come across Angel's two unsympathetic brothers can be considered another adverse chance event. This unnerves her and deters her from attempting to see their, to her ignorance, kind-hearted father. The influence of this meeting on Tess's mind is certainly enforced by her temperamental passivity and hyper-sensitivity which will be discussed later.

It is certainly ironic for Tess to have gone to see Reverend Clare, and to meet, in his stead, his convert, Alec, on her way back. The putting of Alec in Tess's way for the second time does surely look like a stroke of malign fate. It is apt to look like a thinly-disguised, rather studied bending in a pre-destined course. It serves, however, as a significant episode in the development of Tess's emotional life. Like Mrs Yeobright before her, she encounters a closed door, sees an unrepresentative face of the house-dwellers and, like her, she feels she is shut off from the sympathy and warmth of the world. Like her, also she has a fatal encounter on her way back: Mrs Yeobright with the serpent and Tess with what the serpent symbolises. The symbol, nevertheless, proves as lethal as the real thing in the long run.
Improbabilities of this kind are perhaps meant as illustrations both of the writer's views of life, rendered meaningless by unexpected chance happenings, and his views of action in fiction. On the one hand, they show how man is not the master of his fate and that circumstances conspire to put him in situations that look as if calculated to rob him of his freedom. On the other, the improbable coincidences illustrate Hardy's belief that such events do not hurt the structure of fiction but tend to lend it a reality "more true" than that of nature or history.

This is in accord with not only Hardy's tenets and scientific views of the universe but also with his artistic instincts tending towards the bizarre nourished mainly by childhood experiences with local superstitions that leave a wide space for the seemingly improbable and strange in his world view. On this dual basis of science and superstition, perhaps, are built Hardy's artistic views and practices in fiction.

The difficulty facing the reader, as well as the narrator, concerning the problem of fate and chance in the novel, is that the concept of fate looms so large behind events that many have been led to accuse the writer of fatalism - not without some justification. (25) Hardy is
perhaps trying to mix the objective view and the fatalistic tradition in a queer and confusing way. This often leaves the reader at a loss whether, for example, the so-called intrusions commenting on fate are meant to be by the educated nineteenth century narrator or by the awe-stricken rather primitive story-teller. The subtle use of and interchanging between ironic and straightforward tones of narration, so to speak, add to the muddle and confusion. When we are told, for example, that Tess "had hoped to be a teacher at the school, but the fates seemed to decide otherwise",[6, 73] we are entitled to ask what Hardy precisely means by "fates". When Tess, furthermore, amidst the bliss of Talbothays feels that "All this good fortune may be scourged out of me afterwards by a lot of ill. That's how Heaven mostly does",[32, 234] we feel that Hardy here is giving expression to deeply rooted feelings he may have inherited from his mother and from the Dorset rural tradition. This certainly recalls the "figure in the van" image Hardy admitted to believe in. Connected with this, and presenting more difficult problems, are the narrator's comments on nature and how it works in man. This, however, will be dealt with later. The main impression we are likely to gather from the accumulation of chance events, however, may be that man's freedom is severely limited by outward
events on which he has no control. The difference lies in these events being designed by a supernatural power, or being merely visible links in a chain which contains other invisible ones.

Nature features very highly in the novel, both as a system and as landscape and natural objects. In innumerable instances, for example, Tess is identified with natural objects implicitly suggesting that she is governed by whatever laws that govern the other things in nature. She makes her debut in the novel as what can be seen as a priestess for Cerealia, the goddess of harvest.[2, 38] On several occasions Tess is linked to Pagan concepts of sympathy with and, to an extent, oneness with nature. Commenting on Tess's exclamation on her not knowing the "Lord as yet," the narrator observes,

...Women whose chief companions are the forms and forces of outdoor Nature retain in their souls far more of the Pagan fantasy of their remote forefathers than of the systematized religion taught their race at later date.[16, 132]

Once Tess is referred to as the "daughter of the soil".[19, 154] Moreover, in different aspects of her, she is linked to different plants or animals. In their first meeting Alec literally fills her with roses and cherries. The simile in the unweeded garden passage draws a comparison between her
and a cat. All links between Tess and natural objects that are maintained in the story add force to the impression we are likely to form of the great effect of nature as a whole in Tess's life and its role in defining her freedom.

Nature in the sense of natural surroundings occupies a great portion of both the setting and the "atmosphere" of the novel. Compared to the vast landscape, man is likely to lose greatly not only in physical terms but also in terms of innate significance and consequence. In the same way that Clym was seen as an inconsequential insect to the vast heath, we see Tess reduced to an insignificant fly compared to the verdant stretches of the Vale of the Great Dairies. Though Clym is shown in contrast with the barren and antagonistic heath and Tess with a green fertile field, the message delivered is still much the same. In either case, man is reduced to insignificance. If this sounds in line with evolutionary views which continually put man in juxtaposition with huge powers from nature, it is certainly out of tune with what Hardy, the artist, sees in man. To Hardy man is simply more significant than nature.(26) Here also comes the conflict between the humanist and the tragic writer (for no tragedy can be written arising from insignificant man chained and crushed by vast powers beyond
him), on the one side, and the scientist on the other. Hardy's preoccupation with man as a value was too deep to be uprooted or swept aside by findings in the fields of biology or geology. From these sciences, however, he borrows the comparison between huge nature and miniscule man to drive home his concept of nature as a freedom-limiting agent. In this light I can only describe the narrator's likening of Clym to an insect or of Tess to a fly as an artistic indulgence meant to inspire awe and hyperbolise the effect of nature on man. Hardy can in no way be considered a subscriber to the supposedly scientific reductionist view of man's significance. The reductionist similes, however, have done harm to the prospects of the novel as tragedy and can be considered among the contradictions and discrepancies that plague the novel.

To return to nature and its effects on man's freedom. Both as phenomena and as a system, nature plays an important role in the novel.

The existence of vast stretches of landscape is acutely felt by characters and especially by Tess. The long exhausting walks from Marlott to the Chase, from Marlott to the Vale of Great Dairies, from Flintcomb-Ash to Emminster and back not only exhaust Tess but also (albeit partly) help
tame and subdue her spirit as well. The barren land of Flintcomb-Ash surrounds Tess with misery. But it is to be noticed that in spite of all these hardships Tess retains her pride and much of her independence. The chilling tempest that blows on her and Marian at Flintcomb-Ash, with all its horrors and destruction, cannot break her resistance and integrity.

I feel that nature as landscape and phenomena is used more as an artistic tool than as means of defining man's freedom. Rather like the pathetic fallacy, the elaborate descriptions of natural landscape and phenomena in Talbothays and Flintcomb-Ash, help provide a window to Tess's inner state of mind. In the lush greenness and fertility of the dairy a match for Tess's vitality and appetite for joy is found. In the same way, Tess's wretchedness and suffering are reflected in the hostile and parsimonious upland of Flintcomb-Ash.

Nature as a system, as a set of laws, however, is surely to be held culpable in antagonistically affecting man's life.
The novel, in a sense, can be considered a counterblast to the Wordsworthian concept of nature as a benign power looking after man's life. To Hardy, this tenet is completely incompatible with what modern biology revealed of the cruelties in nature, "red in tooth and claw", with its enormous wastage and suffering. In fact Hardy makes clear that he sees nothing "holy" about Wordsworth's "Nature's holy plan" [3, 49] which he ridicules in questioning the poet's authority in his assertion. On the contrary Hardy sees in nature a tendency in the opposite direction. Nature does not provide its creatures with necessary knowledge and wisdom to cope with the hardships of life. It does not often say "See!" to her poor creature at a time when seeing can lead to a happy doing; or reply "Here!" to a body's cry of "Where?" till the hide-and-seek has become an irksome, outworn game.[5, 67]

This can be considered a protest against an indifferent, neutral nature and a protest against those who have led humanity to be deceived by its "holy plan" into expecting active help from it. Hardy, however, seems to have entertained a dim hope of melioration, of improvement in the general situation which might bring along some relief for mankind. He goes on to say,
We may wonder whether at the same and summit of the human progress these anachronisms will be corrected by a finer intuition, a closer interaction of the social machinery than that which now jolts us round and along; but such completeness is not to be prophesied, or even conceived as possible.

This hope seems to have rallied in a sense when Hardy arrived at his conception of the Immanent Will with his belief that it was slowly coming into consciousness. For the period of Hardy's novel writing, however, the entertainment of that hope could be discarded.

The novel, however, has worse opinions of nature in store. Describing the complicated situation Tess finds herself in concerning her love to Angel, the narrator accuses "Dame Nature" of "vulpine slyness" [36, 269] attaching to it active malignity. The protest, however, can be seen as mere pathetic fallacy again and can be considered as an indicator of the role nature plays in the life of man leading to a limitation of his freedom. The role cannot be seen as actively or consciously malicious. There is nothing in Hardy that would endorse this opinion and his comments protesting against nature can be taken as protesting against those who make themselves live under the illusion that nature is going to take care of providing happiness for man in this world. There is also a sense of disappointment at
discovering that nature is not after all that loving mother man hoped her to be, and hence the disillusioned protest against the senseless laws governing man. Man's unfortunate position as a creature of nature has put him under its mechanical, but neutral, laws. This does not mean that man is a mere puppet for natural laws, as Joan Durbeyfield's "Tis nater, after all" might imply. Man is free to choose and should practise this freedom and not let himself drift with natural laws. He bears the responsibility for his actions and it is he who will suffer as a result of his misdeeds. Alec's infringement of Tess's right to choose and of her freedom can be considered of one piece with natural laws, but it has led to immense suffering. If there is a moral to be drawn from the situation it is perhaps that man, essentially free (and Alec's conversion and backsliding bear witness to this) should not blindly surrender his freedom to natural forces at work within him. Nature does have an immense role to play in man's life through the powerful ties that link man to it but it is not a puppeteer.

Natural Law, the formidable power that draws the sexes to each other, is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of nature's forces at work in man. The "appetite for joy", (apparently another term for the desire that pulls the sexes
together), Hardy remarks, "sways humanity to its purpose, as
the tide sways the helpless weed".[31,218] This is the
"nater" to which Mrs Durbeyfield surrenders. Responding to
its relentless drive Alec is magnetised to Tess in what can
be called (to borrow the words of the narrator of Far from
the Madding Crowd, commenting on Troy's confessing to
Bathsheba that he loves nor more than his father) "exquisite
fidelity to nature."[FFMC, 26, 197]

"Nater" has been at play in the ignorant and unwitting
Tess on that fateful night on the road from Chaseborough to
Trantridge. It has been argued (27) that Tess's encounter
with Alec is perhaps more of a seduction than a rape. The
most elaborate account of how the Law operates, in the novel
and (perhaps with the exception of the early Jude-Arabella
affair) in all Hardy's novels, is given in the description
of the Angel-Tess relation. Love creeps stealthily to the
hearts of the young couple without their wanting or
encouraging it, and even against their wills (especially for
Tess). Tess enthusiastically fights against her attraction
to Angel and tries to divert his love to her, but to no
avail. She and Angel "were converging, under an
irresistible law, as surely as two streams in one vale."[20,
156] Tess's roommates are still more helpless victims of the
Law. In their room in the dairy, in the heat of the oppressive summer nights they "writhed feverishly under the oppressiveness of an emotion thrust on them by cruel Nature's law."[23, 174] Of course, the word "cruel" here again is mere pathetic fallacy that should not be taken literally. Nature works mechanically through its laws and such epithets as "cruel" or "merciful" are absolutely out of the question. Nature can seem cruel because of the severe limitation its laws impose on human freedom, urging man to try to attain the unattainable with the suffering consequent upon this.

