

**IN HARDY'S NOVELS THE
VISION OF NATURE
AND FATE**

A THESIS

SUBMITTED

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLISH

FACULTY OF ART

Research Scholar

PREMLATA SHARMA

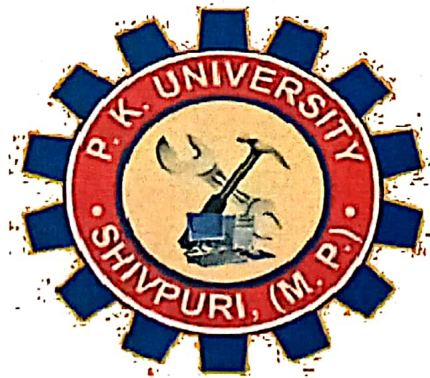
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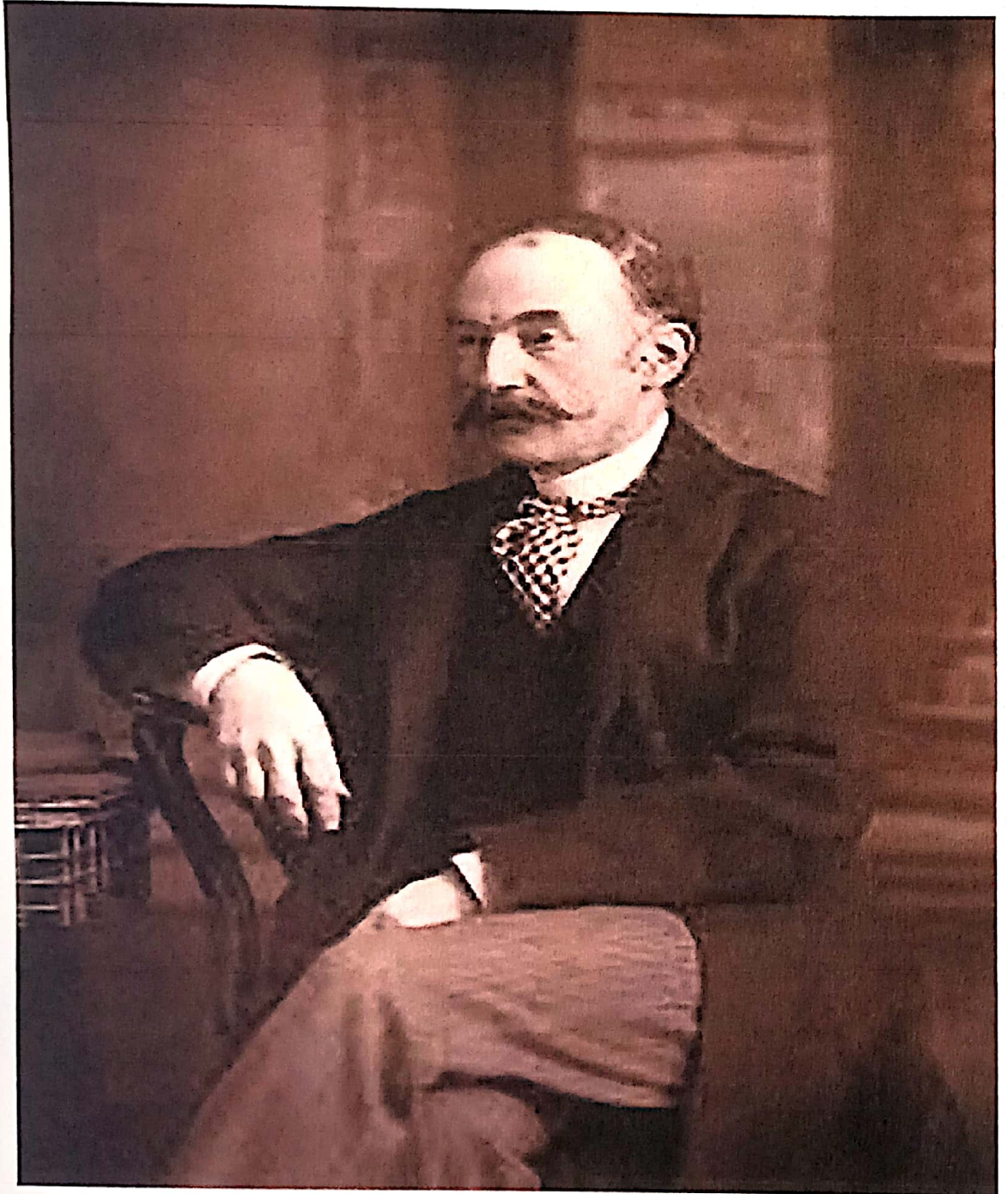
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THOMAS HARDY (June 2, 1840 – January 11, 1928)



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This is to certified that work entitled "**IN HARDY'S NOVELS THE VISION OF NATURE AND FATE**" of research work done by **MS. PREMLATA SHARMA (Reg. No.: PH17/ART/ENG/17)** under my supervision for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in **ENGLISH** to be awarded by P.K. University, Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh, India.

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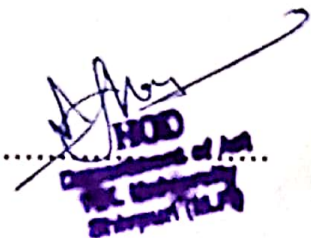
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PREFACE

Thomas Hardy is well known fiction writer of the late Victorian Age. In his fiction writings, Thomas Hardy has scattered his deep and gloomy thoughts about life and the scheme of the universe. In his thoughts about life, he was influenced by Charles Darwin's theory of **Origin of Species** and the nihilistic ideas of Shopenhaur. His mind was obsessed with what he saw in nature, a cruel phenomenon at every next step and untold sufferings without much cause. In this background he began to read new things of his own concerned designs in Nature and Fate. He saw human life full of miserable episodes. Even a little happiness occasionally visiting the human life was found to be crossed by some unhappiness and misery suddenly engulfing the whole environment within its jaws.

Hardy in his novel after novel, shows that sufferings and miseries have their permanent dwellings around the innocent and nature abiding Wessex dwellers. His dark poetic spectacles see darkness in the living patterns whether in human life or even in the lives of birds and animals. With all his deeper probes in life's mystery, he concluded that there is some mysterious force, whose intentions are always malevolent. This force has its delights in viewing the tragic waste in human life. A man or a woman of Hardy's choosing is generally placed amidst the sufferings which first tickle like drops and then suddenly smash like torrents. The malevolent working of this mysterious force is manifested through different agents. Sometimes Fate and Chance surprise his characters and at another time Nature and Love also play havoc with the things around his characters. In every case, his protagonist, suffer heavily and get relief only in death.

Hardy is not new to the field of research and analytical studies in the academic spheres. Several studies on Hardy's tragic vision and his art and craft in his novels have been attempted. But a close study of his treatment of nature in his novels and the presence of Nature as Fate in bringing calamities around the protagonists is comparatively, a new phenomenon. It has been viewed that Nature in Hardy's novels is not merely a background or a setting, but an active force playing to the tune of the tragic game designed by some malevolent Force as conceived by Hardy. Really, Nature employed by Hardy to exercise an active influence on the course of events in the novels. Nature's influence is the shaping influence on the dispositions of

human beings. In his novels, Hardy's eyes are always sensitive towards the cruelties perpetrated on the living beings in the lack of Nature. Hardy establishes emotional relationship between Nature and the events and finally intends to show that nature is also an emblem of Fate. In its various manifestations, Nature works as an agent of Fate in creating darker shadows around the protagonists. Edgon Heath in **The Return of The Native** assumes a personality with demonic, face. It has engulfed several human lives. Tess's life is made miserable by several unhappy situations occasioned by Nature. Henchard, though victim of his obstinate will, is completely ruined by Nature by its turns and overturns. In this manner, a close survey of all the novels of Thomas Hardy from this point of view makes an interesting subject of research.

The present research Thesis is divided in six chapters. In the first chapter i.e. **"Introduction"**, Hardy's life and his growth as a novelist have been shown. In the second chapter i.e. **"Hardian scheme of Universe"**, a typical analysis of Hardy's serious vision of life has been made. Several influences on his gloomy thoughts are discovered and several items of happenings in human life contributing to the tragic intensity of his novels are earmarked. In the next two chapters, a close survey of the treatments of Nature in his early novels, minor novels and masterpieces is made. In the chapter V i.e. **Nature and Fate**, it has been shown that Nature works as a powerful agent in causing pain and sufferings in the lives of the Wessex people. Nature seldom smiles on its creatures, and even it is smiles, only to trap lives for further tragic waste. In the last chapter i.e. **"Conclusion"**, we have summarized the whole issue by declaring that Nature in Hardy is not a silent force; it is an active force. Like Wordsworth, Hardy also finds life in Nature, but for different conclusion.

For Hardy, Nature is not a healing power or a healthy phenomenon of life; it is for him a cruel force which watches human life or other lives on this planet and takes delight in pushing them to their unhappy domain. The greater designs of Fate to disturb human life are well supported by the schemes of Nature.

In this manner, the purpose of the present Thesis is to make a serious attempt to understand Hardy's intentions behind his Nature portraits, which are invested with a kind of personality in the magnitude of Fate's working. The tragic waste in his novels is partly due to the presence of Nature with its multifarious scenes and occasions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank the Almighty – who governs our life upon this planet in the Universal Scheme of Creation as He, with all his bountiful graces, illuminated in my mind to have a clear vision of Thomas Hardy’s novels and the treatment of Nature in them and to complete the present adventure in research oriented study. “**Illumine what is dark in me, raise and support**”, Milton prayed for his mighty task, and I sing it for my modest task, and it was quite obvious for me that my prayer was heard as He hears of all those that are pure and simple, religious and submissive.

The first name from amongst all whom I am indebted to in the composition of the present thesis in that of my Co-guide, **Dr. (Prof.) Sujata** and My guide **Dr. (Prof.) Kavita Agnihotri**, She was kind enough to assimilate her deep thoughts about Thomas Hardy and his novels during the course of the present study.

I am thankful to Dr. Dinesh Sir (Research Director) and Dr. Somesh Bhami Sir for their moral support and all the members of the Department of English, **P.K. University** who from time to time exchanged my views and supported them with their honest criticism and **Ms. Nisha Yadav**, Librarian of P.K. University along with other staffs of P.K. University. I am really thankful to my Father **Mr. Shrinivas Sharma** and my Mother **Mrs. Bhudevi Sharma** who unhesitatingly extended their valuable suggestions in the progress of the present study and also grateful to my Dear Chacha Ji **Dr. Rajesh Sharma** for his moral and valuable support.

Let my thanks have no reservation when I came to acknowledge the help of different libraries in helping me to reach the relevant material in the furtherance of the present research work – The library staff of **Smt. B.D. Jain Girls P.G. College, Agra** deserves my special thanks as even the most rare books kept in the interior cells of the library were made available to me for consultation. I am thankful to the library staff of Hyderabad University, Library, as well I would also like to acknowledge the help I received from British Council Library New Delhi, Sahitya Academy New Delhi, and different websites consulted by me to have access to the relevant material on Thomas Hardy. I am really thankful to them. I really thankful to my brothers & sister for their cooperation.

Lastly, I thank my Computer Typist **Atul & Sarthak** who have, with their nice skills, gave the nice look at this volume.


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ABSTRACT

The thesis entitled '**In Hardy's Novels The Vision of Nature and Fate**' comprises of the following six chapters-

1. Introduction
2. Hardian Scheme of Universe
3. Elemental Forces of Nature in Early Novels
4. Nature in Minor Novels
5. Nature and Fate in the Novels of Hardy
6. Conclusion

In the first chapter of the thesis entitled **Introduction**, a detailed introduction of Thomas Hardy has been made covering the various aspects of his life and the making of his personality as a novelist. Every literary man is the product of his own circumstances, and the same was true of Thomas Hardy.

The chapter as a whole includes all such circumstances that contributed in placing him at the top in the world of fiction. In addition, the special focus has been made on his contribution to English fiction that has won him a distinct name and fame and that has reserved him the title of being the greatest novelist of the literary age he belonged to.

As the title of the second chapter of the thesis **Hardian Scheme of Universe** suggests, it makes a remarkable emphasis on Thomas Hardy's Scheme of Universe as reflected in his novels. Hardy's novels enrich Darwinian and feminist perspectives, extend formalist evaluations of his achievement as a writer, and provide fresh interpretations of enigmatic passages and scenes.

Hardy's own deeply interdisciplinary knowledge of astronomy and cosmology within both literary and scientific traditions, from the ancient world through the Victorian era had a deep impact on him. *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Return of the Native*, *Two on a Tower*, *The Woodlanders*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and *Jude the Obscure*, reveal Hardy's personal synthesis of ancient and modern astronomy with mythopoetic and scientific cosmologies that enabled him to write as a literary cosmologist for the post-Darwinian world.

The third chapter of the thesis entitled **Elemental Forces of Nature in Early Novels** highlights the use of all the seven elemental forces of nature in Hardy's early novels that include seven elemental forces of nature--water, fire, wind, rock, plants, animals, and beings of light, including angels.

Thomas Hardy was quite sensitive towards the ugly changes in nature which came to disturb human ambitions and wishes. For him even the passive adherence to nature did not provide real happiness. The occasional happiness was very soon overtaken by some fatal changes in nature in the scheme of universe.

Hardy's preference for gloominess was in the part guided by his own life's melancholy, which seldom left his abode. Usually weak in health and enormously huge in brain, this child was since his infancy given to dreaming and contemplation. His fondness for human faces, where in he read stories of unique import, is proverbial.

His love for nature and lower animals, his strange delight in the comic and grotesque, his sweet and easily impressionable temperament and lovable manners were simply amusing. All his life he had a weakness for horrible incidents grim legends creepy stories, accounts of spells, omens, ghosts, murders, suicides and the like.

The fourth chapter of the thesis entitled **Nature in Minor Novels** discusses at length Hardy's treatment of nature which reveals the foundations of thinking that has contributed to our contemporary environmental crisis.

Hardy shares affinity philosophically reconstructing culture through presenting the truth value of literary art and nature in the heart of natural elements and images. As a reaction against a mechanized and materialized society that politically values technological advancements and expositions, self-consciously Hardy portrays the naked truth of nature and land and the place of man.

Hardy has distinctively portrayed nature, having his own unique style and perspective in his writing. The portrayal of Nature in Hardy's minor novels finds a sufficient room in this chapter.

The fifth chapter of the thesis entitled **Nature and Fate in the Novels of Hardy** reveals Thomas Hardy's projection of a view of life, gloomy and serious. He has discovered a definite

scheme of life in the suffering of mankind. In order to project his view of life he takes help of natural surroundings of the Wessex region.

Sometimes nature is presented with smiling face another time it is show with a gloomy face, but every time it contributes the tragedy of mankind. The natural setting, changing weathers, landscape features, chance happenings, natural instincts of love, cumulative effect of heredity all create the effect of doom in the novels of Hardy.

The sixth chapter of the thesis entitled Conclusion concludes the title, theme and chapters of the thesis. The conclusion is all detailed and comprehensible covering all the aspects of the present research work.

Thus, thought was developed through the above-mentioned six chapters of the thesis. Throughout the work, the central focus was made on the title and theme selected for the purpose of research.

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Preface

Thomas Hardy is well known fiction writer of the late Victorian Age. In his fiction writings, Thomas Hardy has scattered his deep and gloomy thoughts about life and the scheme of the universe. In his thoughts about life, he was influenced by Charles Darwin's theory of **Origin of Species** and the nihilistic ideas of Shopenhaur. His mind was obsessed with what he saw in nature, a cruel phenomenon at every next step and untold sufferings without much cause. In this background he began to read new things of his own concerned designs in Nature and Fate. He saw human life full of miserable episodes. Even a little happiness occasionally visiting the human life was found to be crossed by some unhappiness and misery suddenly engulfing the whole environment within its jaws.