This shows how factors from the environment, from "outside" character, tend to join forces to limit character freedom. The human surroundings; both as individuals and as community; chance events that character cannot control; circumstances in general; and the fact that man is part of nature, susceptible to its laws (which are not tailor-made to provide him with happiness); - all these tend to minimise human freedom of choice as well as of action.

We may see a symbol of the crude, direct and callous intrusion of the outside world unto individual's freedom in the threshing machine and its machine-like engineer.[47-48] The machine is an intruder into the agrarian world of Wessex.
working towards its mechanisation. The outside world with its machine-like precise laws intrudes on individuals and draws them to conformity. For those who do not conform there is destruction and extinction, like the primitive agrarian methods of Wessex that are apt to disappear with the advent of the machine.

Perhaps more influential in this are factors coming from "inside" character: more influential probably because it is more difficult to go against one's own wishes and tendencies. Moreover, certain mental idiosyncrasies are likely to lead one's thinking, sometimes without one's being aware of it, in certain channels. Unconscious urges, furthermore, are a formidable contributor to limiting one's freedom and directing one's thought and action.

Momentary influences that spur us sometimes into unwise deeds or statements are another factor, which is perhaps less influential in the long run. Parson Tringham's afterthought comment on his unwise action in telling Durbeyfield of his aristocratic origin can help as a key to much of action in the novel:

At first I resolved not to disturb you with such a useless piece of information, ... . However, our impulses are too strong for our judgement sometimes. [1, 33]

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The parson regrets his deed and has serious misgivings and "doubts as to his discretion in retailing this curious bit of lore."[1, 34] He knows it is useless and can be harmful but his impulse was stronger than his knowledge. This can be considered an example of what Hardy called "human automatism, or impulsion" which shows how "very far conduct lags behind the knowledge that should really guide it."[Life, 152] This shows how unconscious trends and tendencies in one's mind dictate one's conduct in spite of better judgement. In the novel, as in other Hardy novels, knowledge does not always lead conduct. More often than not we have deeds, words or offers made on the spur of a floating idea or a passing whim. One such is Angel's asking Izz to accompany him to Brazil. Only Izz's confession that she cannot love him as much as Tess does diverts Angel from carrying out his plan.[40] Alec's conversion to Christianity and subsequent backsliding can be considered illustrations of actions based on momentary or passing influences.

But deeper in action in directing behaviour than momentary impulses is the influence of character traits, or the "frame of mind" in Hardy's terms.

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Unconscious wishes have a powerful hold on man's behaviour as has been made obvious in previous chapters. *Tess*, like other Hardy novels, provides illustrations for the influence that desires unknown to the conscious reasoning of man have in directing his behaviour. The unconscious self-destructive urge, for example, can be seen in more than one instance in the novel. Angel, following his severe disappointment in discovering Tess's past, is in a state of great internal turmoil. This finds vent in his sleep-walking adventure when he carries Tess and walks on the narrow plank over the overflowing river courting very near death. He lays Tess (his dead dream) in the stone coffin and lies asleep on the ground in the inclement weather and cold of the night.[37] Later, towards the end of the novel, Tess finds her resting place in the Stone-henge altar and pronounces her contentment and happiness at the coming of the policemen to take her away, "I am almost glad - yes glad!"[58, 418]

Tess's character is shown all through to be a contributor to her fate. Hardy's stress on the Durbeyfield temperament inherited by Tess and the influence of this temperament in her thought and action is an illustration of psychological fate. The terming of this type of causality
working in man as fate is perhaps justified by its being the resultant of two powers or laws (over which man has no or negligible control) at play in formulating Man's innermost traits and tendencies: heredity and early life relationships.

In *Tess* Hardy seems at some pain to illustrate the effect of heredity in his heroine's character. In fact, heredity in the novel can be seen as taking the part of a god, an Immortal, an epithet which Hardy thought applicable in the case.(28)

The "Durbeyfield temperament" which Tess inherits mainly from her father is a mixture of listlessness, trepidation and refraining from any action towards betterment. This is apparent in both Mr and Mrs Durbeyfield. Perhaps the Durbeyfields have their own version of "the figure in the van" which Tess shares.

A close look at the episode of Tess's trip to Emminster to see her father-in-law will reveal to us how this disposition worked in her producing something like resignation and lack of energy in spite of her conscious effort in the opposite direction. To begin with, she takes the decision to make the trip against her "independent
character of desiring nothing by way of favour or pity which she was not entitled on a fair consideration of her deserts."[44, 319] But she knows she has to see Angel's father as a last resort for a solution or a way out of her terrible situation. It takes her tremendous debating and effort to arrive at the resolution. Moreover, during her trip we are told that "as the mileage lessened between her and the spot of her pilgrimage, so did Tess's confidence decrease, and her enterprise loom out formidably."[44, 321] Further on her way she is in need of some encouragement and "hoped for some accident that might favour her, but nothing favoured her."[44, 321-2] Even ringing the bell of the vicarage door is an effort-consuming achievement for her. When the door is not answered she turns back, goes out and closes the gate "with a breath of relief".[44, 322] Fighting against her trepidation, and after walking away from the house, Tess returns and looks at its windows in an attempt to exhaust all probabilities. Remembering that everybody would be at church burdens her with the responsibility of having to wait for them. After what can be seen as superhuman effort in fighting against her own disposition Tess finally breaks down under the strain on her courage from the comments of the Clare brothers and Miss Chant. Turning to go away "She knew that it was all sentiment, all
baseless impressibility,"[44, 324] but her knowledge could not lead her conduct. The narrator comments, "she went her way without knowing that the greatest misfortune of her life was this feminine loss of courage at the last and critical moment ..."[44, 325] Far from being an indictment of Tess, this can be seen (in the light of her huge thwarted effort) as a justification of her action uttered in sympathy and compassion. But this is the lamentable truth: Tess tries to live up to her knowledge gained from suffering and experience going opposite to inherent trepidation, but with no luck. Her energy would not carry her over the last barrier, or what is left for her of the spent and exhausted energy of the ancient d'Urbervilles. Is Angel right then in his disillusioned verdict, "Decrepit families imply decrepit wills, decrepit conduct" [35, 259]?

The case is not as simple as that. It cannot have been decrepit will that carried Tess over the trying months at Flintcomb-Ash. There, other girls are able to go on working because they have ale. Tess is; because of the "traditionary dread, owing to its results at home in childhood"[48, 357], she knows from bitter experience what it means to be idle and refrain from work. While the spent blood of the d'Urbervilles, as such, produces such
personages as John Durbeyfield, in sensitive Tess, mixed with pressing economic conditions, it produces a new kind of stamina that helps Tess overcome her unfortunate debut into adult life with Alec, and later over the severities and hardships resulting from Angel's leaving her. The narrator's direct reference to "home" and "childhood" indicates a conscious effort on the part of the author to link Tess's "frame of mind" with early childhood influences.

This ambivalence in Tess's personality, this marriage between decrepit wills and spent blood on the one hand, and stamina and vigour on the other, is very plausibly accounted for and revealed. It shows, moreover, how Tess's character (which is partly her fate) is formed by agents outside her control: heredity and preconscious experiences forming her future trends of thought. An optimistic note is struck when Tess goes against the inherent bent of resignation and refraining from action towards improvement in her deciding and carrying out her trip to Emminster. But, and this is a formidable but, her effort proves vain not only because of the chance event of meeting the Clare brothers and Miss Chant but also because of the detrimental "loss of courage" at the last moment. As usual with Hardy, the situation is so delicate and ambivalent that it is impossible to give an
easy verdict. Hardy seems to be wanting to retain as much sympathy for his characters as possible and yet at the same time to show their shortcomings. The result is the pessimistic conclusion that fine and "pure" people, in spite of their doing their best in trying to improve, will not be able to achieve success. "This planet does not supply the materials for happiness to higher existences." [Life, 218] It is a "blighted" star [4, 56], to use Tess's terms. Tess, then, is partly responsible for her fate, but could she help it? Could she have done otherwise? This is the question to which Hardy is at considerable pain to form a negative answer.

This makes clear the author's intention to show the effect of character trends in shaping behaviour, life-course and fate. Man is free to choose and his freedom is enlarged by experience and knowledge but this is minimised by innate limitations of freedom: conscious and unconscious tendencies and wishes and more or less rigid trends of thought. Those gain their significance in controlling man's life-course from being made for man and not by him, imposed on him by external factors. Hereditary traits and highly influential formative experiences of early childhood are the most effective of these factors in forming character.
Knowledge gained from experience, it is true, has an effect in enabling man to modify character traits to a certain extent and oppose whatever of them he sees harmful to his ends. Tess passes through the enlightening experience, and is able to act upon knowledge gained from this experience, in a shorter period than, say, Henchard does. But with very little change in the outcome. In this she is contrasted sharply with Alec who, in spite of knowing the reality of his situation, does not stir to oppose his selfish instincts. Surrendering to his egotistic impulses from the beginning has bred in him an inertness and an unwillingness to change. Refusing to oppose his impulses has imprisoned him in the web of his own desires and robbed him of the chance of taking part in developing his personality. In this sense, the concept of responsibility loses a great deal of its relevance and we see that if there is something wrong, it is not only in man. It is in him, in the world, in circumstances and in the interplay between man and the whole environment. In short, "the struggle is simply between man and the way things are". (29) That Nature does not provide happiness for man is because it is completely indifferent. The "venerable philosophers" started wrong and the world was not meant as a "comfortable place for man." [Life, 179] The curse of man's consciousness is at the
root of all his pain, because it is at the root of his expectations and deprivations.
NOTES

1. One feels that "A high degree of probability was not attempted in the arrangements of the incidents," [HE, Preface, 31] not only of The Hand of Ethelberta but of Tess as well as of other novels. In a letter to Havelock Ellis dated April 29, 1883, Hardy described his novels as "unmethodical books."[Letters, I, 117]


3. In a letter to James R. Osgood dated August 4, 1889 Hardy wrote, "I should say that [Tess's] position is based on fact."[Letters, I, 196]

Moreover, while noticing that "As many people remarked, Hardy spoke about Tess Durbeyfield as if she were a real person", Robert Gittings goes on to deduce from statements of relatives that the model could have been Hardy's grandmother. Young Thomas Hardy (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), p. 303.

4. I feel, however, that it is far-fetched to describe the novel as an allegory of the declining peasantry or the disappearing rural system. Arnold Kettle, faced with
problems issuing from the loose plotting of the novel, found the only way to solve the artistic problem was in emphasising that "Tess of the D'Urbervilles is a moral fable, that it is the expression of a generalized human situation in history." An Introduction to the English Novel, Vol. II (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1953), p. 53.


6. Commenting on the issue Hardy wrote later, "I still maintain that her innate purity remained intact to the very last; though I frankly own that a certain outward purity left her on her last fall." Reported in Black and White, August 27, 1892, p. 240 as quoted in F.R. Southerington, Hardy's Vision of Man (London: Chatto & Windus, 1971), p. 124.


8. Ibid., p. 82.

10. In an entry dated February 23, 1893 Hardy wrote, "A story must be exceptional enough to justify its telling. We tale-tellers are all Ancient Mariners, and none of us is warranted in stopping Wedding Guests (in other words, the hurrying public) unless he has something more than usual to relate than the ordinary experience of average man and woman." [Life, 252]


12. In this Hardy was perhaps living up to Darwin's literary tastes. According to Darwin "A novel, ..., does not come into the first class, unless it contains some person whom we can thoroughly love, and if it be a pretty woman so much the better." Autobiography, 1958 edition, pp. 138-9 as quoted in Ian Gregor, The Great Web (London: Faber & Faber, 1974), p. 175.

13. Alec can also be seen as one of the fit for survival with his wealth, virility and aggressiveness. The outcome of the situation, however, is likely to underline the inadequacy of Spencer's phrase, adopted by Darwin, the survival of the fittest. Fitness can only be judged after survival, its qualities can never be categorised beforehand.
and thus cannot be very helpful in predicting results of struggles in nature.

14. We certainly expect nearly all allusions to the "deep passions" to be made in symbols for a variety of reasons, not the least of which being contemporary editors' compliance with dominant literary tastes and hence publication necessities.

15. In several private letters Hardy told his recipients that he was in love with Tess. One such letter is that directed to Sir George Douglas, dated Dec 30, 1891, in which Hardy stated, "I, ..., lost my heart to [Tess]." [*Letters*, I, 249]

16. In thus sticking to hereditary and environmental factors in the making of character, the novel comes near the "naturalistic" school dominant especially in French fiction of the day. But this does not mean that the novel can be considered as belonging to that school. This can be seen from the special dislike Hardy had to Zola's works for example. In private letters Hardy expressed his belief that Zola was "no artist, but at bottom a man of affairs, who would just as soon have written volumes, of say, statistics of crime, or commerce, or of fiction ..." [*Letters*, II, 231; to Edmund Gosse Oct 1, 1899]

17. In insisting that the Aeschylean phrase should
be taken ironically, and only ironically; and in equating it to other reproaches of Providence by other characters in other novels; Roy Morrell has, I feel, failed to capture the full implications of the phrase under discussion. See Chapter III: "A Note on 'The President of the Immortals'", of Morrell's book, Thomas Hardy: The Will and the Way (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1965)

18. Carl Weber sees in Hardy's presentation an equation between Aeschylus' President and British law in Tess's case,

A pagan dramatist like Aeschylus might have explained Tess's fate as the result of the "President's" unhuman and ignoble zest for cruel sport. British law would explain her fate, like that of Martha Brown, as the result of long-established legal codes, of prescribed rules for meting out "justice". ...Hardy's [attitude] was an indictment of an intolerant society that could condemn a woman of Tess's integrity and courage and humility and unselfishness.


19. Life reports that in August 1889, while Hardy was finishing the manuscript for Tess, he wrote the following note, "When a married woman who has a lover kills her husband, she does not really wish to kill the husband; she wishes to kill the situation."

Some students of Hardy, like Jeanette King, found in the note "obvious


23. This episode, Alec's murder, might have been one of the things in John Bayley's mind when he observed that

...in the case of Tess Hardy seems as it were to be actually blaming the conventions of the novel - malignant coincidences, recurrences and contrivance - for what happens to her, as well as the conventions of the society; and the result is a muddle on the grand scale.[FFN, "Introduction," 26]


25. E.M. Forster describes the lot of Hardy's characters saying, "The fate above us, not the fate working through us -- that is what is eminent in the Wessex novels." *Aspects of the Novel* (London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1927), - 308 -
p. 126. This, however, can be seen as extreme statement not giving full justice to Hardy's characters and plots. We have seen how Hardy's characters were participants in the working out of their fates. However, on a quick reading of the novels one is likely to be impressed by the abundance of chance events giving the idea of external and ulterior fate.

26. In an entry dated September 28, 1877, Hardy wrote:

An object or mark raised or made by man on a scene is worth ten times any such formed by unconscious Nature. Hence clouds, mists, and mountains are unimportant beside the wear on a threshold, or the print of a hand. [Life, 116].

27. F.R. Southerington maintains that Tess was a half-willing partner and produces evidence from the actual description of the scene. He argues, however, that Tess retains her purity because of her ignorance of social values. Hardy's Vision of Man, pp. 126-7. Likewise, seeing a prophetic message in the description of Tess accepting Alec's cherries as "half-pleased, half-reluctant", Ian Gregor sees that Tess, owing to her ambivalent nature, was not a completely unwilling victim in her misadventure with Alec. The Great Web, p. 181.

28. Heredity in the poem bearing that name for title, describes itself as
The years-heired features that can
In curve and voice and eye
Despise the human span
Of durance - that is I;
The eternal thing in man,
That needs no call to die.[CP, 434]

In the coming chapter on Jude the Obscure where the effect of heredity is still more evident, the question of how heredity appears in Hardy's work will be considered in more detail.

CHAPTER FOUR

"JUDE THE OBSCURE"

In writing Jude the Obscure, perhaps more than in any other of his novels, Thomas Hardy was aware of the form he wanted his novel to take. In a letter to Edmund Gosse dated 20.11.95 he asserts

Of course the book is all contrasts -- or was meant to be in its original conception. ... Sue and her heathen gods set against Jude's reading the Greek Testament; Christminster academical, Chr in the slums; Jude the saint, Jude the sinner; Sue the Pagan, Sue the saint; marriage, no marriage; &c. &c. [Letters, II, 99]

The novel had given Gosse a feeling that the plot was "geometrically constructed", a feeling Hardy endorsed, though he found "constructed" a word too strong to describe his plot. [See Hardy's letter to Gosse on Nov 10, 1895, Letters, II, 93]

Jude is an odd novel in more than one sense. Representing the last and probably the highest in Hardy's fiction achievement it still does not fit completely with the other "Wessex" novels. Unlike almost all the other novels, most of the action in Jude takes place in towns.
rather than in the country. Its people are mostly more-or-less sophisticated townspeople rather than simple villagers. Apart from Jude's early employment as bird-scarer, very little of the activities of the rural world is presented. Most importantly, Jude is different from other novels in the nature of its action. While other novels seem more concerned with outward action, we see most of the action in the novel internalised. "The landscapes of the mind" were largely the subject of Hardy's scrutiny rather than the features of natural landscape as had been the case with earlier novels. Even Tess does not go to the length Jude goes to in depicting the internalised mental life of the characters. In this Jude is a pioneer experiment pointing the direction fiction was going to take in the future. Never before Hardy, I think, were the loneliness of life and the antagonism of the outside world expressed as we see in Jude:

All around you there seemed to be something glaring, garish, rattling, and the noises and glares hit upon the little cell called your life, and shook it, and warped it.[I, 2, 42]

As such the novel was certain to meet difficulties, the difficulties that attend leaving the trodden track and exploring new maiden wilderness. This is why action sometimes seems to take what can be described as clumsy
turns on not very likely incidents. The episode of the pizzle thrown by Arabella at Jude is one of these. Hardy admitted that "... throwing the offal was, of course, intended to symbolize the conflict of animalism to spiritualism."

[Hardy to Lady Jeune, 17.11.95, *Letters*, II, 98] Another example is Sue's "worshipping" of the Greek gods' statuettes in the darkness of her room in that memorable scene. Sue's aversion to Christianity and her Hellenic tendencies are accounted for and understandable against the background and the general trend of the age. But I feel the scene is a twist in probability and is probably meant as an artistic tableau which the Ancient Mariner in Hardy could not resist. The episode does not have any bearing on the plot, and little of Sue's feelings in this direction is made use of later. Moreover, Hardy does not account satisfactorily for Jude's mastery of Greek and Latin and his acquiring the extensive knowledge he displays of ancient as well as contemporary men and works of arts and letters. There is a wide gap between Jude the boy's receiving the grammars and embarking on learning Greek and Latin and the grown-up Jude who recites the Nicene Creed in Latin in Christminster. We are not "shown" how this gap is filled, we are only "told" it was filled. From the point of view of realism this is a serious weakness that Henry
James for example would deplore.

The ultimate in this trend in the novel is Little Father Time. This boy seems to belong to another world, and not to be subject to the ordinary laws that govern everybody else's thought. His act in killing the children and committing suicide really brings the novel very near fantasia and nightmare. The horrible act by the horrifying boy is never accounted for satisfactorily in the sequence of action. Sue's misguided and misleading conversation with the boy on the eve of the disaster can in no way be considered sufficient preparation for the acts of homicide and suicide. Neither can the physician's explanation of the "phenomenal" event to Jude next day. The doctor asserts that "... there are such boys springing up amongst us - boys of a sort unknown in the last generation - the outcome of new views of life. ... it is the beginning of the universal wish not to live."[VI, 2, 342-3] These words which seem to be coming directly from Schopenhauer are a feeble attempt on the part of the author to lend credibility to this highly improbable act, taking the opportunity of a macabre occasion to voice some of his own opinions on life and its meaninglessness. Considered as an episode in a sequence of action in a novel, the act can plausibly be seen.

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as a *deus* (or rather, a *diabolus* *ex machina*) to bend the direction of action in the novel in the tragic course it takes in the end. This aspect of the novel tends to classify it with a future generation of fiction, with which the twentieth century has become familiar, and which renders the meaninglessness of life so forcefully.

The novel is thus partly an intellectual and emotional biography of the titular hero from the time of his refraining from scaring the birds (fellow-creatures) till the time of his reciting the curses of Job on his deathbed amid the cheering cries of the crowds outside. The idea of recording the mental development of a character was nothing new to Hardy. Upon learning of the death of Robert Browning in December 1889 Hardy wrote in his diary a quotation from Browning, "Incidents in the development of a soul! little else is worth study."[Life, 223]

Refusing to see the novel in this light, or perhaps insisting on seeing it in the light of old standards made Desmond Hawkins, for example, see in "The action of Jude the Obscure ... little more than a fitful and improbable interruption of Jude's and Sue's tete-a-tete on the difficulties of marriage."(1) Being a bridge between the old and the new burdened the work with artistic difficulties.
which we must overlook if we want to appreciate and understand the novel. The minimising of outward action, the gross improbabilities and the clumsiness of the dialogue are some of the novel's shortcomings arising from its deviating from the old path without having full knowledge of the new. Hardy was or at least liked to think of himself as, an experimenter in fiction. In an entry dated March 4, 1886 he stated his belief that

"Novel-writing as an art cannot go backward. Having reached the analytic stage it must transcend it by going still further in the same direction. Why not by rendering as visible essences, spectres, etc., the abstract thought of the analytic school?"[Life, 177]

This is the standard we should use to understand and judge the novel.