Hardy in his novel after novel, shows that sufferings and miseries have their permanent dwellings around the innocent and nature abiding Wessex dwellers. His dark poetic spectacles see darkness in the living patterns whether in human life or even in the lives of birds and animals. With all his deeper probes in life's mystery, he concluded that there is some mysterious force, whose intentions are always malevolent. This force has its delights in viewing the tragic waste in human life. A man or a woman of Hardy's choosing is generally placed amidst the sufferings which first tickle like drops and then suddenly smash like torrents. The malevolent working of this mysterious force is manifested through different agents. Sometimes Fate and Chance surprise his characters and at another time Nature and Love also play havoc with the things around his characters. In every case, his protagonist, suffer heavily and get relief only in death.

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Nature in Hardy's novels is not merely background or a setting, but an active force playing to the tune of the tragic game designed by some malevolent Force as conceived by Hardy. Really, Nature employed by Hardy to exercise an active influence on the course of events in the novels. Nature's influence is the shaping influence on the dispositions of human beings. In his novels, Hardy's eyes are always sensitive towards the cruelties perpetrated on the living beings in the lack of Nature. Hardy establishes emotional relationship between Nature and the events and finally intends to show that nature is also an emblem of Fate. In its various manifestations, Nature works as an agent of Fate in creating darker shadows around the protagonists. Edgon Heath in **The Return of The Native** assumes a personality with demonic, face. It has engulfed several human lives. Tess's life is made miserable by several unhappy situations occasioned by Nature. Henchard, though victim of his obstinate will, is completely ruined by Nature by its turns and overturns. In this manner, a close survey of all the novels of Thomas Hardy from this point of view makes an interesting subject of research.

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PREMLATA

IN HARDY'S NOVELS
THE VISION OF NATURE AND FATE

INTRODUCTION:

Thomas Hardy was born on the Egdon Heath, which he made famous in his books, in Dorset, near Dorchester, on June 2, 1840, and died on January 11, 1928. He was delicate as a child and was taught at home by his mother before he attended grammar school. At sixteen Hardy was apprenticed to an architect, and for many years architecture was his profession although he wrote poetry, his first and last literary love, in his spare time. His first novel was written in 1867, and his first published book, printed at his own expense was a financial failure, yet by 1874 he was convinced that he could earn his living as an author and he retired from architecture, married and devoted himself to writing. Hardy was an extremely productive novelist. In 1896, disturbed by the public outcry over the unconventional subjects of two of his greatest novels, **Tess of the D'Urbervilles** and **Jude the Obscure**, he announced that he would never write fiction again, and after that he wrote only poetry.

Thomas Hardy, the well known fiction writer of the late Victorian Age, has scattered his deep and gloomy thoughts about life, he was influenced by Charles Darwin's theory of **Origin of Species** and the nihilistic ideas of Shopenhaur. His mind was obsessed with what he saw in nature, a cruel phenomenon at every next step and untold sufferings without much cause.

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Queen Victoria was monarch of England from 1837 to 1901, and it has been found convenient to group the writings produced during that long stretch of years as “Victorian”. But the classification is too facile because in an age that abounded in great literature and music. The age which bears her name has since been subject to diverse and divided judgment.

The most noticeable feature of Victorian Literature is the concern with specific social problems. The impulse is generally recognized to have started before Victoria came to the throne, with the First Reform Bill (1832). The act of Parliament recognized the economic dominance of the middle class by finally placing direct political power in its hands. The vote was thus

extended to all members of this class. At this time the old concepts of ‘Whigs’ , and ‘Tory’ made way for ‘Liberals’ and ‘Conservatives’.

“In 1829 the Catholic Emancipation Act has been passed; in 1833 slavery was abolished, in 1846 free trade became a national policy with the repeal of corn laws; in 1845 Jews were made eligible for public office; and in 1972 the institution of voting by ballot was inaugurated”.¹ The conservatives were as responsible as the liberals for the passage of these acts; for a long time there was little difference between the two parties. Both were committed to the teaching of utilitarianism, as promulgated by Bentham, that it was necessary to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number.

John Stuarts Mill, the son of James Mill, taught that the only reason that can be adduced for limiting the rights of any individual in the community is **“to prevent harm to others”**. **“This philosophy of unrestricted individualism vastly increased the holdings of the middle class as well as its material comforts. The British Colonial Empire expanded in Asia and Africa by conquest and Colonization.”**¹

1. D.N. Bernard Grebanier: **Essentials of English Lit: Vol. 11: Barron’s Educational Series, Inc:** Woodbury, New York, p.510.

The Victorian Age, from a working class point of view, is the record of a long struggle of wage-earners to win recognition from the government. A people's Charter was drawn up in 1838, and began the so called Chartist Movement, which demanded universal manhood suffrage, the secret ballot, the abolition of property qualification for member of parliament. **“Universal Manhood suffrage was perhaps inevitably the foundation of any further progress”.**² Actually it was not until 1917 that the point was won in the Manhood suffrage Bill. Before that act was passed, the decades were punctuated by a series of strikes and riots in urban centres. Though the Chartist movement was for a long time unsuccessful, it served the function of making the general public aware of the problems involved.

The Victorian era represented a close connection between material expansion on one hand and a phase of realism and order on the other, **“Since the 16th Century, science has been a growing rival force beside religion and arts; during the 18th Century it ceased to be privilege of an elite, and awakened an interest in the mind of every cultured person. About**

1. D.N. Bernard Grebanier: **Essential of English Lit.: Vol. 11: Barron's Educational Series**, Inc Woodbury, New York, P.510.

2. Ibid.

the middle of the 19th Century, it begins to hold a place of primal importance among the intellectual preoccupation of the average man.”¹

It proves its worth by the central and it exercises over the physical universe, and also by the idea of unity which it offers to the innumerable seekers in the many branches of knowledge. It gave power, logical thinking, helped the progress of production and set its goal in the search of truth. Thus science provided the very type of mentality that is essentially counter Romantic.

1830 onwards the parallel and simultaneous development of all sciences of mind and matter proceeds with the rapid, imperious, irresistible trend of great historical changes. English Literature, therefore in the years which followed will be deeply moulded by the authority of a reason which grow more exacting and active and find their direct and main outlet in Science. The Victorian age does not bring science in the full sense of the word, because the great majority of the nations is not interested in anything beyond empiricism.

The Victorian period achieved little of the stability we have learned

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1. Cazamian Louis: **A History of English Literature:** J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd. London, 1960. p.1089.

to associate with a semi-mythical neoclassic culture. It moved from form to form, and nothing stood. Almost every Victorian thesis produced its own antithesis, as a ceaseless dialectic worked out its designs. Throughout the period there were vast differences between rural and urban society; the fields of the agrarian south were, as Mrs. Gaskell suggested, a far cry from the Smoky cities of the Industrial North.

The Victorian age as a whole was forced to adapt itself to new values as old traditions crumbled; and the term “**Victorian**” is therefore, egregiously abused when invoked to describe attitudes that the Victorians inherited, modified or discarded. In its many-sided concern with manners and morals, the Victorian era was not unlike the Elizabethan age, when conduct-books, pamphlets, plays, sermons, poems explored the problems of degree in an expanding economy. Both periods brought to the present a deep sense of the national past based upon high scholarship and eager research. Both shared the excitement of vital education. Like the Elizabethans, the Victorians valued a manifold competence, Ruskin like Bacon took all knowledge to be his province and left his mark on many others. Not without some reasons, then, did John Addington Symonds conclude that, “**The English Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century became renascent in the nineteenth**”.¹

1. Austin Wright: **Victorian Literature, Modern Essay in Criticism**: Oxford University Press, 1961.

The Victorian Society was forever subject to tensions which militated against complete spontaneity and singleness of purpose. It experienced in various forms the self-consciousness that is at once the strange disease of modern life and genesis of analytic science. It learned to fear its own ardors, to distrust the falsehood of extremes. Whenever artist or philosopher was betrayed by the intensity of his conviction, Victorian parody served to restore a lost perspective; laughter produced eccentric genius into an awareness of common reality. Despite the resounding clash of individual wills, there was until late in Victoria's reign a desire for cultural synthesis. Again and again the poet dreamt of remote harmony which might catch up diverse themes into a larger pattern, a meaningful Victorian counter point. Tennyson prayed for his whole generation a prayer which might be echoed by Victorians of vastly different intellectual persuasion:

**“Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell
That mind and soul according well
May make on music as before.”¹**

The Victorian age was happier than most in the flow of both these currents into a common stream of vigorous and effective talent. New truths were welcomed in free Minds, made brave men though later critics might charge the Victorians with divorcing intellect and feeling the liaison was in fact well sustained into the 1870's, and the process of separation was, as we shall see, prolonged and painful. By 1884, when Ruskin, sensing a great **“Storm cloud of the nineteenth century”** blotting out the sun and breaking an old **‘harmony’**, English Culture, heedless of his mid-Victorian warnings, was catering upon new phase of its development.

1. Tennyson: In Memoriam.

Hardy describes his family as **“having all the characteristics of an old family of spent social energies”**,¹ and its history was the basis of his lifelong interest in genealogy. Some crucial events overtook Hardy’s boyhood and youth which decisively shaped his psyche and formed, his perception of the human condition. A shock which cast a gloomy shadow on Hardy’s mind was the sight of a child labourer, dead of starvation, under a hedge. The narration by his father of the hanging of a young boy, to whose feet weights had been tied to ensure a speedy death, left a deep scar on Hardy’s mind.

It was at Issac Last’s Academy in Dorchester, where Thomas got enrolled, that he first became conscious of the possibilities

1. Timothy O’ Sullivan, **Thomas Hardy – An Illustrated Biography:**

Macmillan Limited, London, 1975. p. No. 8.

of serious intellectual work. Hardy was an outstanding pupil who won prizes for his studies and acquired the habit of self education which remained with him till his death. But he shunned the other school boys and loved being alone. **“He was recorded that like his jude Fawley, he did not wish to grow up.... to be a man, or to possess things, but to remain as he was, in the same spot and to know no more people then he already knew”.**¹

If Hardy had stayed at school longer he might have gone straight to the Church, but in 1856 he caught the eye of the Dorchester architect John Hicks who offered to take him as pupil after his 16th birthday. Hardy’s father was familiar to Hicks and respected his profession, thought the opportunity of establishing his son in it too good to be missed. So architecture was to be the major concern of his working life for the next 16 years. Hicks was sympathetic employer who shared Hardy’s classical interests and more than tolerated them as a distraction from work. He was a specialist in Gothic architecture, and, thus, Hardy’s lifelong absorption with Church architecture began.

1. Timothy O’ Sullivan: Thomas Hardy – An Illustrated Biography Mac Ltd.
London 1975.

Here at Hick's office he found two other apprentices Herbert Fippard, a young man of 21 and Henry Bastow of Bird Port. Bastow and he grew friendly with them.

While living in Dorchester, Hardy befriended two important personalities who acted catalysts in his turning to literature and the intellectual life. Reverend William Barnes, a dialect poet and philologist, was the first one who served in several ways as an excellent model for Hardy's creativity. It was Barnes who instilled in Hardy the confidence that the life of obscure country people could also become an inspiring subject for writing and that the local speech could be recorded in verse exactly as it took place among people. However, Hardy's introduction to the modern thought was brought about through his contact with Horace Moule, a young man whom Hardy met in Dorchester. Hardy was persuaded by Moule to read *Essays and Reviews*, which was a powerful and influential collection of polemical studies. It was through Moule that Darwin's, **The Origin of Species** was brought to Hardy's notice and this book proved still more damaging to his faith. As a result Hardy turned into a skeptic and gave up

his idea of preparing for the church forever.

Darwin dealt a severe blow to the world of conventional Christianity and confirmed Hardy's belief that pain and cruelty are essential elements of human existence. **“Spenser was responsible for-teaching him that the power which the universe manifests to us is a utterly inscrutable”**.¹

However, Hardy was goaded to open disbelief by Huxley and Mill according to whom the universe is sponsored and contains neither moral quality nor an inherent purpose Hardy's quest is not for a system with which to replace Christian theology. **“In fact Hardy ardently desired philosophical props which could become instrumental in maintaining the ethical discipline and human solidarity in frigid universe as conceptualized by the skeptics”**.²

Huxley and Mill influenced Hardy more powerfully and directly than Darwin and Spencer. Hardy was determined to be a poet by the time he reached London and he wrote a large number of poems during his stay in London and sent them to literary Magazines. However, the editors invariably sent them back. A look at these poems show that his literary style had already been formed by the time he attained the age of twenty five. He began imitating, like every young

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1. Subhash Chandra: Thomas Hardy-Then & Now, Prestige Books New Delhi, 1999.
 2. F.E. Hardy: The Life of Thomas Hardy, London 1962.

poets, the great writers of the past-in his case Wordsworth and Shakespeare. But Several poems bear Hardy's own unmistakable stamp "**The Ruined Maid**" and "**Hap**", for instance, exhibit his characteristic philosophy and typical tone.

Under the stress of the crisis and the humid – weather of the summer of 1867, Hardy had begun to feel physically weak and mentally depressed. "**Bloom field told him to go to the country for a few weeks. He went home, leaving most of his books and other possessions at West Bourne Park Villas with a view to returning in October. In Dorset he soon recovered and resumed work for Hicks but neither for the last nor the first time became innocently besotted with a woman**".¹

When Hardy came back to Dorchester, that summer of 1867, he was still uncertain what he wanted to do with his life. He did not feel committed to architecture. So while continuing to do occasional works for Hicks, he began to write his first novel **The Poor Man and the Lady**. Hardy's attempt to capture emotion in poetry had failed to excite any reader. "**On the other hand, a simple unpretentious narrative called, how & built myself a House**", had been published by '**Chamber's Journal in 1865.**'

1. Timothy O' Sullivan: Thomas Hardy-An Illustrated Biography
Macmillan London Ltd. 1975.

Now he saw the most promising course in a novel, based on his knowledge of **“West-country life in its less explored recesses and the life of an isolated student cast upon the billows of London with no projection but his Urains”**.¹

Hardy’s second novel **Under the Greenwood Tree**, appeared early in June and earned appreciative reviews in the Athenaeum. Although Tinsley advertised liberally, sales were never high, largely for the reasons, Alexander Macmillan gave in his-forecast. Nevertheless, **Under the Greenwood Tree** is a minor masterpiece, and remains as much in demand as ever. In this novel, Hardy for the first time exploits his knowledge of rustic scenes, life and speech.

Hardy had been introduced to Emma’s father John Gifford during the summer and directed some of the proofs of **A Pair of Blue Eyes** to be send to him. **“By this stage in his life Gifford was incapable of being less than disgruntled about anything, and his reception of Hardy as a prospective son-in-law was not warm. But there were no material advantages dependent on his approval and Emma evidently no longer valued it for sentimental reasons”**.²

By the time Hardy started to plan **Far From The Madding Crowd** he realized that the novel would not be his last and that as a writer who had been

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1. Timothy O’ Sullivan: Thomas Hardy – An Illustrated Biography Macmillian Ltd. London 1975.
 2. Timothy O’ Sullivan: Thomas Hardy – An Illustrated Biography Macmillan Ltd. London 1975.

noticed mainly for his evocation of the countryside, his exceptionally retentive visual memory was going to be far too important to him to be confined to the facts of an earthbound territory. Like Trollope he decided to fictionalize his ground and named his place 'Wessex'. The name 'Wessex', which first appeared in the novel, **Far From the Madding Crowd**, was originally intended to represent little more than Dorset itself but grew to include two-thirds of Southern England.

Hardy wrote the **The Mayor of Casterbridge** with the theme of decline of traditional agricultural communities in the face of new requirements and new methods. He finished the Mayor couple of months before he moved into Max Gate in June 1885, and his next novel, **The Woodlanders** was written. In Sept 1888 he went to look at some of the houses and lands which his family had owned and from there new ideas about the story came to his mind.