One of the things Hardy was presumably experimenting with in writing Jude was the possibility of writing tragedy or achieving tragic effects in a novel in the world of post-Darwinian evolution. To begin with, Hardy looked at the novel as tragedy. Writing to Agnes Grove on Nov 7, 1895 on Jude, he asked her not to let the novel depress her, "even though it is a tragedy."[Letters, II, 92] This seems rather to suggest that Hardy was aiming at a depressing work and anticipated, if not planned, the kind of effect it was
going to raise in the reader. In the "Preface" Hardy makes clear his tragic meanings in writing the story:

... marriage should be dissolvable as soon as it becomes a cruelty to either of the parties - being, then essentially and morally no marriage - and it seemed a good foundation for the fable of a tragedy, told for its own sake as a presentation of particulars containing a good deal that was universal, and not without a hope that certain cathartic, Aristotelian qualities might be found therein.[29]

The most obvious examples to follow in writing tragedy for Hardy were the Greek tragedies of Sophocles and Aeschylus and their world. These he tries to invoke in the novel by different ways. Very early in the novel, Jude the boy watching the captivating scene of sunset and moonrise, kneels down and recites from a hymn to Diana and Phoebus.[I, 5, 58] In an oddly fascinating scene we see Sue kneeling in front of the candle-lit statuettes of Apollo and Venus in the darkness and seclusion of her room.[II, 3, 116-8] Little Father Time's face looked "like the tragic mask of Melpomene", the Muse of tragedy.[V, 4, 293] The hereditary curse on the Fawleys and the Brideheads barring them from fulfilment and happiness in marriage is explicitly compared to that curse on the house of Atreus in Aeschylus.[V, 4, 296] Jude quotes the chorus of the Agamemnon: "Nothing can be done. Things are as they are, and will be brought to
their destined issue."[VI, 2, 348] He later borrows Antigone's words to describe his state just before death. [VI, 9, 398]

While the tragedies of the Greeks depict the clash between the hero and gods or the moral scheme of the universe, we see Jude illustrating the writer's vision of tragedy, the more or less modern vision of the "'collision between the individual and the general' -- formerly worked out with such force by the Periclean and Elizabethan dramatists, to name no other."[Personal Writings, "Candour in English Fiction", 126-7] The tragedy according to Hardy should express "the triumph of the crowd over the hero, of the commonplace majority over the exceptional few", which is just what we witness in Jude. Again in Jude we see the image of the "highest tragedy" as the "WORTHY encompassed by the INEVITABLE."[Life, 251] Thus we see individuals like Jude or Sue fighting against universal incomprehensible powers. It is true the universe they are fighting against is not the morally ordered universe against which the heroes of the Greek and Shakespearian tragedies were pitted, but it is inimical to the interests and ambitions of man all the same. Thus we see in Jude the classical "hubris" replaced by the powers of the crowd, heredity and environment.
Jeanette King does not see in Jude or Sue the Aristotelian representativeness necessary for tragedy. She sees that the split between the private and the public is complete. There is none of the representative relationship between the hero and society, or even a section of society, that we find in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Jude and Sue speak not for a race that is dying, but for a race that is yet to be born."

Granting that the modern sense of tragedy is wide enough to accommodate unrepresentative tragic heroes, I still feel that Jude and Sue are not outside the scope of Aristotelian representation. There is enough of the "universal" in the "particulars" of Jude's and Sue's life, as Hardy saw, and as we can see, to warrant calling their story tragic. This perhaps applies more to Jude than to Sue, the difficult character, but it is there in the cases of both.

In his battle for education Jude is conceived as representing a wide cross-section of working-class young men with high educational ambitions which are checked by the rigidly class-orientated educational system of the day. He represents perhaps the John Antells and even the Thomas Hardys who found difficulties in getting beyond the thick walls of the established universities. As far back as 1882 Hardy felt he was "the one to show" the world the story of a
young man "who could not go to Oxford."[Life, 207-8]

In the other side of his tragedy, that of frustrated sexual passions, Jude is still more representative. In this, he perhaps speaks for all ordinary men of all ages. Hardy meant the idea of the influence of sexual passions in men's lives "to run all through the novel. It is in fact to be discovered in every body's life -- though it lies less on the surface perhaps than it does in my poor puppet's."[Hardy to Gosse, Nov 10. 1895, Letters, II, 93]

Even Sue is not a complete alien speaking for a race yet to come. There were enough samples of Sue-like girls in the second half of the nineteenth century to warrant her representativeness. Hardy saw that the Sue type was "comparatively common & getting commoner ..."[Hardy to Chavelita Clairmonte, Dec 22. 1895, Letters, II, 102](3)

All this suggests that Jude was meant by the writer to be a tragedy and to produce tragic effects. However, the novel cannot be considered as conforming completely to the Aristotelian concept of tragedy in that it pictures the struggle of worthy individuals against the vast powers of an orderless universe, their own souls and the social codes of behaviour. In this it comes nearer the wider concept of
modern tragedy with its emphasis on the value of the individual and the sorrow that underlies his defeat at the hands of powers beyond his comprehension and control. According to Hegel, for example, "... our interest [in tragedy] is directed not to the 'ethical vindication and necessity' but rather to 'the isolated individual and his conditions.'"(4)

It may be found useful here also to reopen the question of Hardy's philosophy since Hardy's assertion in the "Preface" is the basis of most of what is said about denying the existence of a Hardy philosophy. Hardy states that his novel

is simply an endeavour to give shape and coherence to a series of seemings, of personal impressions, the question of their consistency or their discordance, of their permanance or their transitoriness, being regarded as not of the first moment."[27]

Conceding that Hardy was not attempting a coherent and tightly built philosophical system, it should be noticed that Jude does express the writer's philosophy as much as a work of art can. By philosophy I simply mean here a consistent view of life and things which gives the work of art its significance, cohesion and perspective. Hardy's view of man's place in the universe is an important factor
not only in the authorial intrusions scattered all through the novel and the views put forth by characters at different occasions in the novel, that can be considered as echoes of some of the author's opinions as gathered from his personal writings, but also in choosing the types of character and the peculiarities of incident that most illustrate the author's way of seeing life and the world. It should be stressed however that this does not draw Hardy away from art to philosophy or propagandism. He clearly did not have ready-made solutions for the problems he was tackling. This is exemplified for example in his tackling of the problems of education and man-woman relationships and their effects in men's lives.

Attaining higher education is a burning ambition with Jude as well as with his teacher, Phillotson (and presumably his creator, too). The ambition of his life is perhaps initiated in Jude by his aunt's remarks upon Phillotson's leaving the village, that the school-master should have taken the boy with him, a lover of books as he was. Inability to achieve this goal is a great disappointment that affects the whole of the individuals' lives inimically. Education should not be the exclusive right of the financially privileged, it should be offered to everybody

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who is interested in culture and knowledge. Hence the poignancy of "To Mr J. Fawley, Stone-mason,"[II, 6, 138] in the answer to Jude's application from the Head of Biblioll College. In spite of Hardy's strong attitude on this we feel that his aim was not to promote the cause of open education so much as to show the pain and suffering underlining the frustration caused by the social barriers which prevented genuine ambitious men from attaining their heart-felt goals in knowledge.

Much has been said about Jude and "the anti-marriage league" and about the novel being a statement against the institution of marriage. Hardy was probably right in his indignation at being thus grossly misunderstood, something which stemmed perhaps from considering him more of a philosopher than an artist. Man-woman relationships are an important aspect of human life that should be built on sound foundations so as to enrich man's life and alleviate the suffering in it. At the dictate of the law of nature no ordinary person can escape the desire for fulfilment in sex. With the absence of a divine law-giver Hardy obviously looks at marriage laws as a man-made attempt at putting a suitable frame for the relationships between the sexes that may or may not be the solution for the problem. Indeed most of
Hardy's stories can be considered as experiments towards finding a way out of the dilemma of the relationships between the two sexes of humanity. In a letter to Lady Jeune on 17.11.95, Hardy exclaims with regard to the "marriage question" in Jude, "I wonder they do not see that my own opinions are nowhere given." [Letters, II, 97] In justice to Hardy it should be mentioned that in this he was never a propagandist for or against marriage, for or against free love, for example. Most of his plots show the great difficulty amounting to seeming impossibility of finding a sound basis for sexual relationships, conducive to happiness. The difficulties facing Egbert and Geraldine in An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress are much the same as those facing Clym and Eustacia, Tess, Alec and Angel and Jude, Sue and Arabella in the later novels.

In most cases man-woman relationships were in a bitterly ironic way leading more to suffering and pain than to satisfaction; equal in this are those under the roof of marriage or outside it. It is just to say that rather than criticising marriage or calling for free love, Hardy was merely experimenting by exploring different alternatives and possible solutions. Hardy's life-long interest in the subject of the sound basis for male-female relationships in
the world of human beings is voiced also in his contribution to "The Tree of Knowledge," where he observes "that civilization had never succeeded in creating a satisfactory scheme for the conjunction of the sexes."["The Tree of Knowledge", Personal Writings, 249]. It is not impertinent here to say that with the exception of the happy endings of the affairs of Dick and Fancy in Under the Greenwood Trees, Springgrove and Cytherea in Desperate Remedies and Oak and Bathsheba in Far from the Maddening Crowd, the prospects for happiness in man-woman relationships look very bleak indeed. This moves towards something like the attitude expressed by Hartmann in that the quest for sex is more likely to end in suffering, pain and freedom-restriction rather than happiness and fulfilment. Hartmann sees that pain in love outweighs pleasure and an individual feels that he is used to fulfil aims which are not his. With this the individual's pleasure is corroded.

That the characters of the novel are to be seen as essentially free can be deduced from their choices, the mental development of each and the ways they react to outside influences. Jude's massive effort in going about educating himself in the two dead languages of Old Greek and Latin and in other branches of culture attests to his strong
will in facing hardships with consistency. It is true his programme is interrupted by his encounters with Arabella and Sue and by the unsympathetic response of the educational establishment, but it is equally true that in spite of all adverse circumstances he never abandons the dream which prompts him to return to Christminster towards the end to be near the haunting place of the old masters of knowledge. Furthermore, it can be clearly seen that he, unaided, made great progress on the road to learning.

Sue has her way with the Anglican shop and the Normal School. With Promethean dignity she stands up to the tyrannical punishment. She has had her way with her friend, the Christminster graduate, and in like manner, she asserts her individuality with Jude and Phillotson later.

In Phillotson we have a fine example of sticking to one's principles in face of adversity and general reprobation. He chooses to give Sue her freedom because he feels that is the right thing to do in spite of his friend's counsel and in face of general persecution.

We see thus that the characters are not meant to be automata of necessity. They are free responsible agents who excite feelings of admiration and pity rather than
commonplace curiosity. I am tempted to add that the characters feel they are free and act accordingly. To the narrator, and to us as readers they may, at first sight, seem to lose some of their freedom because of the remote and comprehensive view we have of their careers, and because we are in a position to know of things and events hidden from them. Jude, for example, does not know about the conspiracy of Arabella and her mates till it is too late. Likewise, towards the end, the attraction between Arabella and Vilbert is unknown to him. The characters, however, do not feel this restriction. In the same sense (albeit on different levels and with different proportions) that man is mainly free because he feels to be free, the characters do not feel this limitation on their freedom which we can perceive. In fact, Hardy refers the final shape of the novel to the wills of the characters and not to his own. In his letter to Gosse on Nov 10, 1895, referred to earlier, Hardy admits that "beyond a certain point, the characters necessitated [the plot], & I simply let it come."

However, as we have seen in other Hardy novels, characters' freedom is severely limited by factors from within and from without their personalities. In Jude we can perceive that divine freedom-limiting forces are left
behind. Very little of the fates and gods of *The Return of
the Native*, the mysterious powers of *The Mayor of
Casterbridge* and even the Providence and President of the
Immortals of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* encounter us in *Jude*.
Up to the moment of Sue's "It is no use fighting against
God![VI, 3, 351] no supernatural power has been mentioned
as a freedom-limiting agent or as an antagonist to man.
Sue's surrender, it is to be remembered, is prompted by the
morbid state she lapses into in the wake of her disastrous
loss. When Jude shakes her out of the nightmare saying it
is only "against man and senseless circumstance", Sue
realises the mental perversion she has fallen into: "True!
... What have I been thinking of! I am getting as
superstitious as a savage!" However this is a momentary
realisation after which she sinks back into a half-conscious
state of religiosity which culminates in her giving up her
body to Phillotson in a propitiatory act.

Hardy expressed his fear that he should be considered
"High-Churchy" for that conclusion of Sue's career. This
point was made in quite a number of his letters of November,
1895. An example is his letter written to Sir George
Douglas on 20.11.95.[Letters, II, 98] I feel that this was
part of Hardy's defensive mechanism against accusations that
were sure to come against his presumed anti-marriage and anti-Christianity attitudes. The truth seems, however, to lie elsewhere. It is made perfectly clear that Sue's last decisions are made in a half-somnambulistic mood and are not examined under the light of reason and common sense. Hardy is able at last, but not fully so, to do away with divine influence in his fiction, and face his readers with his bitter facts without the aid of rhetorical tropes. Man faces senseless circumstances and no divine power, beneficent or otherwise.

One of the elements of these circumstances arises from the fact that men are destined to live together. In their coming together they tend to lose or surrender a portion of their freedom in order to be able to obtain protection, the sense of belonging and the fruits of cooperation and coexistence. However, codes of conduct necessitated by living in a community tend to increase in complexity and in their pressures on the individuals and often reach the limits of tyranny. When society does not tolerate individual fulfilment outside its laws and traditions situations of tragic dimensions are apt to be encountered. In \textit{Jude} the pressure of the intolerant establishment on the dissenting individual is felt in the air of the story
especially towards the end, with Jude and Sue flying from one town to another to escape recognition and persecution. But that pressure is illustrated in several distinct episodes along the course of action. Sue suffers at the hands of authoritarian administration. Discovered to be in possession of the Greek figurines, Sue is given a hard time by Miss Fontover, one of the owners of the Anglican shop she was working in. One is hardly expected, however, to work in an Anglican shop and to live in his heart with divinities other than those of the shop-owners, taking into account that the shop is dedicated to religious ends, and to get away with it. Sue, moreover, is not only living Paganism in her heart, she is, in a sense, worshipping the gods of the religion deposed by Christianity. It is difficult to imagine even in a generally secular and tolerant society that one should work in a religious institution while holding Pagan beliefs. The episode is reenacted in Sue's experience at the Normal School. Staying away from the school for a whole night which was spent with a male "relative" cannot be a popular practice in the eyes of the administration and Sue gets the sack again. Once more we see Sue doing the things directly opposite to what is expected of her by her superiors and employers. A teacher-trainee in a still apparently religious society is
not supposed to spend nights with male friends and relatives. The punishment is, it is true, severe, but we cannot overlook the fact that the act runs against predominant common sense and prudence which says that one should be careful not to expose oneself to unnecessary dangers. It seems as if Sue keeps going to the wrong places for employment and keeps "tempting Providence" in a way to make of herself a target for retribution or punishment. This aspect of Sue's character will be dealt with in more detail later, however.

Phillotson similarly suffers at the hands of the intolerant establishment. He is faced with a difficult choice between being the hangman or the victim, and magnanimously chooses to be the second. In consequence he loses his job, income, social position and respect of many. Phillotson's kind-heartedness and magnanimity, nevertheless, are a little marred at the end by his accepting Sue's sacrifice of her freedom and body to his desires.

Jude's agony at the hands of inimical social tradition is perhaps the greatest. He is prevented from attaining the ambition of his life in education and hunted down by prudery for his daring to break the moral code of behaviour for man-woman relationships set by the community. He realises
that he is fighting against "man and senseless circumstance". I feel that "man" in Jude's statement should include himself since he seems to be fighting against himself as well as against others, as we shall see. Conceding that Jude is entitled to his deserved and desired share of education, I find it very imprudent that a self-respecting stone-worker who is living with another woman outside the bonds of marriage, should go and do relettering work in the Tables of the Ten Commandments at the church, accompanied by his co-habitor and his son.[V, 6]

I am inclined to conclude that society, in fact, plays a secondary role in Jude's and Sue's tragedies, interfering only when the heroes' challenges and breaking of the norms become glaringly obvious. The mood of the community's reaction to Jude and Sue is described in this passage:

Nobody molested them, it is true; but an oppressive atmosphere began to encircle their souls, particularly after their excursion to the Show, as if that visit had brought some evil influence to bear on them. And their temperaments were precisely of a kind to suffer from this atmosphere, and to be indisposed to lighten it by vigorous open statements.[V, 6, 311]

So the truth is that the couple are not fighting against society as much as against their own temperament. An Arabella or a Suke Damson or a Sergeant Troy for example, would not suffer much at the hands of the same society.
They would be able to shrug it all off and go about their vigorous lives almost all the same. This suggests that even though society and the norms and traditions of the community have a hand in limiting the characters's freedom, by virtue of their living it, exerting pressure on them to bring them to conformity, the "Ishmaelitish" (7) heroes could challenge society and get away with it most of the time. What destroys them at the end comes more from inside, from their temperaments and from their reactions to the social framework. It is not mainly marriage laws that destroy the young couple. They were both able to obtain divorces fairly easily from their respective previous spouses. Neither is it the censure of the society which treats them relatively leniently. These are, nonetheless, factors in the tragedy, but the main responsibility lies with the temperaments of the heroes. The punishment they get is mostly, like Henchard's, self-imposed.

As we have seen earlier, nature is not to be seen as a major influence in the course of action in the novel. Apart from the early scenes at Marygreen we see very little of nature as landscape and phenomena. In Jude we do not see inclement weather playing foul with the chances of the characters or vast heaths and stretches of wilderness.
exhausting them and minimizing their significance. With his interest in the power of nature in Hardy's novels John Holloway perceives that Jude does not fully represent Hardy because in it there is "no background at all of nature or of a harmonious common life in accord with it."(8)

If nature is largely absent from the novel as scenery and phenomena, it is there in the background. It is there in the oneness the novel sees in man with nature. This is the perspective established very early in the first section of the novel. The boy Jude feels that "A magic thread of fellow-feeling united his own life with [the rooks']. Puny and sorry as those lives were, they much resembled his own."[I, 2, 39] This line of feeling is supported by the pig killing episode. Jude is much repulsed by the hateful job of killing the pig, "his fellow mortal."[I, 10, 89] Much later we see Jude not able to stand the suffering of the rabbit caught in the gin and, as Tess did before with the pheasants, he kills the rabbit to free it from its pain. Acting on much the same feeling Sue cannot but open the cage's door for the pigeons to fly away, releasing them from captivity wondering, "O why should Nature's law be mutual butchery!"[V, 6, 316] In this we have a key to the concept of nature in the novel. "Nature's law" permeates every
living being and ties man to the lowliest creatures. What applies to other animals applies to man who is only a more complicated animal. This was the consciousness dawning upon man in the wake of the publicity the theory of evolution had had at the outset of the second half of the nineteenth century. The pain of it lies in the paradox that man, while realising that he is just another animal and that he has to go by the laws that govern fellow-animals — the struggle for survival, in particular — is still under the moral teachings of long centuries' standing calling for kindness and cooperation. The paradox was keenly felt with Herbert Spencer, for example, calling for the application of "natural ethics" in the life of man. On the opposite side, stressing the necessity for man to shed the means and methods of struggle and butchery that he found himself using in his early stages of development and go for loving-kindness, was T.E. Huxley, whose Romanes lecture for 1893 was an ardent call for cooperation, kindness and the abandoning of what may be called "evolutionary ethics". Huxley enthusiastically asserts that the law of struggle for survival must be replaced in human societies by a higher one, that of cooperation. He sees that "... the ethical progress of society depends, not on imitating the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in
With over-evolved sensitivity Jude and Sue are in great pain to see that "mutual butchery" is still the law in nature. By degrees Jude comes to realise more fully the cruelty of natural law and man's suffering because of it. Upon the marriage of Sue and Phillotson Jude is in great agony that makes him see "the scorn of nature for man's finer emotions, and her lack of interest in his aspirations."[III, 8, 195] Sue's illusions about nature are also shattered in the wake of the death of the children. "...a year ago...", she tells Jude,

I said it was Nature's intention, Nature's law and *raison d'etre* that we should be joyful in what instincts she afforded us - instincts which civilization had taken upon itself to thwart. What dreadful things I said! And now Fate has given us this stab in the back for being such fools as to take Nature at her word! [VI, 2, 348]

She is now moving towards something like Phillotson's observation: "Cruelty is the law pervading all nature and society; and we can't get out of it if we would."[V, 8, 329] In their disillusionment the three main characters express their shock at discovering that nature is not the caring mother, after all, and there is no "holy plan" to ensure man's happiness. However, the final impression the novel leaves us with is that if nature does not care for
man's aspirations it in no way purposely thwarts them. Believing in a cruel immoral nature is going from one false extreme to another. Pain largely arises from the disillusionment, so it seems Hardy is saying it would be less painful to be disillusioned from the beginning. Even though Hardy's Promethean sympathies are with the over sensitive and the illusioned Jude and Sue he is not blind to their failures and shortcomings. He obviously sees the easy going and coarse Arabella and Vilbert as representing a type more fitted to survive, much to his own disgust and indignation. This is so because they go with the law of nature and respond to their instinctual impulses in a "natural" way. They thus best serve the aims of nature. The novel shows then that far from being cruel or consciously bent on thwarting man, nature acts by laws that restrict man's freedom but do not annihilate it.