"The mingled with memories of a woman whom he had seen hanged, as a boy for crime passion, and with his own knowledge about the exploitation of country girls".¹ He began to write **Tess of the D'Urbervilles**, although it was not known by that name at first in the manuscript the heroine was called Rose Mary Troublefield.

1. Merryn Williams: A preface to Hardy, Longman, London, 1976. p.32.

Hardy in his next novel, **Jude the Obscure**, one of the greatest thing that was ever written. Some people found it extremely depressing and a failure. In his novel **The Well Beloved** Hardy moved from Wessex community to the **Isle** of Portland. “Portland was a **highly individual community, where marriage was a contract for seven years voidable thereafter by either party and where marriages were commonly preceded by periods of cohabitation, to test the prospects of their fertility**”.¹

At time the most painful thing was that his wife, Emma, was against him two and the things grew worse about the time he wrote **Jude the Obscure**. Emma felt that a book which criticized marriage would be interpreted as an insult to her; moreover she was shocked by Hardy’s cynicism about the church. In the early years of the century Hardy began to work an **The Dynasts**, an epic drama in blank verse. The whole work is deeply imbued with a sense of the horror of war.

The early Life and the Later years must be regarded as the biggest single task of Hardy’s last ten years. The famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall was a last act of homage expiation to Emma. Meanwhile it is

1. Timothy O’ Sullivan: Thomas Hardy – An Illustrated Biography
Macmillan Ltd. London, 1975. p.134.

interesting to know that Liberal and Conservative alike had no intention, of impending the solid profits of British Industry. Malthur's "**Essay on Population**" had insisted that poverty, disease and war are necessary to prevent the greater catastrophe of over – population and to coddle the people, it warned, was to upset natural law. Among the many idealists who arose to dispute this official view were some who dreamed of a return to manufacture by hand – an idea that appealed powerfully to certain, important authors. One of the few who looked to the future instead of the past was Robert Owen (1771-1858), who originated the ideas of co-operatives. He was convinced that the machine must be controlled for the benefit of the people who run it. His socialistic self-supporting communities made their experiments in Ireland, Scotland and the new world. Some succeeded at first, all eventually failed. But Owen's teachings have had important bearing on the history of trade unions, and various species of socialistic theory.

Science took on an undreamt of importance in the Victorian age. The whole world was brought close together, first by the building of rail roads, then by the telegraphs, the telephone, the automobile, and the beginning of travel by air. Everywhere machinery was revolutionized by the use of steam and electricity.

The basic principle of teaming economic activity favours in literature, the return to the precision in forms, to beauty within the limits of reason and to values which have received the stamp of universal.

The growth, the material well-being of the middle class and the development of scientific invention provoked violent reactions on the part of some writers. **“There were men then alive who felt that all this progress was suicidal to the soul. Carlyle was sick at the sight of the sordid lives led by men and women in the factories and he sought refuge from the tendencies of the machine by preaching the doctrine that human labour alone was sacred. An enemy of industrialization looked back to the Middle Ages to prove that consecration to humble labour had made great souls. John Ruskin was to a certain degree his disciple. Pre-eminently concerned with art, Ruskin concluded that only great spiritual values can make for great art, he denounced utilitarianism as an apology for the evils of industrialized society. He too found in the Middle Ages a noble spiritual ideal which the modern world had lost.”**¹

1. D.N. Bernard Grebanier: Essentials of English Lit. Vol. 11: Barron's Educational Series.

In the Victorian age this escape to the Middle Ages became a favourite resource for many who could not bear the ugliness of contemporary life. The pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, of which the leaders were Rossetti and Morris, frankly imitated Medieval painters and poets in their own works.

The theologians of this period are divided into four groups – the Evangelical, the Noetics, followers of Coleridge and the exponents of the Catholic reaction. John Henry Newman, leader of the Oxford Movement, found in the ritual of the Medieval Church a beauty nourishing to the soul; he sought to annihilate the traditions of Puritanism which he felt had impoverished the English Church. **“His own spiritual struggles mark the beginnings of a rebirth of Roman Catholicism and the Conversion to that faith of thousands in England.”**¹ Thus, Oxford Movement is one among the several streams of fervid philosophy or social thought which runs through the dry, uninspiring expanse of that industrial age and fertilize it. It’s course is parallel with those of other streams and it sometimes mixes with them but preserves its separate identity. The idealism of Carlyle does not recognize its kinship with that of

1. Cazamian: A History of English Literature: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., London, 1960, P.1147

Newman for whom personality counts for everything. The theologians of the Oxford Movement refreshed religious life by a return to vitality stored in the past. But the reform, introduced by Newman, is more refined, more intellectual, more academic and its scope is widely human. His original contribution to the thought is a theory of religious belief.

It's no light thinking, that millions have now a place and influence in literature, where a century ago only the thousands, and earlier still hardly more than hundreds had it. In all this democratic movement we have entered upon the inheritance of the revolution. We have to ask how liberty can be reconciled with order. Questions such as these form the substance not merely of systematic political philosophy, but of the work of seers like Carlyle and poets like Tennyson. The Victorian age is the first in which the lower middle classes and the greater part of the common people have really had access to culture. With the realization of democratic ideas, education is now more widely distributed. A feature of the age is the fortune of the serial novel, while another is the creation of modern newspaper.

Perhaps most cataclysmic of all new ideas were those advanced in natural science. The theory of Evolution which for sometime had been under mining the prestige of the idea that the universe had been created for man, was finally summed up in the writings of Charles Darwin. He was able to put before the public a mass of facts justifying the theory of organic evolution, in a manner which could no longer be ignored. The very foundations of religion began to rock and the authority of the Bible, was subjected to such doubts as the world had never known before. Many felt that the whole ground work of ethics and morals was crumbling. **“The doubts and despair occasioned by the Darwinian theories, can be read in a number of Victorian writers, notably in the poetry of Mathew Arnold. But Darwin’s disciple, Thomas Huxley went up and down the English – speaking world to acquaint the average man with what the Darwinian teachings actually were. Through his influence agnosticism was understood to be by no means inconsistent with high ethics and towards the close of the century Huxley’s view became increasingly by that of the English intellectual”.**¹

1. D.N. Bernard Grebanier: **Essentials of English Like Vol. 1 Barron’s Educational Series, Inc.: Wood bury, New York, P.1512**

“The work of Darwin has more powerfully affected the thought of the whole century, it has modified the outlook of scientists and gradually in turn, that of every thinker; while its contagious influence had spread over imaginative life and the aesthetic activity of the mind”.¹ the origin of species opens to man a view of his past and probably his future, very different from that which had been current since ancient times; poetry and fiction are infected by the new spirit, the spirit of scientific observation and philosophic analysis. Never before were so many books written which were literary as well as scientific. Science, strictly speaking, has little to say about the problems of profoundest interest to humanity but the spirit and the method of science have influenced the treatment of those problems. The science of nature and that of human origin, now bring unexpected assistance to the spirit of free intellectual inquiry. The consciousness of average man is dimly aware of the conflict in progress, and intuitively comes to realize that there is a danger threatening the fundamental reason to live. The echo of this alarm is heard through the whole Victorian age. The historians and naturalist appeared to be the enemies of Biblical teaching.

1. Cazamian: **A History of English Literature:** J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd, London.

“The breaking up of beliefs, the loss of cherished illusions, the end of all nobility and beauty, such are the aspects of one and same disaster. The destructive action of science and of material revolution thus produces its inevitable effects as early as the middle years of the century; this rationalistic age is all shakened by echoing sounds of one impassioned protestation after another”.¹

Newman, Carlyle, Ruskin in conflict with the spirit of their time introduce all the themes. It would be better, therefore, to define the tendencies of the age as the outcome of an essential duality of character made up of so many elements – that it would be impossible to bring them under one principle. But no matter how different may be the quality of each, they can still be grouped around one common impulse – the search for stability, for balance, for desire to obey the laws of life. The motive of the heart of the scientific, practical, and rationalistic movement is a string after balance by way of intelligence; it is an effort to view, to comprehend and to organize life and society according to the

1. Cazamian: **A History of English Literature:** J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., London.

inferences which mind draws from nature. It is also a desire for balance which lies at the root of the inventionist movement and of the revival of idealism. It will be seen, therefore, that the search for balance is at once the most general and typical feature of the age. And this quest for equilibrium is rather like an orderly arrangement, it tends to be intellectual and conscious. It will also be recognized that the rational element of thought, the neo-classical element in art are indeed the most normal and central of the period.

It is our opinion that any cultural period suffers distortion from a generalized indictment, however speciously formulated. But the outlines of the Victorian era blur beyond recognition in the confusion of contradictory charges. The Victorians we are told were **“a poor, blind complacent people”**¹, yet **“they were torn by doubt, spiritually bewildered”**², lost in a troubled universe. They were materialists, wholly absorbed in the present, quite – unconcerned **“with abstract verities and eternal values”**³ but **“they were also excessively religious, lamentably idealistic, nostalgic to the past”**⁴ and ready to forego present delights for the vision of a world beyond. Despite their slavish

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1. H.H. Asquith: **Some Aspect of the Victorian Age**: Oxford, 1918
 2. H.V. Routh: **Towards The Twentieth Century**
 3. J.H. and Massingham Hugh: **The Great Victorians: Garden City**, 1932
 4. H.V. Routh, op. cit, P.45

“Conformity”¹, their purblind respect for convention, they were, we learn; **“rugged individualists, given to doing as one likes”**² headless of culture, careless of great tradition; they were iconoclasts who worshipped the idols of authority. They were, besides, at once sentimental humanitarians and hard-boiled proponents of free enterprise. Politically, they were governed by narrow insular prejudices, but swayed by dark-imperialistic designs. Intellectually and emotionally, they believed in progress, denied original sin, and affirmed the death of the Devil; yet by temperament they were patently Manicheans to whom **“living was a desperate struggle between the force of good and the power of darkness”**³. While they professed, **“manliness, they yielded to feminine standards; if they emancipated women from age- old bondage, they also robbed her of a vital place in society”**⁴ Though they were **“sexually uninhibited”**⁵ and even failed to consider the existence of physical love, they beget incredibly large families and flaunted in their verse a **“morbidly over developed erotic sensibility”**⁶ Their literature remains too purposeful, propagandistic, didactic, with too palpable a design upon the reader, yet it is

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1. Sitwell Osbest
 2. Bennet Arnold: **The Old Wives’s Tale: Chap. 1**
 3. William Gaunt: **The Aesthetic Adventure: New York, 1945**
 4. Batho Edith and Bonamy Dobree: **The Victorians** and After London: 1938
 5. B. Lennon, Florence: **Victoria through the Looking Glass: New York** Pq.45
 6. Mario Prag: **The Romantic Agony: London, 1933**

clearly so romantic aesthetic escapist that carries to posterity but a tale of little meaning.

Hardy's own branch of the family declined, or whether they lived continually in Dorset, is not known. By the end of 18th Century his great grandfather John was a builder in Puddle town that and this was prosperous enough to establish his son in the same trade. The son who was the first of the three generations of 'Thomas's prospered in his building works and he was also trained as a volunteer to face the invasion of Napoleon. He also continued a family tradition by leading the Stinsford Church Choir of the three sons, Hardy's father, Thomas II was born in 1811 and Hardy's mother Jemima was born in 1813. She was a voracious reader as she read every book she could lay hands on. But her early years cost a permanent shadow over her life and she grew up determined that, **"no child of her own should ever feel its chill of illiteracy"**.¹

Thomas Hardy was born at about eight O'Clock on the morning of Tuesday, 2 June 1840, in a small thatched cottage in the little hamlet

1. Timothy O' Sullivan, **Thomas Hardy An Illustrated Biography:** Macmillan Limited London, 1975, p.no. 10

of Higher Bockhampton, three miles from Dorchester, a few months after the marriage of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. England was thin in throws of Industrial revolution and Chartism, a reform movement was stirring many people. However, the Dorset country side at the Southwest corner of the island (which appeared as Wessex in Hardy's novels) appeared to remain placidly changeless and unaffected by the turbulence of history or technology. Of course, the rural and traditional Dorset, steeped in old country ways, rituals and speech, could not remain entirely untouched by the winds of, change for Long and these slow incursions into the tranquil world of the countryside were destined to be reflected as a major theme in the fiction of Hardy.

Hardy was born under great pains and he was a frail baby with a large head. The child was first thought dead, but fortunate for English Literature, the nurse revived him in time. There were three more children; Mary 1841, Henry 1851 and Katharine 1856. None of them married and there was no Hardy's in the next generation.

Little Thomas was kept at home till he was eight as doubted whether he would survive childhood. **“It is not surprising that a frail and precocious boy, nursed with tender care, fondly protected during his infancy, and encouraged to develop enjoyable activities, formed attachments to his home and parents”**.¹

1. F.B. Pinon: Thomas Hardy – His life and friends, New York, 1992, p.14

As a boy Hardy was of an ecstatic temperament and danced the endless jigs, hornpipes, reels, waltzes and country – dances to the tunes his father played on the violin. **Under the Greenwood Tree**, contains the details of Hardy’s association with Stinsford String Choir. Though Hardy denies that there was family portrait in the tales, the tranter’s house is recognizably the Hardy’s at Higher Bockampton, and old William Dewy, Reuben Dewy, Dick Dewy, and Michael Main occupied the same seats and played the same instruments as Thomas Hardy Senior, Thomas Hardy Junior, James Hardy and James dart in ‘**Mellstock**’ church gallery. Besides being playful, Hardy was also noticed as a bright, shy and sensitive boy vulnerable to pain who became the favourite of the lady of the manner, Julia Augusta Martin. She Hardy would later recall, was “**passionately fond of him**” and his feeling towards her was “**almost of a lover**”¹

Hardy witnessed the execution of Martha Brown at Dorchester country goal for the murder of her husband at Birdsmoorgate, near Broad-Windsor, on August 9, 1856. Two or three years later, he watched through a telescope a convict in Dorchester being hanged to death: “**At the moment of his placing the glass to his eyes, the white figure dropped downwards, and the point note of the town clock struck eight. The whole things had been so sudden**

1. Subhash Chandra: Thomas Hardy – Then and New Prestige Books, New Delhi, 1999 p. 10

that the glass nearly fell from Hardy's hand. He seemed alone on the heath with, the hanged man, and crept home wishing, he had not been so curious."¹

These two executions remained embedded in Hardy's memory and contributed to the story and final scene of **"Tess of the Urbervilles"**. However, none of these childhood traumas in the form of social violence can be regarded as the only source of the darkness of spirit which seems to permeate Hardy's work. Probably the change which made him regard human experience as a string of disaster and mischance, took place after his boyhood. **"Education for most young, people ending of the age of twelve, Hardy was privileged in having parents who appreciated the importance of scholarship, and who could afford private schooling for their children"**². Meanwhile Jemima Hardy encouraged her son's reading and bought him books like Samuel. Jahnson's *Rasselas*, Dryden's *Virgil* and two volumes of the popular *Educator* with an eye to the future.

1. F.E. Hardy: *The Life of Thomas Hardy*, London 1962

Hardy began to write poetry but, till this time, he had no-ambition to turn to literature as his career and, therefore, in 1862. He started alone for London to pursue the art and science of architecture on more advanced line. He found a place with Arthur Bloomfield in Adelphi terrace, and stayed there for the next five years until 1867. During these years in London Hardy, in a sense completed his education. He worked hard and conscientiously at architectural drawing during the day and in the spare time visited the museums and art galleries and read extensively. He read widely the Greek tragedians as also such recent and contemporary English writers as P.B. Shelly, Robert Browning, Walter Bagehot, Charles Robert Darwin, T.H. Huxley, A.C. Swinburne, Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill.

A curious example of the Hardy's studious application in 1863 is afforded by the notes he made on basic psychology and in the same year he was awarded the essay prize of the Royal Institute of British Architects. By 1865 his zest for architecture had cooled and he was devoting more arid and more time to Literary pursuits. At the end of 1864 he had sent his amusing satirical narrative sketch, **"How I built Myself a House' to the editor of Chamber's Journal. There were two memorable events for Hardy in 1865. The first occurred when he joined the crowd to hear John Stuart Mill and the second occasion was the burying of Lord Palmersten a farmers states – man"**¹.

1. Timothy, O'Sullivan: **Thomas Hardy, An Illustrated Biography**
Macmillan London Ltd.

While Hardy was finishing **A Pair of Blue Eyes** at Bockhampton in December 1872 he received a letter from Leslie Stephen who had succeeded Thackeray as the editor of the Cornhill Magazine in 1871. Moule had told him that Hardy was the author of **Under the Greenwood Tree** and Stephen was impressed by it, “**Stephen was a more muscular version of Horace Moule and after the latter’s death had a greater influence on Hardy’s thinking than any other contemporary.**”¹

Before the end of 1874 **Far From the Madding Crowd** had been reprinted seven times. Its success was anticipated by that of the serial, and Hardy, seemed assured of an income from a source at which he was willing to preserve and the means on which to marry. He married Emma at St. Peter’s Church Paddington, on 17 September 1874. “**Canon Gifford, who shortly afterwards became Archdeacon of London, came up from Worcester to perform the ceremony, but apart from Emma’s brother Walter, who gave her way, no other members of either family were present. The circumstances and place of wedding, after so long a courtship, suggest that all was not as it might have been**”².

Emma kept an illustrated diary of their honeymoon holiday. Its concentration of notes suggests that she did not wish to forget any of it; perhaps

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1. Timothy O’ Sullivan: Thomas Hardy – An Illustrated Biography Macmillan Ltd. London, 1975
 2. Timothy O’ Sullivan: Thomas Hardy – An Illustrated Biography Macmillan Ltd., London, 1975

she thought she was preserving observations which might be useful in Hardy's fiction. **“The diary reveals a painter's sensitivity to colour, and Emma's interest in French food dress and bedroom arrangements – In Paris she was delighted with her first view of the place de la concord by moonlight”**¹. After returning from France they moved into the first of succession of rented rooms. In moving to London Hardy had less immediate aim. Marriage had made him realize that having staked his career on success in novel he must prepare for future contingencies.

When Hardy and Emma returned to Teovil, the urgency of finding a new home with the space, privacy and furnishings, which were necessary for her comfort and his professional advancement was most apparent. Fortunately they did not have to wait long before they found an attractive and adequately commodious house to let in a quite position over-looking the River Stour at Stumister Newton in the South-east corner of Blackmor vale. Later when he wrote his life, he referred to Riverside villa as the house in which he and Emma had spent the happiest days.

This period was an interlude – between **The Hand of Ethelberta** and **The Return of the Native**. Hardy enjoyed the Blackmoor Vale, this fertile and sheltered tract of country where the fields are never brown and strings never dry.

1. F.B. Pinion: Thomas Hardy – His Life and Friends. St. Martin's Press, New York. 1992. p. 122

“But the smiling land, like the inconstant sky over Hardy’s native health, was deception. At sturminster, where nature was at its most lavish and even their Servant became pregnant, Emma remained childless and the distance between them unbridged, ‘Your novel’, she had told him seems sometimes like a child, all you own and none of me”.¹ The Return of the Native was conceived as a purely pastoral story and Hardy set it in the harsh country behind his birth place.

Hardy never liked London, **“He had a horror of lying down in the company of monster whose body had four million heads and million eyes, but even after his three years at Tothing he continued to spend few months there in most years until he was over eighty”**² In 1875-78 the Napoleonic era was particularly on Hardy’s mind. During those years he wrote the poems and **The Trumpet – Major** – which is Hardy’s only historical novel.

While Hardy was writing **The Trumpet – Major**, the American owners of Harper’s New Monthly Magazine decided to launch a European

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1. Timothy O’Syullivan: Thomas Hardy- An Illustrated Biography Macmillan Ltd., London 1975 p.84
 2. Ibid. p.86

edition. They wanted the most popular authors and offered extremely attractive terms. In Hardy's case this was 100 for each of twelve installments. The first installment of *A Laodicean* was scheduled to appear in December 1880 and Hardy began to feel increasingly ill. In October he suffered an internal hemorrhage and took to his bed. The Doctor suggested either a hazardous operation or long period of complete immobility. **“Lying his feet propped higher than his head, and in a good deal of pain, he dictated the rest of *Alaodician to Emma*”.**¹

During his last months in Wimborne Hardy wrote his longest short story, **‘Our Exploits at West Poley’**. His career as a short – story writer had begun in the autumn of 1874, when he wrote ‘Destiny and a Blue Clock’ for the *New York Times*. Hardy had no special regard for the short story as a Literary form, although he wrote forty-seven in all, ranging from anecdotes to novelettes. It was in Wimborne, Hardy started to plan his next novel, **Two On a Tower**. His conception of it was more ambitious and he wanted to transcend the padding, of romance, but the actual vehicle of romance.

1. Merryn Williams: *A Preface to Hardy*, Longman, London, 1976. p.29

It is very clear from everything Hardy said and wrote at this time that he was moving in the direction of greater realism and this tendency can be seen, still more clearly. Hardy tried to rebuild his life as far as he could. He decided not to write any more fiction and found his thoughts turning back to poetry. This first collection, *Wessex Poems*, came out in 1898. It was rather a shock to the public but was received well. He went on writing poetry exclusively for the rest of his life.

Hardy was still on very cold and distant terms with his wife when she died suddenly in Nov., 1912. **“Looking back over the years he found that he could only remember the long-ago time when they been young and in love and much of what had happened since seemed to him to be more his fault than hers. He found a manuscript among her papers, headed, ‘What I think of My husband’ which deepened his feelings of guilt”.**¹

But what saved him at this juncture was the friendship of Florence Dugdole, she was a teacher’s daughter, wrote stories for children and had done some research for Hardy in British Museum. After Emma died she had come to Max Gate at his request and made all funeral arrangements. They were attached

1. Merryn Williams: A preface to Hardy, Longman, London, 1976, p.40

to each other and finally married in February 1914.

The Great war which broke out six months later was profound shock to Hardy. It destroyed his belief that the world was gradually getting better. He joined the writers War Committee and wrote several patriotic poems.

“But he never hated Germans or joined in the hysterical propaganda which was so common during these years”.¹ He was nearly eighty now, and too old

to go far from, but many admirers came down to Max gate to see him in 1920.

The University of Oxford, doubtless earlier offended by Jude, decided to give Hardy an honorary doctrate. It was an enjoyable moment for Hardy.

After a visit to Oxford in June 1923, Hardy never slept away from Max Gate. In Nov. 1927 he told Florence that he had done all that he wanted to do and three weeks later sat down at his desk and found himself for the first time unable to work. By Christmas he was confined to bed, where his mind began gradually to weaken with his body. At dusk on 11 January he asked Florenec to

1. Merryn Williams: A Preface to Hardy, Longman, London, 1976. p.39

read him a verse from Omar Khayyam:

Oh, Thou who man of baser Earth didst make,
And ev'n with paradise device the snake;
For all the Sin where with the Face of Man
Is blacken'd – Man's forgiveness give – and take!
shortly after nine he died.

“I do not, in truth, feel much interest in posthumous opinions about me”, Hardy wrote in 1914, and shall sleep quite calmy at Stanford whatever happens. “But his only heart was buried in Emma’s grave. The rest of the frail body which had almost escaped life on his mother’s bed at Bockhampton was burnt and the ashes lodged in the stoniest soil in England at West Minster Abbey. No doubt the double funeral would have ranked high in Hardy’s catalogue of the Bizarre”¹.

1. Timothy O’ Syllivan: Thomas Hardy – An Illustrated Biography Macmillan Ltd., London, 1975. p.183

Thomas Hardy's dark poetic spectacles see darkness in the living patterns whether in human life or even in the lives of birds and animals. With all his deeper probes in life's mystery, he concluded that there is some mysterious force, whose intentions are always malevolent. This force has its delights in viewing the tragic waste in human life. A man or a woman of Hardy's choosing is generally placed amidst the sufferings which first trickle like drops and then suddenly smash life torrents.

Queen Victoria, the monarch of England, by the 1890s "**Victorian**" had become a favourite derogatory epithet to a generation which, ironically enough, was spending lavishly of its pounds to celebrate Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. More over, no longer period of English Literature exhibits so vast a variety of traits, style and ideas. It is absurd to pretend that the label "**Victorian**" communicates any idea common to the work writers so different as-Macaulay, Dickens, Emily Browning, Tennyson, Browning, Rossetti, Arnold, Swinburne, Hardy and Meredith.

The term "**Victorian**" itself is often used in a fashion that is misleading. Popularly it can notes bad taste, stuffy morals, and moral priggishness. These were, attributes true enough of the Queen's private house – hold and for that

reason they are indeed **“Victorian”**. But they are certainly not to be found among the ideas and beliefs of Browning, Rossetti, Arnold, Hardy and Meredith. The old concepts of **‘Whigs’** and **‘Tory’**, made way for **‘Liberals and Conservatives’**. Liberals were anxious to see operating in full effect the principal which Adam Smith, had laid down the economic **‘law’** of unlimited free competition in trade.

But there was a less attractive side to the picture which industrialists chose to overlook. The philosophy of non-interference by the government meant unrestricted hardship to the begonia of workers who were dependent for their very existence upon their employers. The labour was cheap, the birth rate high, and slum conditions became increasingly worse.

The term **“Victorian”** and **“Victorianism”** have acquired the Vaguest of emotional connotations. They have become what Ruskin chose to call **“masked words droning and sulking about us”**. While social historian of the Victorian age who is able to withhold opinion is far ever aware of unstrinsic complexities, the critic intents upon cultural evaluation constantly betrayed into premature judgment and it is the aggregate of these judgment that obscures definition. Many agreed that Victorianism whereas a single tragic flow which

vitiates all its sounder impulses. But to one it is a **“moral hypocrisy”**¹, to another a **“deliberate sentimentalism”**², to a third a **“social snobbery”**³. An eminent debunker laments the total failure of the critical faculty, while a sensitive student of abnormal psychology detects in all Victorian life, **“a manifestation of the anal complex operating upon the group psyche”**⁴. Yet all the subtleties of over simplification merely confuse, **“Victorianism”**, remains obscure, we approach no nearer the Victorian essence.

Far from sinking beneath the weight of its **‘moral’**, their at its best followed new experience beyond the bounds of thought. But whether at home or abroad, many a Victorian captured the almost Elizabethan exuberance that led Hurrell Froude to exclaim on the launching of the Oxford Movement and 1833; **“What fun it is living in such times as these! How could one go back to the times of old Tory humbag”**⁵.

For all his sharp censure of Victorian Culture, even John Morely came to feel that the prayer had been at times richly fulfilled. In 1921, nearly fifty years

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1. Bonamy Dobree: **Essays in Biography**: London 1925.
 2. Lascelles Abercrombie: **Revaluations**: London 1931
 3. O.F. Christie, :**The Transition from Aristocracy** London, 1927
 4. Anna Kavani **Back to Victoria, Horizon, XII, 1946**, p.65
 5. Austin Wright: **Victorian Literature, Modern Essays in Criticism**: Oxford University Press, 1961

after the first appearance of his essay “**On Compromise**”, he added a few words by way of epilogue, a Victorian’s final answer to a skeptical posterity. Whatever we may say of Europe between Waterloo and Sedan, he wrote in our country of least it was an epoch of hearts uplifted with hop and brains active with sober and manly reason for the common good. Some aged are marked a sentimental, others stand conspicuous as rational.

The second part of the chapter deals with the making of Hardy’s mind Tradition, family and local is often invoked to support the unverifiable, and it pleased. Thomas Hardy in his later years. Hardy was always pleased to think that, “**the descent of the Dorset Hardy’s from Clement Le Hardy, Bailly of Jersey, whose son John probably landed at Warcham, then a port, and settled at Weymouth in the fifteenth century, was confirmed by oral tradition**”¹. Descendants included Admiral Hardy, Captain of Nelson’s flagship in the battle of Trafalgar, the Elizabethan Thomas Hardy of Frampton who endowed Dorchester Grammar School. “**Hardy was reminded of all this on**

1. Timothy O’Sullivan, **Thomas Hardy – An illustrated Biography**: Macmillan Limited, London 1975, p. no. 8

30 September 1888, when he walked from the railway station at ever shot past the cite of Woolcombe House to Huble down, whence he gazed over blackmoor, the ‘Vale of the Little Dairies’ with his own family decline and the genealogical down, down, down, theme of ‘Tess of the d’Urbervilles’ very much in mind”¹.

The years Hardy spend in London may have been fruitful for him, but he was not happy there. He felt himself to be among strangers and strange things, and though he accepted with case the radical views of the city’s – intellectuals, he could not bring himself to reconcile to the city’s mode of life. His diary for 1865, contains an entry: **“My 25th birthday: not very cheerful. Feel as if I had lived a long time and done very little”²** Sometimes, he did meet his friend Moule, but by and large he was gripped by a feeling of loneliness and was shocked by what he saw among the richest in the world.

In 1866, a book called Providence and Mr. Hardy, by Lois Deacan and Terry Coleman, was published, that the world knew anything about Hardy’s

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1. F.B. Pinion Thomas Hardy – His Life and Friends, St. Martin’s Press, New York, 1992, p.no1
 2. F.E. Hardy: **The Life of Thomas Hardy**, London 1962

love-affair with his cousin Tryphena Sparks.

“Tryphena like Sue Bridehead, must have been a brilliant girl, who impressed education authorities so much that she was made a headmistress at twenty one. Tryphena was involved with Horace Moule while she still engaged to Hardy and his led to the estrangement of the two friends and Moule’s death.”¹

Hardy’s experiences of life in **“Dorset and London had made him radical, and there are several signs that he had suffered very bitterly because people ha treated him as a member of inferior class”²**

Hardy’s novel **The Poor Man and the Lady** was never published in its original form, but after ten years later it was partly drawn on for the short story were removed from the story which, however, gives a fairly good idea of the style of young Hardy. Much better writings were to come from Hardy’s pen in later years, **“An discretion in the life of an Heiress”**. Some of the radical passage **“but even his first crude attempts at prose fiction won the admiration of several distinguished literary men”³**

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1. Merryn Williams: A Preface to Hardy, Longman London, 1976. p.14
 2. Merryn Williams: op. cit., **Longman London**, 1976.p.14
 3. Merryn Williams: A Preface to Hardy, Longman London, 1976. p.24

The result of Meredith's advice was quite as sensational as Collin's fiction, as Hardy completed *Desperate Remedies* which was published in 1871. The novel is a murder and mystery story, a melodramatic work, quite below the level of *The Poor Man and the Lady*. Nonetheless, some sections of the novel foreshadowed Hardy's genius.

John Hicks died in 1868 and his work was taken over by G.R. Crickmay, who had less interest in the work of church restoration. He asked Hardy to help with the completion of such contracts in that field as were in hand. One of them was at St. Juliot in north Cornwall and Hardy had been struck by the Romantic name and agreed to work.

The scattered Parish of St. Juliot lies around the River Vallency which enters the sea at Boscastle. It was a lonely parish and the journey of a hundred miles by road and railway took him all day. **“Late in the evening he arrived at the rectory, where he was to stay and where there lived an elderly clergyman, the Reverend Caddell Holder, related to his much younger wife and her sister Emma Lavinia Gifford, who was Hardy's own age twenty-nine”**¹

1. Merryn Williams: *A preface to Hardy*, Longman London, 1976. p.14

The two girls were the daughters of a Plymouth solicitor and socially their family was much above Hardy's but they had troubles recently their father drank, and had gone bankrupt and one of their brothers was insane. Emma must have been very lonely in this isolated place for she loved excitement and an active social life. She received Hardy alone and was interested in him at once..... **"I was immediately arrested by his familiar appearance, as if I had seen him in a dream his slightly different accent, his soft voice, also I noticed a blue paper sticking of his pocket.....I thought him much older than he was He had a beard, and a rather shabby greatcoat, and hard quiet a business appearance. Afterwards he seemed, younger and by daylight especially so..... The blue paper proved to be the MS of a poem, and not a plan of the church. He immediately arrested by his familiar appearance slightly different accent and the paper a poem sticking out of his pocket"**¹.