The Jude-Arabella story is an exquisite example of how Hardy sees Natural Law in action. At nineteen, Jude is seen as obviously without any sexual experience, or even feelings whatsoever. He is so immersed in his study plans carried over from childhood that he is taken in complete surprise by the entirely novel feeling that burst in him after his first encounter with Arabella. Not prepared for this in any way,
he loses his balance and his table of priorities is toppled. This is the revolt of the flesh, or rather its vengeance on being disregarded. With something like this in mind, perhaps, Hardy, in a comment on W.E. Henley's poem "Invictus", painfully laments the fact that "No man is master of his soul; the flesh is master of it!" (10) We are prepared for this from very early in the novel. Hardy describes the moods of matrimony very critically in his opening chapters. He speaks of girls

who had given themselves to lovers who would not turn their heads to look at them by the next harvest; and in that ancient cornfield many a man had made love-promises to a woman at whose voice he had trembled by the next seed-time after fulfilling them in the church adjoining. [I, 2, 38-9]

Moreover, the oppressiveness and freedom-restricting nature of sexual passion is powerfully stressed in the narrator's comment on the first encounter between Jude and Arabella,

She saw that he had singled her out from the three, as a woman is singled out in such cases, for no reasoned purpose of further acquaintance, but in commonplace obedience to conjunctive orders from head-quarters unconsciously received by unfortunate men when the last intention of their lives is to be occupied with the feminine. [I, 6, 63]

Nature is heedless of the personal ambitions of individuals. All it aims at is procreation and if this aim clashes with their aspirations, it is for their own misfortune. The
strongly coercive nature of sexual passion is rendered forcefully clear in the description of Jude's state of mind after meeting Arabella. It was "as if materially, a compelling arm of extraordinary muscular power seized hold of him."[I, 6, 67] This clearly recalls the power that drew Tess and Angel to each other as "two streams in a vale" are drawn. Hardy's insistence on likening male-female attraction to material things shows the irresistible power that is dragging his heroes and heroines together. Jude cannot wake from his trance-like infatuation until it is too late. That he could not get completely over passion, and that flesh has been the master with him all through, is illustrated by his spending the night with Arabella after their accidental meeting in Christminster after all the bitterness that has passed between them.

The mastery of the flesh over the soul in Jude is also vividly shown in his relationship with Sue. He is shown to be fighting against his passion for her with all his intellectual being. He prays against it to no avail.[II, 4] Later, he is still seen fighting against it. He "might fast and pray, ..., but the human was more powerful in him than the Divine."[IV, 1, 224] The defeat of the divine is complete when Jude, after his first passionate kiss with Sue
feels that he cannot become "the soldier and servant of a religion in which sexual love was regarded as at its best a frailty, and at its worst a damnation."[IV, 3, 233]

Arabella, the agent of Natural Law in Jude's case, herself has her freedom restricted by the same law. Her renovated desire for Jude is not much to her liking. A new convert to Christianity, she, like, Alec resorts to religion to fight her passion off, without success. When no help comes from religion Arabella surrenders to her passion, tosses away her beliefs as she tosses the tracts.[V, 8, 326]

This underlines the invincibility of Natural Law and, in a fatalistic manner, shows the futility of fighting against it. In the case of Arabella, like Alec before her, we can deduce that she has wilfully imprisoned herself in rigid moulds of behaviour which she was loath to change, thus being an active contributor to her loss of freedom. She tries religion, but lacking will power and perseverance, she soon relinquishes her attempt at change. It should be noted, however, that she sees reality more clearly than Troy did, for example. She does not put the blame on Providence for her failures. She is aware that the choice is hers and she commits herself to her chosen way. The case of Jude, however, bears more pessimistic notes. We cannot say that
from early life he has surrendered to his instincts and has thus put himself under the mercy of laws operating in him. His first experience comes when he is in his late teens and teaches him very bitter lessons. With these lessons in mind, when he meets Sue, he fights against his desires with all his might to no avail. Jude's career is liable to show the extreme in the cruelty of the Law.

Phillotson, however, shows how a partial and temporary victory can be won over oppressive passion. In spite of his love to Sue he gives in to the principle of loving-kindness and deals with her according to her own terms preferring tenderness to selfish sexual satisfaction. The effect of this is not lessened by the fact that towards the end he at last gives in and accepts Sue's offering her body to him.

With Sue, however, the case is to be seen in a different light. She is largely outside the power of the Law not because of strength of will but because of weakness of drive. She does not fight against her desire as Jude and Arabella do. She fights to bring herself to fulfil the role expected of her, of woman. In a letter to Edmund Gosse dated 20.11.95 Hardy describes Sue's instinct as "being healthy as far as it goes, but unusually weak and fastidious;..."[Letters, II, 99] She breaks the heart of the
Christminster graduate - friend by withholding the sexual satisfaction he was seeking from her. Phillotson barely escapes the same fate, thanks largely to the relative weakness of his sexual urge. Jude was partly her third victim, or more appropriately, victim of his desire for her. Hardy makes clear that Jude was really destroyed by her withholding herself from him and by not being able to get her "as freely as he desired." [Hardy to Gosse, 20.11.95, Letters, II, 99] So the case is that if she is not under the influence of sexual passion she is under pressure from others, other men, who expect her to conform to what a woman is supposed to be and do.

When Jeanette King asserts that in Jude Hardy "follows his thoughts on life to the ultimately pessimistic conclusion: the whole cosmos, not the individual, is at fault", (11) she seems to be equating Hardy and Sue. Sue is the one who finds the universe in the wrong. When Phillotson finds her sad and asks her if he was to blame she answers, "No - I don't know! The universe, I suppose - things in general, because they are so horrid and cruel!" [IV, 3, 237] This view, however, may or may not be endorsed by the writer. For the universe to be totally to blame, I think, however, the meaning of the word should be
enlarged to include forces acting within the individual as well. As we have seen and as we shall see later in more detail, the individual cannot be absolutely exempted from responsibility. Anyhow, when Sue blames the universe (a vague and general term, as it stands), she is implying that incomprehensible forces are at play in her tragedy. These forces, then, presumably, include the Anglican shop owners, the Normal School headmistress and social laws besides others. Sue obviously cannot pinpoint these forces but feels the resistance they put against her efforts.

Coincidences occur which we cannot understand and affect our life-courses greatly. In the view of the mechanistic universe ruled by necessity and in the absence of an over-all conscious creator who can arbitrarily intervene in everyday life events, these coincidences should be considered as natural effects for causes which are hidden from us. Hardy's dependence on coincidences and improbabilities is, admittedly, less obvious in Jude than in other novels. None the less, they are there. One such coincidence is the first encounter between Jude and Arabella.[I, 6] There is nothing strange about a young man meeting a young woman on his way home, but for such a turbulent and greatly decisive relationship as that between
Jude and Arabella to begin with the puzzle throwing scene, the probability involved is open to question. More so is the likelihood of Jude meeting Arabella in a Christminster bar a long time after her departure to Australia.[III, 8]

Bringing Arabella back from Australia and getting her to work in that bar and getting Jude to attend the specific bar itself is running against probability, I feel. An even stronger improbability attends Jude's and Sue's going to the same Aldbrickham hotel to which he went with Arabella for the night out. For Jude and Sue to witness none but the dreariest cases at the Register's office and the church when they are in the mood for wedding is also a bleak coincidence that affect the lives of the couple greatly.[V, 4] It is true that the effect would come with or without the scenes at the Register's office and the church but that was how Hardy chose to bring it about.

Little Father Tine's career in the novel is one big blast to reality and probability. This has already been mentioned but I would like to stress some of the points of daring improbability in the episode. To begin with, the boy does not have a formal name till later when he has been living with his father for some time. The outlook on life he is reported to have (described by A. Alvarez as "almost
a caricature of Hardy at his most Hardyesque" (12)) is very rare even in the world of adults. Terrifying is his remark, "I should like the flowers very much, if I didn't keep on thinking they'd be all withered in a few days!"[V, 5, 309] His horrifying act in killing his brother and sister "because we are too many"[VI, 2, 345] seems to come from a fairy tale, from Halthus and from Schopenhauer at the same time. It has a logic of its own and we shall be doing both the novel and the concept of reality in fiction great harm and injustice if we insist on seeing the episode in the light of realism. The exhausting toils of the day and Sue's conversation with the boy are but feeble attempts to stitch the glaringly occult and macabre episode to the fibre of the novel, which, otherwise has a semblance to reality.

I feel strongly, however, that the improbabilities in the novel are used to bring to light and illustrate the writer's views and the inner traits of the characters of the persons of the story and can be seen as examples of the writer's practice in plotting more than as plausible turnings of action. The pizzle throwing scene should, as Hardy later remarked, be seen as symbolic of the conflict between "spiritualism" and "animalism". It highlights Arabella's carnal coarseness and Jude's physical side, as
opposed to his spiritual and cultural aspirations. Bringing Arabella back to the arena of the novel is perhaps largely meant to accelerate Sue's surrender to Jude's desires. What cannot be done through Natural Law with Sue can be done through the power of envy and the desire for self-assertion. Jude and Sue were probably never going to get married even if they were to witness the happiest of matrimonial contracts at the Register's office and the church. Their bleak experiences there serve only to underline their hypersensitivity and what Hardy saw as the dryness of legalising an essentially emotional and spiritual relationship. It is to be noticed, however, that as early as 1876, the year of publication of *The Hand of Ethelberta*, Hardy was aware of this aspect of marriage. In that novel the marriage licence is described as "a document in which romance, rashness, law, and gospel are so happily made to work together that it may safely be regarded as the neatest compromise which has ever been invented since Adam sinned." [HE, 40, 317] Only in retrospect and having Jude in mind can the irony in this description be fully appreciated. As far as Little Father Time is concerned, I feel there is nothing to be added after all that has been said about his role in the novel. He seems to be only there to air some of his creator's opinions about life and to illustrate his view
that a work of art can be nearer to nature by breaking the laws of literary realism.

This shows how forces from outside the character act in a way to rob man of a portion of his freedom. Nature and natural laws act in man's life as they act in the rest of nature with animals and plants. Society with its norms and implicit and subtle relationships and understandings not only cuts man's freedom of choice but complicates the effect of the laws of nature. Necessity and causation, that work sometimes in an incomprehensible way - giving the impression of chance - also help in restricting man's freedom of choice. The most serious effect, however, is that of forces acting from within and through man. These are the most difficult to recognise and resist since they take the form of unconscious drives and moulds of thought that one can resist only with greatest difficulty, if he recognises them at all. In many cases these drives and moulds prove impossible to detect and they pass as irresistible forces, justifying Hardy's quotation from Novalis in The Mayor of Casterbridge, "Character is fate". This is illustrated in the lives of all the major characters of the novel. I feel that David Lodge has carried this argument to the extreme when he affirms that Jude's personality is the cause of his
downfall and that all the other forces are marginal. (13)

A clue purporting to an even distribution of responsibility in the novel is given in a letter Hardy wrote a friend in September 1926 on a proposed dramatization of Jude. Hardy wondered: "Would not Arabella be the villain of the piece? - or Jude's personal constitution? - so far as there is any villain more than blind chance." [Life, 433]

As it has been with Henchard, forces outside the character's personality and outside his control play an important part in forming his fate. But the effect of character, however, cannot be denied even in forming the person's reactions to outside influences. This is what I propose to discuss in the following.

Jude has the curse of looking for an order in the universe. This has accompanied him from early childhood. In spite of repeated shocks Jude persists in his search for a universal scheme. The smacking Jude the boy gets from Farmer Troutham for failing in his bird-scaring job is the first slap he sustains in his ill-fated search. As a consequence of the beating he perceives that there is a "flaw in the terrestrial scheme, by which what was good for God's birds was bad for God's gardener." [I, 2, 40] Another
landmark on Jude's road to disillusionment is the disappointment he suffers when Vilbert neglects his dreams and forgets his grammars in a frustrating way. [I, 4] Still another painful eye-opener for Jude is when Phillotson, his previous schoolmaster, whom he loved and idealised, and who had told him at their parting in Marygreen, "... if you ever come to Christminster remember you hunt me up for old acquaintance' sake" [I, 1, 34], cannot remember him when they meet in Christminster. [II, 4] Great frustration also attends Jude's discovery of the truth about the music composer. Hardy goes out of the way of the plot to illustrate Jude's situation and to show the pain accompanying the discovery. Jude was enraptured by the hymn of the "Foot of the Cross" and comes under the strong impression that the composer must be a "man of sympathies" [III, 10, 211] who will understand his deep suffering. Under this impression he takes the trouble of going to Kennetbridge to meet him. A great shock is in store for the dreamy hero when he discovers the real mercenary nature of the "man of sympathies".

Living under the illusion of a designed universe causes Jude to leave himself drift with no design of his own for his own life. Upon coming across the female in Arabella he is spurred to shelve his educational plans to get his share.
of joy. The same thing occurs when he meets Sue. Jude is obviously at a loss as to how to deal with this strange creature, mainly because he does not have a clear idea of what he is and what he wants. His indecisiveness plays a great part in his course of action and fate.

This leads us to a discussion of a fatal attribute of Jude's. A clear passivity can be perceived in his behaviour, especially with women. Brought up to it by his aunt who pounded him with "there never was any sprawl on thy side of the family, and never will be", Jude carries this susceptibility to the end of his days. In spite of the great effort at learning, he is not able, it seems, to carry out the necessary transfer of knowledge from the world of books, of theories to the world of everyday life, of "reality". He first surrenders his rudder to Arabella. He follows her in a trance-like manner intoxicated by passion in the beginning and by a mixture of passion, listlessness, indifference and alcohol in their second marriage. Giving in to Arabella's plan puts Jude in a very trying corner ending with the painful separation in the first marriage and by his death in the second. Sue possesses him body and soul and he gives in to her wishes and conforms to her idiosyncracies sometimes in a
self-effacing manner. Meeting Arabella in the Christminster bar Jude forgets about his having to meet Sue, drifts with the new situation and goes with Arabella to Aldbrickham. [III, 8] This passivity which Jude shares with Giles and Tess, for example, proves to be one of his most fatal flaws. Refraining from taking a clear attitude and a decisive stance on things will allow circumstances to toss him around and narrow his freedom severely.

Jude also displays a serious suicidal tendency that ultimately ends with his death. Built partly on the models of John Antell and Horace Moule (14) and presumably Hardy himself (15) Jude suffers from an evident death-wish that dictates not little of his behaviour. Lying on his back in the field with his straw hat on his face, Jude the boy dreams, "If he could only prevent himself growing up! He did not not want to be a man."[I, 2, 42] A similar message is borne by his observation to Sue at the church during the wedding ceremony. Jude thought "they were both too thin-skinned -- that they ought not to have been born ...

[V, 4, 298] His drinking bouts, like Antell's, perhaps, are meant to drown his bitter consciousness of his situation, his frustration in education and to punish himself for what he saw as his shortcomings. In one of
these bouts, recalling Henchard's blunder at the reception of the Royal Personage, he makes a scene of himself by reciting the Nicene Creed in Latin in front of an unappreciative drunken audience in the slums of Christminster. [II, 7] It is mainly a suicidal urge that makes Jude in his precarious state of health take his self-destructive trip from Christminster to Marygreen and back under the heavy rain to meet Sue for the last time.[VI, 8] At the end of his trip, the following dialogue takes place between him and Arabella at the station,

"You've done for yourself, young man," said she.
"I don't know whether you know it."
"Of course I do. I meant to do for myself."
"What - to commit suicide?"
"Certainly."[VI, 9, 396]

In his awakening and his realisation that there is no design in the universe and that he is merely fighting against senseless circumstance, Jude, who feels he has failed in his career, is giving himself his due. Jude's conscious as well as unconscious guilt feelings come from a number of sources. His shedding of religious beliefs so strongly planted in his unconscious from early childhood is undoubtedly one of these sources. Failing in his educational dreams also works to the same effect. Failing to get satisfaction from women is another strong factor in his frustration and guilt. His
realisation that he has encroached upon Sue's freedom: ("I seduced you. ... You were a distinct type - a refined creature, intended by Nature to be left intact");[VI, 3, 352]) probably has a great bearing on his mood as well. Because of all of this and because no law-giver is going to punish him, Jude is punishing himself.

Coming to Sue we find great difficulty in delineating and understanding her character. No wonder, since her creator himself found her a difficult character to draw, "Sue is a type of woman which has always had an attraction for me," he wrote to Edmund Gosse on 20.11.95, "but the difficulty of drawing the type has kept me from attempting it till now."[Letters, II, 99] A curious restlessness and fluctuation clearly mark her thought and behaviour. One moment she loves Jude passionately and the next she asks him not to meet her again. She wants to marry him and promises that and recants her promise almost instantly. She marries Phillotson and plagues him with this as well. Distracted by this inner restlessness Sue becomes, as she sees herself "a woman tossed about with aberrant passions,"[IV, 1, 223] with great loss to her freedom.
Related to this is Sue's impulsiveness. On several occasions it is made clear that she is acting on sudden impulses without applying quiet reasoning to her behaviour. Her escape from the school, for example, is the result of a rash impulse that blinds her to possible dire consequences. One of the conciliating messages she writes to Jude after their frequent quarrels and misunderstandings is described by the narrator as an "impulsive note". [III, 5, 175] Later, when she, Jude and the boy are preparing to move after selling their furniture, she sees the pigeons she has sold in a cage, and acting on impulse, she pulls out the peg and lets the pigeons out. Besides, there seems to be something impulsive in Sue's behaviour in general. This trait greatly narrows her freedom in dealing with situations arising from her impulsive acts.

From the beginning Sue can be seen as an outcast, a person outside the society with its norms and laws. She is, however, a self-styled outcast, an "Ishmaelite" by choice. When Jude, deceived by her conventional appearance at the start of their relationship, notices she has nothing unconventional about her, she tells him of his ignorance of "what's inside" her. Jude inquires about that and she answers, "The Ishmaelite". [III, 2, 158] This is, however, an
attribute she sticks to and strives to realise in her life. She goes against the policies of the institutions she is working at. She goes against the norms of matrimonial life with Phillotson and asks him to let her go and live with her cousin. She lives with Jude and has sexual relationships with him against the accepted morality of the community. She thus defies all norms in an attempt to assert her individuality and freedom. In her escapade with Jude at the shepherd's cottage she thinks of how she has been able to attain freedom, "I rather like this. ... Outside all laws except gravitation and germination."[III, 2, 158] Under the illusion of seeking freedom outside the laws of society Sue is unaware of her slavery to the laws of gravitation and germination and, above that, to her own whims, impulses and desires. Moreover, she can stay out of the reach of the other laws only for a while.

A curious quality that characterises Sue, furthermore, is her inclination to "tempt Providence" at critical situations. The narrator calls attention to "this curious trick in Sue's nature" in her taking Jude's arm as they are walking out of the church, waiting for her bridegroom, Phillotson, to whom Jude is supposed to give her away.[III, 7, 190-1] I have already referred to this aberration in
Sue's temperament in tempting not only Providence but her superiors and employers at the Anglican shop and the Normal School administration and the Aldbrickham church community, to mention only three examples. This seems to imply an inner wish on Sue's part to draw punishment. This desire seems to govern and direct much of her behaviour.

Sue also suffers from unconscious guilt-feelings: probably on account of her loss of faith and because she thinks she was a cause in the death of her anonymous Christminster friend. And these, besides Aunt Drusilla's reminiscences of Sue's naughty and tomboyish childhood which earned her constant reprimanding,[II, 6] are merely the only things we know about her past that may have bred in her severe guilt-feelings, there probably are others. Sue is continually punishing herself or doing something to draw punishment from others. For no other apparent reason she agrees to marry Phillotson. She had refused that to her Christminster friend before, and will refuse it to Jude later, after all. Why, then, does she choose to bind herself in matrimony to the one man whom she physically detests? She denies him the sexual satisfaction he seeks as her husband at the risk of, or probably hoping for, his retaliation. When he enters her room by mistake she throws
herself out of the window. If he is not going to chastise her she will undertake the job herself. Her self-imposed chastisement, however, is complete in the end in her giving herself up to Phillotson in penance for her "sins" against her friend, Jude, her children, Phillotson, and probably against God, nature and society. Self-chastisement is a tyrannical tendency in Sue that greatly moulds her thought and behaviour.

Granting that Jude and Sue are mainly to blame for what they do, and are to be held responsible for their personalities, we cannot overlook the fact that their personalities were largely formed for them in a way that dictated most of their dreams, thoughts and actions. Heredity and environment were certainly at play in forming their thought and directing their behaviour. The role of society has already been discussed in cutting their freedom, and I propose now to discuss the effect of heredity in the poor couple's lives.

Darwinian theories of evolution stress the importance of the hereditary effects in carrying individual features from generation to generation. In fact, evolution is conceived as feasible mainly on the basis of heredity. Without the possibility of individual traits being
transmissible from parents to offspring, continuity would be impossible and the accumulation of acquired traits would be discontinued. Although Darwin is not reported to have his own theory of heredity he shared with his contemporaries the view that heredity meant a blend of parents' features passed on to offspring. Darwin, moreover, believed that acquired traits, not only innate ones, are transmissible. And to Darwin, this principle extended even to behaviour. Jonathan Howard writes that according to Darwin:

> Environmentally induced change in form would, therefore, tend to be inherited. Darwin was prepared to extend this argument even to behaviour, since he viewed behaviour as a manifestation of the physical organisation of an animal and therefore subject to the same rules as physical form.

The question of heredity was picked up by the German scientist August Weismann whose *Essays on Heredity*, we are told, Hardy dipped into in the latter period of 1890. Weismann's conception of the germ cells as the imperishable transmitters of characteristics from one generation to another held a special poetic charm to Hardy. Even though Weismann's findings clashed with Darwin's concepts of heredity on which the theory of evolution was based, Hardy found in them a tremendous poetic and tragic prop for his view of life illustrated in both poetry and
fiction. Whereas Darwin depended on the fact that acquired changes are transmissible we see Weismann insisting on the fact that hereditary characteristics are transmitted only by germ cells which are not affected by acquired changes. Changes only affect the perishable somatic cells. (16)

The idea of an indestructible, only vaguely comprehensible entity that had a formidable influence over man's life, and acting from inside man at the same time, captured Hardy's imagination forcefully, featuring greatly in his last two major novels. Hardy's earlier novels, however, display a persisting interest in the question which found its ultimate expression in Tess and Jude.

Everywhere in Hardy we see characters voicing their (and presumably their creator's) observation of not only physical features but behaviour idiosyncrasies passed through from one generation to another. Mrs Dewey in Under the Greenwood Tree reproaches her husband: "'tis like all your family was, so easy to be deceived." [UGT, I, 38] Commenting on Elfride's mother and grandmother running away with men, the Lady Luxellian grave-digger observes, "That trick of running away seems to be handed down in families like craziness or gout." [PBE, 25, 256] We of course have a deeper insight into the affair and its effects in the plot.
armed with our knowledge of Elfride's train journey with
Stephen. Neigh, in *The Hand of Ethelberta*, laments his
short memory with respect to people's names: "I ... cannot
keep people's names in my head at all; nor could my father
either - nor any of my family - a very odd thing."[HE, 9,
88] We have already seen how the power of heredity was in
action in Clym and Eustacia in *The Return of the Native*
shaping their thought, behaviour and responses to outside
influences. In *A Landican* we see the de Stanos sharing
the facial features, the foremost of which is "the dent on
the upper part of the nose."[AL, I, 3, 54] Giles, David
Lodge observes, shares a fatal listlessness with his father:
"Giles's father had never troubled to take the simple legal
steps that would have protected his leasehold, and even when
Giles discovers this loophole he postpones acting on it ...
until it is too late.[WL, "Introduction", 21]

In the mirror of his "Pedigree" Hardy divines

That every heave and coil and move I made
Within my brain, and in my mood and speech,
Was in the glass portrayed
As long forestalled by their so making it;

...  