Emma showed Hardy the country-side including the massive Benny cliff

1. Timothy O'Sullivan, **Thomas Hardy** – An Illustrated Biography Macmillan Ltd. London, 1975

and he was attracted by the ‘**vivacity**’ and ‘**aliveness**’ of Emma. On a later visit to the Benny cliff, Hardy sketched. Emma against the forbidding scene.

“Scarcely any author and his wife, she wrote, could have had a much more romantic meeting’ at this very remote spot, with a beautiful sea-coast, and the wild Atlantic Ocean rolling in with its magnificent waves and spray.....”¹

Hardy tried and decided to concentrate on architecture and continued to work for Crickmay because it was the only way of raising sufficient money to afford marriage. On hearing of his resolution, Emma nobly set aside self interest and urged him not to give up authorship which she felt was his true vocation.

1. Timothy O’Sullivan: Thomas Hardy – An Illustrated Biography
Macmillan Ltd. London, 1975.

HARDIAN SCHEME OF UNIVERSE

Hardy's literary career created a lot of controversy and, therefore, his products become the alarming subject of research both in the matters of art and thought, Hardy pioneered serious novel with serious thoughts. He had before him, as part of his soul's commitment, serious aim of presenting the complete picture of the life of those human beings who lived "**Far From the madding crowd**", and loved nature and their natural surroundings, but faced uncalled for violence in the face of Nature's frowns. Hardy wanted to understand why the scheme of universe, which permits life upon this planet, disturbs, distorts and destroys the probable happiness lurking in human wishes and other lives flourishing upon the earth. He noticed all such things with a little more curiosity than that of an ordinary man. It is evident from what he wrote in his poem "**Afterwards**" in his closing years, "**He hears it not now, but used to notice such things?**"¹

Thomas Hardy was quite sensitive towards the ugly changes in nature

1. Thomas Hardy: **Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy**, Macmillan, 1930, P.93

which came to disturb human ambitions and wishes. For him even the passive adherence to nature did not provide real happiness. The occasional happiness was very soon overtaken by some fatal changes in nature in the scheme of universe.

Hardy's preference for gloominess was in the part guided by his own life's melancholy, which seldom left his abode. Usually weak in health and enormously huge in brain, this child was since his infancy given to dreaming and contemplation. He at once picked up an organic familiarity, with the surrounding nature. His fondness for human faces, wherein he read stories of unique import, is proverbial. His love for nature and lower animals, his strange delight in the comic and grotesque, his sweet and easily impressionable temperament and lovable manners were simply amusing.

When Vere Collins met Hardy, he was more than eighty years of age and the comment which Collins made after that visit speaks volumes about Hardy thus:-

“I hesitate the word “old” so opposed is it in its ordinary associations to the vigour of intellect and the liveliness of sentiment that marked his conversation; the quickness of his thought, the versatility of his interests; the alertness of his voice; his gestures; his walk; his keenness of sight; the clearness and steadiness of his handwriting”.¹

1. F.E. Hardy: **The Life of Thomas Hardy**, Macmillan, 1970, P.21.

Thomas Hardy was sublime, his courage was enormously integrated. With a brave heart he looked in the face of mighty troubles of body and mind. It was a great solace to him to have Florence as his wife at the time when the dark clouds of despair were sure to fall upon his health terribly. It was on the contrary a pity that he never was blessed with a child which he expected even in his eighty second year. His life, though full of melancholy, was a bold adventure of spirits which he undertook heroically and closed with befitting grandeur.

In his novels, Hardy shows that inspite of our best endeavours to lead a calm, contented and happy life, we are always breaking our shins against obstacles unforeseen as we tread on the path of life. Difficulties crop up and accidents occur about which we had never thought in our well planned scheme of life. There seems to be a force which buffets us this way or that way and that, without taking the least notice of all our feelings, our schemes and our efforts and the house that we had tried to build on a rock, ultimately tumbles down like a house of cards when the bolt from the blue strikes it. Hardy calls such happenings in our life the shocks of cross causality. This is **destiny**, and since destiny, must have her way in spite of all that we can

do to check it, it must according to Hardy, be endured. Those who believe in a bright future or see beautiful visions will always be disillusioned. The following statement of Hardy amply shows his view of human destiny.

“The view of life as a thing to be put up the replacing that zest for existence, which was no intense in early civilizations must ultimately enter so thoroughly into the constitution of the advanced races that its facial expression will become accepted as a new artistic departure. People already, feel that a man who lives without disturbing a curve of feature, or setting a mark of mental concern anywhere upon himself is too far removed from modern perceptiveness to a modern type”.¹

Hardy is not willing to believe complacently that every change is for the better, rather he thinks that it is for the worse, and as civilization advances, it brings into the world destructive forces which breakup old ways and conceptions without offering new ones in lieu of them. This is an ever recurring theme in Hardy’s novels in the shape of contrast between the old and the new, the rural

1. F.E. Hardy, **The Life of Thomas Hardy**, Macmillan, 1970, P.53

and the urban, and he believes that whenever and wherever they meet and react upon each other, the result is tragedy because no good solution has been offered by modern times to replace the scheme that is being destroyed.

According to Hardy, it is a folly to seek for happiness in the hands of destiny or providence. Hence he advocates that mankind must develop a mental shell that will resist its shocks, whether they are good or bad, and in order to do this, men must have what he calls a **“well proportioned mind”**. Hardy is of the opinion that in future the idea of mere joy of living will be replaced by a sense of resignation and indifference towards the joys and sorrows that life offers and that people will develop natural outlook that will neither feel joy at good fortune nor it will be shocked at the unkind blows of destiny. Edmond Gosse speaks about Hardy’s view of the future of mankind thus:-

“Abandoned by God, treated with scorn by Nature, man lies helplessly at the mercy of those purblind Doomsters, accidents, chance and time, from which he has had to endure injury and insult from the cradle to the grave”.¹

1. Quoted by Evanas Charteris, **The Life and Letters of Six Edmund Gosse**, London 1931, P.209.

Thomas Hardy found life full of misery, mishap and misadventure. He could find no solution for innumerable problems of life, and in his novels he frankly portrayed the helpless conditions of the people of the world. In the world of his fiction, the sky is full of dark and gloomy clouds, and even the momentary gleam of sunshine is not unaffected by them. Hardy becomes sensitive whenever he notices any disorder in the scheme of human living. He searches for happiness and essential grandeur of human life, but fails to his dismay. That is why, he records his impressions in his novels. Hardy once wrote:- **“My opinion is that a poet should express the emotion of all the ages and the thought of his own”**¹ Accordingly, we find that Hardy practices his thoughts in his novels. His themes are universal and his thoughts and ideas of a sensitive man of his age.

Fate rules supreme in Hardy’s scheme of universe. He uses nature as Fate at frequent intervals. Mental agency of his prime characters is well conditioned by the appropriate landscape paintings and other happenings in nature. Though it is a common feature of narration in Hardy, it is more powerfully illustrated in

1. F.E. Hardy, **The Life o Thomas Hardy**,

Tess. The pictures, express **Tess's** state of mind when she is in love with Angel Clare at the dairy farm.

Nature works as Fate in bringing calamity after calamity in the course of events surrounding Tess. At a time when Tess is overpowered by the animality of Alec. Nature is immune. Thomas Hardy declares that there is no feeling of sympathy in Nature. In his novel, **Under the Greenwood Tree**, the atmosphere is apparently light. At the first glance this novel appears to be nothing more than the blithe story of country life, the author has, in a very subtle and indirect way, been pointing out throughout that life has sad and tragic moments to, and there is no escaping from them. Happy and sad moments alternate in life and even though for a short while life may seem perfect, it is no use forgetting that the clouds of sorrow are lurking close by.

In this novel, we do not find an emphasis on ominous incidents and symbols as we do in **Tess, Jude** or **The Woodlanders**, but one or two such incidents and symbols occur, and are recognizable as the product of Hardy's pen. Just before asking Mr. Day for Fancy's hand, Dick notices "**the**

pale mist creeping up from the gloom of the valley¹ and the disturbance caused by an owl killing some small bird is the prelude to Geoffrey Day's refusal to accept Dick as his daughter's suitor.

But Fancy's unhappiness is neither very touching nor long-lasting. What strikes us more as sad and tragic is the relationship between the sexes. Dick feels that for real happiness between a man and woman there should be love and full confidence. But he observes that when people are married, they become blind to romance and **"undemonstrative of the passion"**.² He thinks that he and Fancy will not be like his parents but at the same time he is bewildered.

In **The Return of the Native** we get a description of the majestic and gloomy scene, it can be seen from a distance a **"figure"** that is **"so much like an organic part of the entire motionless structure"**.³

In **The Greenwood Tree** we get an idea of Hardy's philosophy – his sad view of life, love and marriage. Apparently, the story is quite gay, but the author makes us think that married life has always had

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1. Thomas Hardy: **Under The Greenwood Tree**, Macmillan (paper mac), 1966, P.67
 2. Ibid
 3. **The Return of the Native**, P.20

difficulties and unhappiness in the past and will have them forever.

In **The Return of the Native** Hardy's designs to intensify the tragic note of life under the scheme of Fate and Nature became more apparent. Hardy, in this novel, seems to have been trying to bring in something which is quite old in literature. He was trying to imitate the structure of the classical tragedies and so, even though he initiates a new trend in fiction, he also evokes a very ancient world in his novel-the world of the imagination of Aeschylus, Sophocles etc. Hardy has perfectly maintained the unities – the main action occupies only a year and day, the space of the action is limited to Egdon Heath and no superfluous incidents are narrated.

The Return of the Native is typically modern and unlike the classical tragedies, which show man's greatness, it only shows the triviality of man and his helplessness in the face of nature and circumstances. Man finds his life full of unhappy events. Times are not fair: **“Men have oftener suffered from the mockery of a place too smiling for their reason than from the oppression of surroundings over sadly tinged”**.¹ For this reason perhaps Hardy chooses, Egdon Heath as the stage for the enactment of the tragedy of Eustacia, Clym

1. **The Return of the Native**, P.12

and Mrs. Yeobright.

One of the intentions of Hardy seems to have been in this novel to show the insignificance of man in this world. Life is a ruthless struggle and nature is indifferent to the individual. Life is not only difficult, it is incomprehensible with its **“inequality of lots”** and **“perpetual dilemmas”**.¹ Science has so disillusioned man that he cannot find solace in a religious or spiritual vision of life.

In the preface to **The Mayor of Casterbridge**, Hardy speaks of this novel as **“particularly a study of one man’s deeds and character”**² and, in fact, the hero engrosses our interest so much that for us the importance of every character and action depends on its relation to Michael Henchard. Yet, in the very beginning, the author plainly states that his hero has instincts of a **“perverse character”**,³ and he keeps reminding us that he is impulsive, fitful and self-willed. He does not attempt to draw our sympathy for his protagonist. He does not even try to palliate the enormity of his crime in selling his wife by presenting Henchard as horrified when he wakes up in the morning and discovers that he has really sold his wife just as gypsies sell their useless horses.

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1. **The Return of the Native: P.74**
 2. **The Mayor of Casterbridge. P.(v)**
 3. **Ibid. P.(ii)**

Nor does Hardy comment upon his repentance, but leaves it to our discretion to draw whatever conclusion we like from Henchard's swearing of the oath. He does not even give us detailed description of the pains that he took to find out his wife and child. He rather exposes the self-centeredness of his protagonist with utter frankness. Henchard is not so much filled with the sense of loss of his wife as he is concerned about his disgrace for which he blames his wife's meekness and simplicity. We are told that **“a certain shyness of revealing his conduct prevented Michael Henchard from following up the investigation with the loud hue-and-cry such a pursuit demanded....”**¹ But as the story draw to a close, we are not only sympathetic towards him, we are also in complete agreement with Hardy's view that Michael Henchard is **“a man of character”**. We feel pity and sorrow for the sufferings of a man who had immense capacities – who could have led a perfectly happy and successful life but for the faults of temper, jealousy and self destructiveness.

So, not knowing the limitation of his own capacity,

Henchard has already given cause for his popularity to be shaken. His fall is caused mainly by the flaws of his own character and one of the flaws of his

1. **The Mayor of Casterbridge, P.23**

character is a concern with his own interests even at the cost of other people's. He is not going to change himself. He is not ready to accept his responsibility and to make amends to people by undergoing a loss, himself-Moreover at the slightest instigation he shows the same temper, **“which, artificially intensified, had banished a wife nearly a score of years before”**.¹ Henchard would have destroyed himself even if Newson had not returned.

Henchard is as much the victim as the agent of his own misfortunes. He cannot judge properly his own capacities. He is unable to understand his own good. He is a slave to his emotions. He is violent, jealous, proud and domineering and even though he has many good qualities, it becomes inevitable that he should turn love into hatred and should suffer from loneliness and separation from all and in the end wish for such Complete oblivion:

“That Elizabeth – Jane Farfrae be not told of my death, or made to grieve on account of me.

‘& that I be not bary'd in consecrated ground

‘& that no flours be planted on my grave

‘& that no man remember me’²

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1. **The Mayor of Casterbridge, P.41**
 2. **The Mayor of Casterbridge, P.333**

Filled with bitterness, and unable and undersirous of doing anything to change circumstances or people, Henchard completely cuts himself off from the world of the living – from family, society and nature. It is a long way from the **“Pillar of the town”**¹ and the mayor with **“diamond studs”**², to the man who wishes – **“that no mourners walk behind me at my funeral”**³. But Henchard does not take long to travel this distance because he is not one to take good counsel and he is headstrong enough to continue in an error. Moreover, he is unable to get rid of his temper and we get glimpses of it on many occasions and many deserving or undeserving persons – especially at the sale of his wife, at the great public dinner, at Abel Whittle when Henchard insisted that he should go to work half naked, and finally at Farfare.

A tragic hero of the past whom Henchard most resembles is King Lear. In the very beginning, when Henchard says: **“Now then, stand up, Susan and show yourself”**⁴, and he offers to sell her for five guineas, we are reminded of Lear offering Cordelia to Burgundy with the words:

But, now her price is fallen,
Sir, there she stands

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1. Ibid. P.40
 2. Ibid. P. 38
 3. Ibid. P.333
 4. **The Mayor of Casterbridge**, p.15

In the opening scenes of both **King Lear** and **The Mayor**, the protagonist loses our sympathy because of a rash act. This act of rashness and folly is the result of a fundamental weakness in their character they suffer from egoism. Lear casts off Cordelia because she hurts his vanity and Henchard gets rid of his wife and child because he thinks that they are the cause of the frustration of his high aims and hopes. The egoism and rashness of character are aggravated by senility, in Lear and by alcohol in Henchard. The selling of Susan is as unnatural an act as was the banishment of Cordelia: and in both cases the reader is horrified at the mad decisions of the protagonists.

In **The Woodlanders** Thomas Hardy evinces true tragic flames and hopes to achieve what he had in his mind true Sophocles's tragic grandeur. He was very much satisfied after the completion **Woodlanders** as he found the scheme of universe floating in true direction. In this novel Hardy has conveyed to us the idea that throughout the universe there is suffering and unhappiness and nothing can be done to alter things, He writes in the preface that in "The

present novel, as in one or two of this series which involve the question of matrimonial divergence, the immortal puzzle – given the man and woman, how to find a basis for their sexual relation – is left where is stood ”.¹ The unhappiness caused by social institutions can be eradicated by bringing about some reforms. Hardy does hint at solutions to such problems, but his main motive seems to be to show that it is inevitable that man should be unhappy. It is the law of nature that affects all the creatures of the universe.