Said I then, sunk in tone,

- 360 -
"I am merest mimicker and counterfeit! -

Though thinking, I am I,

And what I do I do myself alone."[CP, 460]

With resentment paralleled only by his resentment against the would-be god of "Hap" Hardy voices his protest against the powerful grip heredity is perceived to have on his soul turning him to a "mimicker and counterfeit".

Reading this, one cannot help recalling Tess's revolt against studying history which would only end in knowing she was

one of a long row only - finding out that there is set down in some old book somebody just like me, and to know that I shall only act her part; making me sad, that's all. The best is not to remember that your nature and your past doings have been just like thousands' and thousands', and that your coming life and doings 'll be like thousands and thousands'"[TD, 19, 153-4]

Blinding her eyes to this fact does not prevent the sad outcome from coming true all the same. A moral that may be gathered here, however, is the necessity of facing the bitter truth and trying to influence events if possible.

Hardy draws attention to the effect heredity has in man's life in Jude in a number of his letters in the years 1895 and 96. To William Archer he wrote on Jan 2. 1895
stating that Jude was "concerned merely with the doom of hereditary temperament & unsuitable mating in marriage." [Letters, II, 194] Jude's aunt is probably referring to this when she scolds Jude for his laziness, "there never was any sprawl on thy side of the family, and never will be." [I, 2, 41] Again the aunt can be seen as foretelling Jude's and Sue's predicament in their union, "There's somemat in our blood that won't take kindly to the notion of being bound to do what we do readily enough if not bound." [I, 11, 94] This is echoed in Jude's description of their state to Sue at the parish church watching the, to them, dismal wedding ceremony. He observes that they are "folk in whom domestic ties of a forced kind snuff out cordiality and spontaneousness." [V, 4, 299]

When Jude first hears Sue speak he "recognized in the accents certain qualities of his own voice; softened and sweetened, but his own." [II, 2, 111] Phillotson goes further when he explains to his colleague, Gillingham how he sees Jude and Sue, "They seem to be one person split in two." [IV, 4, 245]
The hereditary doom in marriage which Hardy stresses in his letters can be clearly seen in the book. Aunt Drusilla prepares us for the disaster when she teaches Jude, "Jude, my child, don't you ever marry. 'Tisn't for the Fawleys to take that step any more."[I, 2, 38] Upon parting with Arabella and while he was strolling along the road outside Marygreen Jude "remembered then that he was standing not far from the spot at which the parting between his father and mother was said to have occurred."[I, 11, 96] And his aunt's prophecy comes true. The part played by necessity in Greek tragedy is taken up in the novel by the force of heredity among other freedom-limiting powers. The curse in matrimony which blighted his parents' marriage has been transmitted to him. Upon first meeting Sue, Jude is very much aware of this inimical attribute of his family. He is enumerating reasons for not making Sue's acquaintance. The third is even were he free, in a family like his own where marriage usually meant a tragic sadness, marriage with a blood-relation would duplicate the adverse condition, and a tragic sadness might be intensified to a tragic horror.[II, 2, 113]

And his worst fears are fulfilled at the end.
The view of the earlier novels, seeing heredity as based on Darwinian assumptions of the passing of acquired traits from parents to offspring, rendered the effect of hereditary influences less powerful and less binding than in the later novels. In *Tess* and *Jude* heredity is seen to reign tyrannically in man's psychological make-up and behaviour. Man's life, in a sense, is programmed along certain lines by the seemingly inescapable effect of the redoubtable germ cells.

With their powerful grip on man's mental, physical and behavioural traits, the germ cells are liable to render the whole of man's life predictable. Man is bound to think in the same way and act in the same way his ancestors have done for ages. He cannot escape his destiny. This is the bleak message rendered by Jude's and Sue's tragedy. However, this should not mean the impossibility of change. Heredity, after all, is only one of the factors working on man's personality. The aggregate effect of these powers is comparable to that of Sue's First Cause which "worked automatically like a somnambulist, and not reflectively like a sage ..."[VI, 3, 351] Individual will is part of the equation or part of the machinery, that is apt to be overlooked in affliction where "opposing forces loom
..." This moves towards something like the theory of the Will Hardy is to formulate later. Hardy was so confident of that theory that he thought it would "settle the question of Free-Will v. Necessity." Hardy thought

The will of a man is, according to [the theory] neither wholly free nor wholly unfree. When swayed by the Universal Will (which he mostly must be as a subservient part of it) he is not individually free; but whenever it happens that all the rest of the Great Will is in equilibrium the minute portion called one person's will is free, just as a performer's fingers are free to go on playing the pianoforte of themselves when he talks or thinks of something else and the head does not rule them."[Life, 334-5]

The simile's unsatisfactoriness has been pointed out by Roy Horrell:

The comparison with the performer's fingers is not illuminating. Do the fingers go on playing the original music or start playing notes at random? If the music, then it is difficult to see in what sense they are free; if they play at random, it is equally difficult to understand that they are "free" to any purpose.(19)

The case, then, is perhaps that while affirming man's partial freedom in the general scheme of things by leaving a loophole in the equilibrium of powers that constitute the First Cause - Immanent Will, Hardy has only stressed man's partial responsibility since his character is, at the end of the day, a constituent part of the general will. This moves
rather towards J.S. Mill's view that we are able to take part in changing our character which is originally formed for us by forces outside us. However, by the testimony of Jude, this possibility remains more on the theoretical side and its chances of being fulfilled are tragically minimal.
NOTES


3. Robert Gittings argues convincingly that Sue is of the type of the emancipated woman of the 1860s. Her interest in Biblical historical criticism is of the kind represented or initiated in England by Benjamin Jowett's contribution to *Essays and Reviews*. Moreover, she also comes near the educated English girl exposed to Comte's Positivism as introduced in the 1840s to the English by J.S. Mill. *Young Thomas Hardy*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), pp. 138-40.


5. There is doubt, however, on whether the "happy ending" of *Far from the Madding Crowd* really represents the mature tendency of the writer in seeing life. In a letter to Frederic Harrison dated July 29, 1901 Hardy tells his correspondent that "... perhaps there is something in *Far from the Madding Crowd* which I could not have put there if I had been older."*Letters*, II, 294)
6. Eduard von Hartmann, *Philosophy of the Unconscious*, trans. by W.C. Coupland, vol. III (London: Trubner & Co., 1884), pp. 30-41. Hartmann was among the thinkers who had Hardy's respect as he stated in the "Apology" to *Late Lyrics and earlier*. [CP, 562] Moreover, Michael Millgate also notices that in the early 1880s "The darker, more sceptical strain in Hardy's thinking continued to be fed ... by some of his reading in general works on philosophy ... and in periodical articles on such figures as Schopenhauer and von Hartmann." *Thomas Hardy: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 246.

7. At one point Sue describes herself as an "Ishmaelite*. [III, 2, 158] This aspect of the characters of Jude and Sue will be treated later in the discussion of their characters and the influence their psychological structures have on their lives.


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14. In a letter to Alda, Lady Hoare, on 30 July 1915, Florence Hardy states that Jude was modelled "but only partly" after John Antell. Reported in Robert Gittings, Young Thomas Hardy (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), p. 34. Gittings also observes the similarity between Jude's and Antell's death. Antell's "is said to have been hastened by exposure through having spent the night in a ditch after a drunken bout." Moreover, under severe psychological pressure, Hardy's close friend, Horace Moule, committed suicide in Cambridge. (pp. 261-2)

15. Hardy also had a conscious death wish which he expressed, for example, in a conversation with Edward Clodd in February 1896. He wished "he had never been born and 'but for the effort of dying, would rather be dead than alive ....'" Michael Hillgate, Op. cit. p. 411.


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CONCLUSION
In the 1920s and 30s Hardy's novels were regarded as the works of a fatalist and a rigid determinist who saw man as a plaything for an exterior and ulterior fate that tossed him around without any regard for his feelings and interests. The critical trend in those days represented by E.M. Forster, E.A. Baker and John S. Smart, for example, stressed Hardy's view of man's helplessness in an essentially hostile universe.

In the 1940s a new trend was initiated in underlining Hardy's achievements as an artist rather than as a philosopher by the contributors to the Hardy centenary volume of Southern Review.

In the 1950s a modified view of Hardy's philosophy came up with John Holloway's study of Hardy's novels in The Victorian Sage. Almost to the exclusion of all other factors, Holloway stressed the effect of nature in controlling man's life. Holloway portrayed Hardy's people as playthings of nature with almost no freedom of their own.
Resorting to the other extreme was Roy Morrell's reading of Hardy's novels. In his book *Thomas Hardy: The Will and the Way* and in "Thomas Hardy and Probability", his contribution to *On the Novel* Morrell relentlessly stressed the characters' absolute freedom and responsibility in a way that put him in a difficult situation sometimes trying to square out numerous allusions, intrusions and episodes in the novels that gave the impression of man's constraint with his over-view and preconceived idea of man's absolute freedom.

This preconception of Morrell's was belied by so many allusions and events in the novel and by explicit comments and entries in Hardy's other personal writings that Morrell's insistence on presenting Hardy as ultimately an optimist could not be realistically embraced.

What I hope this study has shown is that Hardy was neither fully pessimistic nor fully optimistic, neither a rigid determinist nor a complete libertarian. He was more of a realist and a compatibilist who thought that even though everything in the universe was determined by causality man still retained a consciousness of freedom and responsibility and that man's character, though largely caused, played a great part in forming his destiny.
To this reading conform most of the episodes and the allusions of the novels, poems and personal writings. However, we cannot ask a man of letters and an artist to be completely consistent in his presentation of his thought, impressions and imagination. There remain, then, some aspects of Hardy's writings that would not consistently conform to this reading. I have tried to interpret these as Hardy himself did, as rhetorical indulgences permitted in a work of art.

However, Hardy's art can be seen as reflecting the post-Darwinian view of man and the world without God. Man's fears and anxieties at seeing himself without the support of a caring Providence find ample depiction in the bleak and despairing world of Hardy. Man's precarious position in the universe is represented in his being a product of a senseless operation and in being at the mercy of relentless laws that greatly limit his freedom while demanding from him a high degree of awareness and ability to cope with exceedingly complicated situations.

Man then holds responsibility, firstly because he is a free agent - a situation made more difficult by the constraints put on his freedom by diverse powers - and, secondly, because he will be the chief sufferer in
consequence of any errors and misjudgements he may make. Man’s situation is also made more precarious by the fact that this life is his only chance of existence. These are some of the fears that Hardy’s novels arouse to which, admittedly, they offer no solution.
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