The heroine of **Tess** also wants to free her virtue – conscious husband from the bond of marriage, but he tells her that she is childish to think so and that she does not understand the law. Social laws are not strong enough to free Grace from the clutches of the mistake that she had committed in the past, but even if somebody could have freed her, there is another stronger and undefeatable enemy of man’s wishes-death. When Grace becomes bold enough to own that Giles is everything to her, he is taken away from her by death. But Hardy wrote in a letter that **“the ending of the story –**

1. Thomas Hardy: **The Woodlanders**, Macmillan (Papermac). 1968, P.5
(Hereinafter Referenecs to The Woodlanders will be given under the little
The Woodlanders only)

hinted rather than stated – is that the heroine is doomed to an unhappy life with an inconstant husband”.¹ Throughout the novel, we are given hints that the spell of happiness and satisfaction is very transitory.

After Marty has cut off her locks, she is compared to **“her own ancestral goddess”** who had suffered **“the rape of her locks by Loke the Malicious”**²

Marty’s character from the beginning wins our heart. The book opens with an important incident in her life and ends with her speech. One may wonder whether Hardy had first wished to make her the heroine. Mrs. Hardy writes that Hardy had taken up and put aside a woodland story some ten years before which he later made into **The Woodlanders** perhaps at first Hardy had planned it to be the story of Marty South – the simple rustic girl who is far removed from the sham of city life. We are filled with pity for her hopeless devotion to a man who has always been beyond her reach.

Marty and Giles are so much a part of Nature that there could not have been much cause for unhappiness had not the woodland been infiltrated by cultured life in the shape of Grace’s city education and in Dr. Fitzpiers and

1. F.E. Hardy: **The Life of Thomas Hardy** Macmillan, 1970, p.220.

2. **The Woodlanders** p.23

Mrs. Charmond. Fitzpiers and Mrs. Charmond are outsiders in the Areadia of the woodlands and they bring unhappiness and disturbance.

Giles unintentionally makes Mrs. Charmond take against him by not turning his horses heads and letting Mrs. Charmond's coach pass. Later he discovers that he could have retained his houses if he had taken steps earlier. **“There was no doubt that he had lost his houses and was left practically penniless by an accident”**¹

Here Hardy also hints at the peasants insecurity of tenure. The spirit of renovation and change had entered even small places like little Hintock and life hold properties were being pulled down instead of the lease being renewed. Giles losing his house was not something unique. Many were made homeless and felt insecure in life.

Giles's life seems to have been wasted because the one thing he wanted he could not get, but as Hardy remarks: **“the Unfulfilled intention..... makes life what it is”**². In Giles's life chance plays a very important role. With regard

1. **The Woodlanders**, P.110.

2. **The Woodlanders**. P.56

to him we feel the truth of the saying, **“man proposes and God disposes, and his arranged welcome was stultified”**.¹

The critical forum is a place of vigorous conflict and disagreement, but there is nothing in this to cause dismay. What is attested is the complexity of human experience and the richness of literature, not any chaos or relativity, of taste.

A researcher is better seen, no doubt as an explorer than as an **“authority”**. He used his mind and imagination in order to explore those things which probably went into the mind and imagination of a lofty genius while struggling to reduce himself into a lofty composition. He is also expected to be well equipped with the knowledge of the surroundings, readings, influences and other things contributing to a genius descending to letters. The effect of a good research is to convince us of what C.S. Lewis called, **“The enormous extension of our being which we owe to authors”**.²

1. **The Woodlanders** P.40

2. **C.S. Lewis: A Preface to Paradise Lost** Oxford 1942 m, p.9

According to all available accounts of Hardy's early life, he was given to melancholy, easily moved to tears, fond of solitude, though by means inaccessible in good fellowship, and enjoyed a good laugh as much as anyone, especially if the joke was of a profane or serolonic character. All his life he had a weakness for horrible incidents grim legends creepy stories, accounts of spells, omens, ghosts, murders, suicides and the like. He would visit the scene to find out all he could about some sinister event and enjoy its full flavor. He never seems to have missed a funeral at least of any one distinguished or of his own relative. He was always full of reminiscences of those melancholy festivals. He could never banish his deep-rooted sense of the supernatural or reduce himself to the clam indifference of a Huxley or a Leslie Stephen.

The scientific ideas expressed in his age filled him with thoughts of the in significance of human beings and the cruel state of the universe when the struggle for existence was evinced not only in men and animals but even in plants. In his novels, as well as in his notes and personal writings, we can see how unhappy he was at the state of affairs in the world. Like Clym, he could have said thus:

“I getup every morning, and see the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain.....”¹ He, too saw half the world going to ruin for want of somebody to buckle to and teach them how to breast the misery they are born. Unlike Clym, he understood the impossibility of the task. One can only look for remedies – if one does not find them, it is not one’s fault. Hardy was often labelled a pessimist but he knew what he was doing:

“As to pessimism. My motto is, first correctly diagnose the complaint in this case human ills – and ascertain the cause: then set about finding a remedy if one exists. The motto or practice of the optimist is: Blind the eyes to the real malady, and use empirical panaceas to suppress the sumptoms”.²

Thomas Hardy was not blind to the ills of human life. He wanted to read existing problems of pain and sufferings. He did not like to close his eyes to the ills of the world and he reasoned thus:

“This horn of the wheel – the roar of London! What is it composed of? Hurry, speech, laughter, moans, cries of little children. The people in this tragedy laugh, sing, smoke, toss of wines etc, make love to girls in drawing rooms and areas and yet are playing their parts in tragedy just the same. Some wear rowers and feathers, some wear rags. All are caged birdies; the only difference lies in the size of the cage. This too is part of tragedy”.³

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1. Thomas Hardy, **The Return of the Native**, Macmillan (Papermac), 1968, p. 182. (Hereinafter references to **The Return of the Native** will be given by the title **The Return of the Native** only).
 2. F.E. Hardy: **The Life of Thomas Hardy**, Macmillan: 1970 p.383.
 3. Ibid. p. 171

Hardy knew that all these tragic facts of life would not matter if people did not have the capacity to feel and experience them. But he found in all nature a determination to enjoy. Even in the leaf of a tree, there is the same wish to enjoy that we find in the most distinguished men and women. When Hardy perceived the difficulties that lie in the way of enjoyment, he was truly grieved. He felt that the world is full of misery, unhappiness and ugliness. So, he, as an artist, tried to do his best. At one point he remarked: **“To find beauty in ugliness is the providence of the poet”**.¹

He further observed thus:

“The business of the poet and manliest is to show the sorriness underlying the sorriest things”.² So, it was quite natural for the genius of Thomas Hardy, to dwell on the tragic aspects of life. Gloominess around the things of the universe was sharply visible to the literary eyes of Thomas Hardy. So, the artistic truth around Hardy revealed itself most faithfully in his tragic writings. He thought it the most cursed thing if the artist should be compelled to – **“Belie his literary conscience, do despite to his best imaginative instincts by arranging a denouement which he knows to be**

1. F.E. Hardy: The Life of Thomas Hardy, Macmillan, 1970 p.213

2. F.E. Hardy: The Life of Thomas Hardy, Macmillan, 1970 p.171

indescribably unreal meretricious, but dear to the Grundyist and subscriber”¹.

Hardy was primary an artist – very sensitive and alive to the influences of his environment. Like many other individuals he, too, had some views of life, which were the result of his temperament, his upbringing, education training and daily contact with the world of art, literature and thought and the physical world of nature and society. What Hardy is fundamentally concerned with in his novels is the universal predicament of mankind. The sources of man’s bad name vary: some of it is inherited in his chosen people of a pastoral land; some seeps insidiously from the world of sophistication and industrial development which is normally situated outside Wessex boundaries. But, whatever the causes, and despite phases of sunny contentedness and exuberant festivity, Hardian man is basically in a bad way, plaintively lonely, in his in different circumstances. Life is always a struggle and generally unrosy.

Hardy does not see life as romance or fancy. He is a realist.

His approach to life is realistic. It is impossible for him to overlook those forces,

1. H. Orel. (Ed.); Thomas Hardy’s Personal Writings, London, 1967 p.130

which work against the happiness of man, and therefore, **“happiness is but an occasional episode in the general drama of pain”**.¹ On the strength of his personal observation and experience of life, he had learnt that the world was not a happy place, and that nature was also hostile to man. Fate, or we may call it **“TU Fate”**, has its designs fulfilled through nature in various ways. So, Hardy did not believe in the happy destiny for man. His outlook was somber and sad, but it was due to his faithful observation of life. He believes that Fate is blind and controls the universe. It is neither benevolent nor malevolent: it is indifferent. His men and women become victims of the mocking Fate, which is ruthless and relentless in its blind justice. People intend to do good, but run into evil days. So, in Hardy Fatalism, plays an important part.

Thus, Hardy as an artist, puts his feet onward in the tragic art, He contemplates human life with its essential tragedy in the face of hostile universal scheme. Hardy believed that **“Comedy is tragedy if you only look deep enough”**². He also felt that a true artist should discover the tragedy that

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1. F.E. Hardy: **The Life of Thomas Hardy**, Macmillan, 1970p. 154
 2. Ibid. p. 439

always underlies comedy.

Throughout his novels, Hardy challenges us to compare his heroes and heroines with those of traditional tragedians and in **“The woodlanders”**, he tells us that even little Hintock is suitable for a grand sophoclean tragedy. About his concept of tragedy, Hardy writes thus: **“The best tragedy – highest tragedy, in short – is that of the Worthy encompassed by the Inevitable. The tragedies of immoral and worthless people are not the best”**¹ But, we must not mistake **“Worthy”** for **“Noble”** even though Tess is presented as the descendant of a noble family and Clym belongs to a slightly higher class than the rest of the people in **The Return of the Native** What Hardy means by **“Worthy”** is nobleness of heart in him. And we cannot but love Henchard because essentially he is good, noble and worthy, even though he errs when he lets himself be a slave to passion and therein lies true tragedy. Hardy makes his point clear about tragedy of human life. **“Tragedy should arise from the gradual closing of a situation that time or ordinary human passions, prejudices, and ambitions”**.²

1. F.E. Hardy: **The Life of Thomas Hardy**, Macmillan, 1970 p. 251

2. Ibid. p. 120

It becomes very different to ascertain one reason behind the tragic happenings in the novels of Hardy. At a few places characters themselves appear to be responsible for their tragedies. It may lead us to think that Hardy wants people to improve and to make things better by awaiting what may probably lead to tragedy.

Sometimes it seems that Nature causes life to be full of struggle, defeat and destruction. The bird eats the snail, and she in turn is trapped by man. Man has to practice, deceit in order to get his food. He must trap the rabbits and he must kill the pig that he has fed with his own hands. Nature has provided life to the individuals, but it has also permitted killing of one for the food of another. In this manner, Nature's life cycle itself becomes the cause of tragedy. The very obvious impulse to enjoy the happiness of Nature's cradle is soon devoured by another scheme of Nature. In this manner, Hardy is not concerned with the human life only, but also the life of other species. A man may glorify himself for sometime in enslaving and killing other species in the name of food and other necessities. But he, as part of nature, is disturbing the peace and happiness of other species of animals and birds. In the scheme of nature, man is also entrapped at occasions and the scene becomes tragic in the human world. There

is lot of tragedy in the scheme of Nature – more tragedy than we can dream of. But, at times, nature becomes a sympathizer with the sorry state of people. Even then there is tragedy. Therefore, according to Hardy there is some unknown power other than Nature that inflicts sufferings on them. Hardy Shows his consciousness for his unknown power and calls it by different names – Fate, Chance, Prime Cause, Immanent Will, the President of Immortals.

In conceiving nature a destructive force along with its constructive plans. Hardy was deeply influenced by the new scientific researches of Charles Darwin about destruction and survival in nature. It is worthwhile to quote the following passage from F. B. Pinion thus: **“Possibly no other single book made a greater immediate impact on Hardy than The Origin of Species. In numbering himself among its earliest acclaimers’, he seems to imply that its conclusions were not altogether surprising. The subject may have been familiar to him from Tennyson’s. In Memoriam, but almost undoubtedly he recognized the truth of Darwin’s presentation of nature from the evidence he had seen for himself on the heath, and in the wods, adjacent to his home at Higher Bockhampton”**.¹

1. F.B. Pinion: Thomas Hardy – Art And Thought, London, 1968. p. 123

Just as Wordsworth rose up in revolt to overthrow the false doctrine of nature enunciated by Pope, so Hardy rose up against Wordsworth, to prove that his conception of nature was but one-sided. In his view Wordsworth saw only the personal aspect of nature in moments of personal mood of joy. This was sentimental conception as opposed to the realistic conception that was put forward by Hardy. Hardy ridiculed by Holy Plan of Nature and tried to show not only “What man hath made of man” but also “What Nature hath made of man”.

It was learnt that the **The Origin of Species** was not only totally different from the one depicted in religious books like the **Bible**, but also that the life was not smooth sailing even since it began, and there was always a struggle for existence. The big fish swallows the smaller one, the lion preys on the deer and the giant tree in the forest wipes out the smaller ones, the weaker species. Nature is, thus blind and indifferent in his struggle for existence. In one poem, Hardy mocks at the Holy Plan of Nature as perceived by Wordsworth. He shows that being fed up with the unrest arising out of the struggle for existence in humanity, he would go to a wood in the lap of Nature and derive some solace and comfort from the observation of the Holy Plan and ways of Nature about which so much has been said by poets like Wordsworth and his followers. He

hopes that at least nature will be free from the vices of rivalry and jealousy. But he is shocked and totally disillusioned, when he reaches there. He perceives that the pine and the beech are struggling for existence and are trying to blight each other with dripping poison. He sees ivy eager to strangling the elm and the hawthorns choking the hollies. Even the populars sulk, turn black in the shadow of a rival. In the end, filled with horror at all these cries of Nature, Hardy, the poet flees from the wood as from an accursed place and he determines that life offers him no consolation except in the company of those human beings who are as beleagued as himself:

**“Since, then, no grace I find
Taught me of trees
Turn I back to my kin
Worthy as these
There at least smiles abound
There discourse thrills around
There, now and then, are found
Life – Loyalties”¹**

Hardy exhorts man to avoid nature, and in choosing the lesser of the two evils, to seek society of their fellow beings, since Nature is totally irresponsible or at least responds only in an ironical way to the feelings of man.

1. Thomas Hardy: Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy, Macmillan, 1930. p. 104

Hardy was familiar with Tennyson's words, "nature red in tooth and claw". Therefore, he looked at the aspects of nature as objectively as he could. He was realistic approach to the world of Nature. Regarding Hardy's Nature Cazamian writes thus:

"We come upon effects more powerful and of a rarer equality aimed at with a sure and certain skill – A great of nature freely displays an exceptional gift for description which awes a vast range to the perception both of fine shades and of vast solemn harmonies. Description is the form in which Hardy's view of Nature finds its expression. But at the same time description is interspersed with his reflections. The place which is most free from human beings or form signs of encroaching civilization appeals to him most because there Nature is still in her virign state, and it has not been polluted by the contaminating touch of civilization, which is always trying to subverse it. Though he is fond of wood, and hills yet that which casts spell over him is the gloomy vastness of the moor, in which every living being vanishes, as if swallowed up in the depth of the centuries".¹

1. Leguouis and Cazamian: **History of English Literature**, London, 1960 p. 1074

Hardy's view of nature proceeds in his descriptions of nature and its moods. Edgdon Heath in **The Woodlanders** and the **The Return of the Native** becomes the symbol of human moods and human predicament.

Throughout his descriptions of nature, we find that philosopher is gradually starting to intersperse the descriptions with his meditations and reflections.

Nature is not just a background for human activity, it influences human nature that comes in contact with it. Let us make the description of Edgdon Heath in **The**

Return of the Native: "The distant runs of the word and the firmament seemed to be a division in matter. The face of the heath by its mere complexion added half an hour to evening, it could in life manner retard the dawn, sadden the mood, anticipate the frowning of storms scarcely generated, and intensify the opacity of a moonless midnight to a cause of shaking and dread..... The spot was indeed a near relation of night, and when night showed itself an apparent tendency to gravitate together could be perceived in its shades and the scene. The somber stretch of rounds and hallows seemed to rise and meet the evening gloom in pure sympathy."¹

1. **The Return of the Native**, Macmillan (Paper mac), 1968, p.17

Hardy wants to communicate is that Egdon Heath is not only omnipotent but omniscient also, in as much as it not only dominates over the sunset and the opacity of the moonlight, but also has fore knowledge of the storm that will burst later. It knows no fears. The night is not more gloomy than it, as it is with the endless heavens in perpetrating darkness. Hardy has compared its form to that of a Titan, but even a Titan would look like a pygmy, beside this colossus, if there could indeed be such things as a Titan and a Heath with a form reassembling in features each other.

In determining the course of Fate and ill designs of Fate, Nature plays an important role. As a matter of fact, Nature seems to be an active agent in the scheme of Fate. Hardy read the Greek dramatists, Shelley, Carlyle and Hugo and was deeply influenced by them to read the ill Fate of mankind, either swept by a storm or other chance happenings in Nature. Shelley remained favourite with Hardy in determining the long line of ill scenes of mankind.

**“What is that power? Ye mock yourselves and give
A human heart to what ye cannot know
As it the cause of life could think and live!
If were as if man’s works should feel, and show:
The hopes, and fears and thoughts from which they flow”¹**

1. P.B. Shelley, “The Revolt of Islam” appeared in **Collected Poems of Shell**, student store, Barielly, 1962

Fate with his terrible character rules through chance happenings either in Nature or in coincidences in human relations. Of the rule of chance in Hardy's fiction there are many remarkable examples. His coincidences are sometimes unusual but never impossible. Hardy's play of chance in the designs of Fate was evident from his earliest writings like **Desperate Remedies** and **A pair of Blue Eyes**. In **Desperate Remedies**, he took pains to assert his new outlook over the conventional one. The death of Miss Aldeclyffe's father makes Cytherea stay at Knap water house after all. Miss Aldeclyffe's wonders if providence has directed the course of events. Hardy's explanatory comment thus:

“One more in the history of human endeavour, a position which it was impossible to reach by any direct attempts was come to by the seeker's swerving from the part and regarding original object as one of secondary importance”.¹ The question of coincidences is discussed in **Desperate Remedies**. People think it odd when two disconnected events fall strangely together by chance. But when three such events coincide without any apparent reason, it seems as if there must be invisible means at work. The most impressive coincidence of the rare kind occurs at the end of **A Pair of Blue Eyes**

1. Thomas Hardy: *Desperate Remedies*, Macmillan, 1903, p.4

when Knight and Smith find that they are on the same train from Paddington to Cornwall **In Far From the Madding Crowd** Fanny Robin's Fate is largely determined by her mistaking the church for her wedding. In the **Mayor of Caster bridge**, it is all chance that ruins the happiness of Henchard, the man of character. It is at a very crucial time that he reads the letter of Susan, despite, instructions to the contrary by the author, about the truth that Elizabeth has about her birth. In a moment, all his high emotions and filial affection, that were bubbling to come out, are curdled and he comes down the stairs from the earlier room of Susan a dejected man. The course of his ruin is easily prepared by the powerful hand of Destiny. The chance happenings contrived by Destiny carry Lucetta away from Henchard to Farfrae's floating clouds of love. All fine dreams of Lucetta to meet Henchard in the dignified style of love are twisted towards Farfrae, when chance brings him suddenly indoors. In the latter phase of events, Henchard develops real passion for Elizabeth by realizing his mistakes of earlier doings.

Henchard fell ill, while living in the house of Joshua Jopp and Elizabeth nursed him in the honour of her soul. All these things bring swing in Henchard's fatherly attitude. Now, he desires to live the rest of his life as a

truthful man for the sake of Elizabeth, his only nearer one. He realizes that she is after all his daughter by birth of her being the daughter of his reverend wife, Susan. But destiny does not want to allow this much happiness to this man of character. Newson returns at this cruel juncture and Henchard tells a lie under the selfish motive of possessing Elizabeth with the truthfulness of his emotion at present. But, the same things becomes the cause of his deeper dismay just to face the vehemence and hatred of Elizabeth whom he loves dearly. At this time, Hardy presents an acoustic picture of more subtle psychological scenes. Henchard is certain that Newson will return and will acknowledge Elizabeth about the grave lie of her death randomly selected by his possessive instinct. He realizes that Newson will now expose his appalling deceit and take away Elizabeth Jane – all he has to live for. The prospect is reflected in the landscape – it is dark and unendurable. Hardy writes thus:

“If he could have summoned music to his aid, his existence might even now have been borne; for with Henchard music was of regal power”.¹ Ironically, what Henchard hear suggests the most appropriate place for suicide. It draws him like music. Tess and Angel Clare, during their courtship, spent

1. Thomas Hardy: **The Mayor of Caster bridge**, Macmillan (Papermac) 1968. P. (Hereinafter References to **The Mayor of Casterbridge** will be given under the title The Mayor of Casterbridge only)

wonderful afternoons roving the meadows. Tess's almost unalloyed happiness is transmitted into a Turner-esque scene:

“They were never out of the sound of some purling weir, whose buzz accompanied their own murmuring, while the beams of the sun, almost as horizontal as the mead itself, formed a pollen of radiance over the landscape. They saw tiny blue fogs in the shadows of the trees and hedges, all the time that there was bright sunshine elsewhere”¹

By the late autumn, Tess's desire seemed to be for a perpetual betrothal in which everything should remain as it was then. In the early afternoons, she and Angel lingered in the warm meadows. Looking over the damp sod in the direction of the sun, they saw –

“A glistening ripple of gossamer

1. Thomas Hardy: **Tess of the D'Urbervilles**, Macmillan (Papermac) 1967, p.174. (Hereinafter references to **Tess of the D'urbrevilles** will be given under the title **Tess of the D'Urberivilles** only)

nothing of their brief glorification, wondered across the shimmer of this pathway, irradiated as if they bore fire within them, then passed out of its line, and were quite extinct.”¹

The picture of natural objects described here bears resemblance to Tess's Fate in the cradle of love. Here we have marvelously artistic and philosophical picture of love, its radiance and its ephemerality, for Tess far shorter lived them for most. The significance of the wailing gnats..... like sparks of fire in Hardy's previous scenes is now explicit. It is the significances of the individual in the vast expanse of time and space.

Harmonization of landscape and situation is to be found in several of Hardy's novels, but never more felicitously or abundantly than in Tess. A golden harvest scene accords with Tess's resolution to shake off the, past, though it is reminder of Nature's indifference and there are meaning signs in the red revolving arms of the reaping machines, in the fourfold doom of animals within the shrinking covert of corn. Tess's summers in the bush green meadows of the vale of great dairies coincides, with love and relative happiness, and contracts with the winter on the chalk hills of Flantcomb – Ash Farm after

1. Thomas Hardy: Tess of the D'urbervilles, Macmillan (Papermac) 1967, p. 174

her abandonment by Angel Clare. Her intense misery is expressed in the frost and snow, but most intensively in the eyes of those Arctic birds that came near her and Marina as they toil in the fields.

“..... gaunt spectral creatures with tragical eyes – eyes which had witnessed scenes of cataclysmal horror in inaccessible polar regions of a magnitude such as no human being had ever conceived.....; which beheld the crash of icebergs and the slide of snow – hills by the shooting light of Aurora; been blinded by the whirl of colossal storms and terraqueous distortions; and retained the expression of features that such scenes had engendered”.¹

The later novels of Thomas Hardy became intensely tragic and nature was consigned an agent in bringing down and crushing human lives ruthlessly. But even in his early novels, his tragic designs were explicitly present under the skin of pastoral romance.

Hardy portrays **“the strife and** disharmony in nature because he is filled with bitterness against a universe where virtues like honesty, devotion and endurance go unrewarded. For all his love and selfless devotion.

1. Tess of the D'urbervilles. p.89

Even though Hardy finds the spirit of discord in the whole of the universe, he finds a peculiar sort of harmony between nature and human beings. In the midst of nature, man finds a contentment which the city – bred Mrs. Charmond and Dr. Fitzpiers with their-so-called “culture have never known. Being able to communicate with nature in her own language. Marty can feel an apathy, a calm indifference, even in her state of utter destitution; and this indifference turns into solace in the end. With the help of a very striking image in the shape of John South’s tree, Hardy has been able to show the influence of nature upon the lives of the Woodlanders. John South is sick and he sits in his room, watching through the window the tall elm tree. Seeing it rock and sigh as the wind blows, he feels that it will dash him into his grave. We are told that it is their fear, **“rather than any organic disease, which was eating away the health of John South”**.¹

It is quite natural that, because of this strong belief, John should fulfill his own prophecy by dying within a few hours of the telling of the tree. But we find that most of the important events of **The Woodlanders** are connected with his tree. When Giles was “shrouding” the tree, he was first told by Grace that she

1. The Woodlanders, p.97

meant to break their engagement, or the understanding that had, existed till then.

When the tree, is felled, John South dies, and since Giles's property depended upon John's life, he loses it. As Marty had prophesied, because of losing his property, Giles loses Greases and suffers that disappointment which finally kills him. According to Hardy, nature dominates life and it also actively shares in the life of the Woodlanders and Hardy foreshadows human conflicts. When the woodland life comes in contact with the cultured life of the outside world, there is naturally a conflict and this conflict is best shown in the life of Grace Melbury. In her character we also find the conflict between traditionalism and modernism. Like Clym of **The Return of the native**, she has lived in the city, been educated there, and seen the false glamour of city life. Like Clym she feels that real happiness lies not in the cultured life but in the simple ways of the woodland people. But, unlike Clym, she does not have strength of character and clear understanding of her inner desires and of what is really good for her. Within her, there is a conflict between her modern nerves and her primitive feelings. She wavers between the two attractions and is unable to decide in favour of her instinct and love for the quiet and old fashioned ways.

Lawrence's heroine – Grace's tragedy lies, to a great extent, in the foolish ambition of her father. He has spent Lots of money on Grace's education so that she may not be one of the woodlanders. He does not understand that it is a blessing to be one of them. His vanity, his preoccupation with honour and his craving for social position remind us of John Durbeyfield. When Grace comes back home after her education, he becomes as vain as John Durbeyfield had become after the discovery of his grand lineage. He combines the follies of Tess's mother also. Like her, he feels sure that his daughter will marry well and feels overjoyed at Fitzpiers's attention to her: **“Why, you scamp, what's this you've been doing? Not home here more than six months yet..... making havoc in the upper classes!”¹**

And as John was mistaken in her estimate of Alec, so Melbury's opinion of Fitzpiers is based on something very unreliable:

“That touching faith in members of long – established families as such, irrespective of their personal condition of character, which is still found among old fashioned people in the rural districts, reached its full perfection in Melbury.”² He believed that if she is married to a man of high position, she will not only satisfy his vanity by being so much above the common people, but

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1. The Woodlanders. p.163
 2. The Woodlanders. p.163

will really be happier and more comfortable.

Melbury's ambition and vanity bring unhappiness in the lives of many because he makes the **“almost irreparable error of dividing two whom nature had striven to join together in earlier days”**¹. But by unintentionally marring the happiness of his daughter, he also mars his own happiness. He keeps on blaming himself for Grace's misfortunes and he has to bear the humiliation of begging for his Daughter's happiness from a woman like Mrs. Charmond. He also has had the bad luck to have to listen to the humiliating words of Fitzpiers, and in spite of his devotion to Greece, he is doomed in the end of lose even his daughter. His frantic search of her and, in the end, his discovery that she had taken Fitzpiers back, evoke our pity for a man who loves his daughter too well, though not wisely.

Grace condescends to the wishes of her father because she knows that she is his **“worldly hope”**², but that is not the sole cause of the tragedy. She does not have a strong personality and she does not use her own judgment. She is weak enough to be lured by social status and simple enough to be beglamoured by the granduer of Mrs. Charmond. In her heart she

1. The Woodlanders. p.285

2. The Woodlanders. p. 93

knows the worth of Winter-borne but she does not do anything but rub out the word “lose” and insert “keep” on the wall of Giles’s house:

**“O Giles, you’ve lost your dwelling place,
And therefore, Giles, you’ll lose you Grace”¹.**

Hardy tells us that **“the tender opportunity then missed through her fastidiousness”²** will not arrive again. Earlier Grace had thought that everything was there in the world and it was only a matter of picking and choosing. Perhaps she also thought that if she was dissatisfied with one, she had only to drop him and pick another.

“Nature was bountiful, she thought. No sooner had she been cast aside by Edred Fitzpiers than another being, impersonating chivalrous and undiluted manliness, had a risen out of the earth ready to her head”³.

But chance or Nature cannot wait on. If we make a mistake once, we may not be able to retrieve it ever, however hard we may wish or try.

Amongst other causes of Grace’s unhappiness are the defective social laws. **The Woodlanders** is the first novel of Hardy in which, together with Fate, Providence, etc, society and man – made rules are shown to be a cause of man’s happiness. In his later novels we find a development of this idea, but it is in **The Woodlanders** that Hardy first hints at the tragic shortcomings of society and law in those days:

“To hear these two Arcadian

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1. The Woodlanders. p.
 2. Ibid. p. 287
 3. The Woodlander. p. 213

innocents talk to imperial law would have made a humane person weep who should have known what a dangerous structure they were building up on their supposed knowledge. They remained in thought, like children in the presence of the incomprehensible”¹.

Grace has told Mrs. Charmond that Fitzpiers will soon tire of her, as he will of any woman and after Grace has taken him back, Melbury says:

But let her bear in mind that the woman walks and laughs somewhere at this very moment whose neck he’ll be calling next year as he does, hers to-night; and as he did Felice Charmond’s last year; and Duke Damson’s the year afore!..... it’s a forlorn hope for her; and God knows how it will end”².

Hardy let us understand that it is destiny that gives unhappiness to a person like Marty, for had she been given a chance, she two would have been a dignified and charming lady and would have been loved by many. But she accepts her fate without complaint. She is not tragic in the traditional sense of the word, because she does not revolt against her misfortunes

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1. The Woodlanders, p. 290
 2. The Woodlanders, p. 376

she rather takes solace from the fact that even the well-placed in life are not very happy – **“So rich and so powerful, and yet to yawn!..... Then things don’t fay with her any more than with me”¹**. She is very humble in her ambition and so she can get satisfaction in something which could have brought only despair to others: **“..... You are mine, and only mine; for she has forgot’ee at last, although for her you died!”²**

We are reminded for Lawrence’s **The Lost Girl** where the outsider Cicio brings life, spirit and vitality to she dry and drab life of the heroine. The position is just the reverse in **The Woodlanders**. Fitzpiers is bored with life and hankers for novelty and adventure like Eustacia Vye or Hedda Gabler. Like Jude, he has a passion for knowledge and for women. He is estranged from nature and even his love is defective – **“His was the passion of Congreve’s M. Millamant, whose delight lay in seeing the heart which others bled for, bleed for me”³**. Like Eustacia Vye he could love a person only so long as that person was loved by others too. Like her, Fitzpiers indulges in his passions because he has nothing better to do.

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1. The Woodlanders. p.44
 2. Ibid. p.380
 3. The Woodlanders. p. 221

Giles's love, on the other hand, knows no tricks. He is a simple man, bom and bred amongst orchards and trees and Grace thinks of him, **“as the fruit – god and the wood-god in alternation”**¹, for she has seen his real self:

“He looked and smelt like Autumn's very brother, his face being sunburn to wheat – colour. His eyes blue as corn – flowers, his sleeves and leggings dyed with fruit stains. His hands clammy with the sweet juice of apples, his hat sprinkled with pips and everywhere about him that atmosphere of cider..... Her heart rose from its late sadness like a released bough”², her senses revealed in the sudden lapse back to Nature unadored.

Giles suffers silently, but the undimished devotion that he feels for Grace throughout heightens our esteem for him and we feel sorry that a man so deserving happiness should be so utterly bereft of it.

And in spite of Fitzpiers's assurance to the contrary, we feel that his death has been hastened by the fact that he cared too, much for property and for people's opinion and so was compelled to sleep in the rain, even though he was sick. When Grace is looking at the bountiful orchards, she feels that in **“all this proud show some kernels were unsound as her own situation, and she wondered if there were one world in the universe where the fruit had no worm, and marriage no sorrow”**³.

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1. The Woodlander. p. 286
 2. Ibid. p. 213
 3. The Woodlanders. p. 212

In **The Return Of The Native** Hardy has also been able to present an equivalent of the Greek chorus in the humble people like Fair Wayt, Grandfer Cante, Humphrey, Olly, etc. From time to time, these people talk about the main characters-their past and present, and their possible future. They also speak out their mind regarding the behaviour and actions of these characters.

The main novel was originally divided into five books which undoubtedly were meant to correspond with the five acts of the classical tragedy. Hardy also tried to make the main characters belong to a higher class than the rest but they are not royal or aristocratic enough to equal the ancient heroes, they are more in keeping with the heroes of modern literature. Even though of nobler birth, Clym is not very different from Humphrey in whose profession he finds contentment and happiness.

In the opening chapter of the novel, we are given a description of the gloomy stage:

“The face of the heath by its mere complexion added half an hour to evening: it could in like manner retard the down, sadden noon, anticipate the frowning of storms scarcely generated, and intensify the opacity of a moonless midnight to a cause of shaking and dreadthe spot was, indeed, a near relation of night..... the somber stretch of rounds and hollows seemed to rise and meet the evening-gloom in pure sympathy, the heath exhaling darkness us rapidly as the heavens

precipitated it..... the storm was its lover, and the wind its friend..... it was..... like man, slighted and enduring: and with singularly colossal and mysterious in its swarthy monotony. As with some persons who have long lived apart, solitude seemed to look out of its countenance. It had a lonely face, suggesting tragical possibilities.”¹

To this somber and gloomy place our heroine was confined. She was full of Promethean rebelliousness against circumstances and Fate, but all her efforts, all her contrivances, and all her rebellion proved to be of no avail and in the end she fulfilled her own prophecy regarding her doom in relation to the heath. **“Tis my cross my shame, and will be my death”**²

Clym makes efforts to change to plight of the whole community. Eustacia tries to change just her own Fate, but both of them fail because a human being is as insignificant as an insect in the world of **The Return of the Native**. Mrs. Yeobright has to die, **“On the heath like on animal kicked out,”**³ and looking at Clym from a distance she finds him like a caterpillar, he **“seemed to be of no more account in life than an insect. He appeared as a mere parasite of the heath fretting its surface in the daily labour as a moth**”⁴

Certain events in the novel, **The Mayor of Casterbridge** remind us very much of the Greek tragedy **Oedipus Rex**, but the hero, unlike king Oedipus

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1. Hardy’s – **The Return of the Native**, p.11-13
 2. **The Return of the Native**, p.93
 3. Ibid. p.316
 4. Ibid. p.283

meets his down-fall because of the shortcomings of his own character rather than for some past sin or curse. He had committed a crime in the past and he may feel guilty at times but no supernatural power compels him to pay for his crime.

In his perversity and under the influence of strong rum he forgot the difference between animals and human beings and said to the people in the refreshment tent.

“For my part I don’t see why men show have got wives and don’t want em, shouldn’t get rid of em as these gipsy fellows, do their old horses. Why shouldn’t they put ‘em up and sell ‘em by auction to men who are in need of such articles?..... I’d sell mine this minute if anybody would but her!”¹

What would seem incredible to the modern reader often becomes to the modern reader often becomes credible in Hardy’s universe. A sailor a stranger to the place-does buy her for five guineas. Henchard wakes up on the morning and realizes that it was not all a dream, and that he had actually sold his wife and child. He hunts for Susan and little Elizabeth-Jane for days together but in the end discovers that they and the sailor have left the country. After this many years are allowed to lapse before the narrative is taken up again. Susan, now a middle-aged woman, calling herself the widow of Mr. Newson, comes with her daughter of Casterbridge; for the furmenty woman has informed her that the man who sold his wife, **“Came back here to the next year’s fair,**

1. The Mayor of Casterbridge. p.13

and told me quite private like that if woman ever asked for him I was to say he had gone to..... Casterbridge”¹. On entering Casterbridge they hear people grumbling because the blind, selfishness of the business world has **“made all the poor volk’s insides plim like blowed bladders”²** people have been deprived even of wholesome bread, and they tell these newcomers that they, **“may as well look for manna-food as good bread in Casterbridge just now. They can blare their trumpets and thumps their drums, and have their roaring dinners but we must need be put to for want of a wholesome crust”³**. Soon we learn that the corn-factor, Mr. Henchard, is responsible for this grievance of the people and, as we look through the open window at the scene inside the inn. The king’s Arms, we are made aware that the Mayor’s popularity is already on the wane. When he rises to make a speech, he is interrupted by people saying, **“Hey! How about the bad bread Mr. Mayor?”⁴** Soleman Longways, one of the loungers outside the hotel, tells, Elizabeth – Jane:

“Never a big dealing in wheat, barley, oats, hay, roots, and such-like but Henchard’s got a hand in it. Ay, and he’ll go into other

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1. The Mayor of Casterbridge. p.27
 2. Ibid. p.35
 3. **The Mayor of Casterbridge.** p.34-35
 4. Ibid. p.40-41

things too; and that's where he makes his mistake. He worked his way up from nothing when 'I came here; and now he's pillar of the town. Not but what he's ben shaken a little to – year about this bad corn he has supplied in his contracts.”¹

Henchard was impulsive enough to compel Farfrae with loads of his love and affection, and offers money and position; but he has also quick in feeling hurt and wronged when people showed a preference for Farfrae's commonsense and practicality. He could soon sense that much of people's admiration, for him had been transferred to Farfrae; and instead of trying to ignore the whole thing, he seems to find some cruel pleasure in hurting his own feelings by drawing out more truths about people's opinions of him. Now he is filled with dislike of a person whom he has impulsively made his best friend. Rejecting his open-hearted friendship, he harbors hatred, jealousy and rivalry. His simple wife can see wherein lies the good of all of them and she tries, in her weak way, to bring Elizabeth and Farfrae together. But Henchard, endowed as he is with the power of bringing about his own ruin, not only stops Farfrae from

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paying court to Elizabeth, but insists on competing with him in business and popularity, and makes it known that he regards Farfrae as his enemy. Full of jealousy, enmity and perversity, he compels the churchmen to sing Psalm the Hundred-and-Ninth.

A Swift destruction soon shall seize

On his unhappy race;

And the next age his hated name

Shall utterly deface

When Henchard goes to the weather prophet, Fall, and wishes to know the future, we are not only reminded of King Saul going to the witch who conjures the ghost of Samuel, we are also reminded of Macbeth who goes to the witches to find out what the future holds in store for him. Just as the prophecy is partly the cause of Macbeth's actions, Fall's prophecy completes Henchard's ruin.

We are also reminded of **A Winter's Tale** where Leonte's, in a fit of similar rashness, gets rid of his wife as inhumanly as Henchard does, and sixteen years pass before the story is resumed.

But during the course of narration of the story of Henchard, it is also visible that Nature and Fate carry him towards his destruction. His

apparent weaknesses of strong – headedness are frequently exploited by the forces of Nature for his tragic fate. His wishes and impulses are frequently dismayed and the road of his destruction is easily prepared. What Henchard suffers is not all his doing. He is a good natured fellow and showers love and affection in abundance. The irony of Fate snatches away from him his filial affection for Elizabeth Jane in a moment. His love for Lucetta is also robbed of by the cruelty of chance. It appear that some unseen forces does not want to allow happiness this ill-fated man. Believing in this energy and business tact, he wants to show an edge over Farfrae, who appears to have been set as a rival to him by the invisible force. But all his plans are overturned against him. The situation is cruelly harnessed by chance and Fate by setting Nature as an agent.

The weather turn against the approximated wishes of Henchard. His purchases of corn in the hope of multiplying money and thus giving a jolt to Farfrae are cruelly turned against him. Weather shines bright, good harvest is expected and consequently prices are brought down. He is forced to sell his corn at a huge loss. In order to cause irritation to Henchard, the invisible force works for the prosperity of Farfrae. The weather becomes rough after Henchard has sold out his corn stock. Farfrae made purchases at a very low price which Henchard was

selling out. This turn of weather brings huge profits for Farfrae and in his manner his chances to become the first citizen of Casterbridge are brighten. In this manner, it appears that the invisible force at work around Henchard wants to snatch away all that Henchard possess. His reputation as Mayor is also at stake. Ill Fate is pursuing him like a hound. He is ready to accept even a low position as a man of character. He does not hesitate in working honestly as a labour man after his fall from the position of Mayor and bankruptcy. But this much is also not permitted by Fate at present. He is being kicked even in this low position by the irony of chance again and again till he is forced to leave Casterbridge for his further destruction. Fate takes rest only when Henchard's life is tragically ended.

In Hardy's novel **The Woodlander's** even plants are not happy to be alive –

“How they sigh directly we put ‘em upright, though while they are lying down they don't sigh at all..... they sigh because they are very sorry to begin life in earnest – just as we be”¹

Tree and plants not only suffer like human beings, they show all the characteristics of human nature and life, and at the same time they influence human lives. Hardy accepted the theory of natural selection and with

1. Thomas Hardy: **The Woodlanders**, Macmillan (Papermac). 1968, p.69
(Herein after References to The Woodlander will be given under the little The Woodlanders only)

the help of his images and descriptions of the woodland, he produces an effect of malignancy and struggle:

“Owls that has been catching mice in the outhouses, rabbits that had been eating the winter-greens in the gardens, and stoats that had been sucking the blood of the rabbits, discerning that their human neighbors were on the move discreetly withdrew from publicity, and were seen and heard no more till night fall”¹

The some struggle for life, the defeat of the weaker though innocent, and the thriving of the strong and the bullying is perceptible in plants –

“Here, as everywhere, the Unfulfilled Intention, which makes life what it is, was as obvious as it could be among the depraved crowds of a city slum. The leaf was deformed, the curve was crippled, the taper was interrupted, the lichen ate the vigour of the stalk, and the ivy strangled to death the promising sapling”²

The author presents the Darwinian view of struggle for existence throughout nature and similar sights confront the heroine more than once – **“Next were more tress close together, wrestling for existence, their branches disfigured with wounds resulting from their mutual rubbings and**

1. **The Woodlanders**, p.26

2. **Ibid.** p.56

blows”¹ When there is a storm, the trees fight and injure each other as though they received pleasure from the sufferings of the other: **“Sometimes a bough from an adjoining tree was swayed so low as to smite the roof in the manner of a gigantic hand smiting the mouth of an adversary, to be followed by a trickle of rain, as blood from the wound”²**

How different nature appears here from Wordsworth’s description of her! The same kind of storm inspires Wordsworth to write –

**“Now shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the storm
Grace that shall mould the maiden’s form
By silent sympathy”³**

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1. **The Woodlander**, p.320
 2. Ibid. p.317
 3. William Wordsworth, **Lucy Poems**, Students Store Barielly, 1968.

ELEMENTAL FORCES OF NATURE IN

EARLY NOVELS

The Wessex people living in the close contact with Nature, are its vital growths are manifestations. Divorced from the scenery they are weak and meaningless: moving in it, they are so much a part of it that they, express its primeval grandeur. Like Wordsworth, and possibly in a higher degree, Hardy shows this sympathy between man and nature. His peasants are as much products of a particular soil.

In his deep reverence towards the earth man's work upon it, Hardy desires to come at the very heart of life, amidst its various forms and manifestations. Agriculture has special charm for him, and he sees in it the most natural, simple and imperious necessity of men-labour for our daily bread.

Hardy is a worshipper of Nature, and his reverent attitude towards her controls and colours all his writing. Towards religion in the conventional sense his temper is hostile; he is a pagan whose faiths and sentiments are rooted in the distant poet. Such religious sentiments as he has, attached themselves to things immemorially sacred, the sun, the moon, the stars, the march of seasons,

the loom of silent powers weaving the web of life, the worship of **fecundity**, the spirit of creativeness, the sense of the eternal in time. The worship of the sun appears to him, the sunset religion under the sky. The rising sun is a golden-haired, beaming, mild-eyed, God-like creature, going down in the vigour and intentness of youth, upon on earth that was brimming with interest for him.

Hardy had realistic abilities of the highest rank in his rural description, and in his seldom equated precision of observation in reporting the aspect and activity of the South of England in the mid of 19th century.

Desperate Remedies, of Hardy was written with more complicated plot, as there is **“too much so to summarize in any detail, but some indication of its involutions may indicate its nature. The main spring is, as nearly always will be the case with Hardy, a love affair”**.¹

Desperate Remedies, was published anonymously in March 1871 by Tinsley. The First reviews in the **“Athenaeum”** and **“Morning Post”** were comparatively favourable which tell **“Desperate Remedies, though in some respect an unpleasant story, is undoubtedly a very powerful one. It is full of crime, in the discovery of which lies the main interest of the tale. These**

1. Richard Carpenter: **Thomas Hardy**, St. Marry Press, New York. p. 39

revelations came upon as one by one and is worked out with considerable artistic power.”¹

Hardy is admired for his sensitiveness to scenic and atmospheric effects. He is capable of arousing similar kind of sensitiveness in his readers, **“the merest sensuality is that the murderer has a wife and wants another. His mother, an unmarried lady of position and fortune is an uninteresting, unnatural and nasty creation”²**

A similar kind of review is of **“The Unsigned Review”**, which is supposed to have been by Hardy’s friend Horace Moule. **“The Saturday Review holds that a familiarity with several kinds of manual work adds great point to the author’s natural power of vivid description. We sincerely hope to hear of him again, for his deserts are of no ordinary kind”³**

Ambrose Graye was a young architect in the novel who expressed his feeling of love among **“the evergreen’s, by the light of a few tiny camps, infinitely enhancing the freshness and beauty of the leaves”⁴** His desire to express love amid the freshness of nature is the beginning of Hardy’s schematic

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1. RG Cox: **Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage**, Vikas Publication. p.1
 2. RG Cox: **Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage** Vikas Publication. p.4
 3. RG Cox: **Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage**, Vikas Publication. p.5
 4. **Desperate Remedies: p.3 Ibid. p.8**

development in the attitude towards nature.

The description of Nature is realistic and impressionistic in **Desperate Remedies**. At this stage Nature is not integral to the action and for this reason Nature is, not aesthetically commendable. We find limpid pictures of sea-coast when Cytherea and spring grave fall in love – **“The distant bell from the boat was heard warning the passengers to embark. She looked for Owen: Nothing was visible save the strikingly brilliant landscape on the ship; the sun dipping beneath the horizon during the proceeding and the moon showing herself at stern”**¹

Hardy associated freshness and innocence with Nature while foul, and impure is represented through industrialization and mechanization. As soon as Cytherea reveals her love for Edward Springrove to Miss Aldclyffe, she comments on Cytheres in terms of Nature as – **“A minute ago you seemed to me like a fresh spring meadow – now you seem a dusty highway”**²

This remark reminds us of the change in the attitude of Angel Clare after knowing the past of Tess. Similar kind of remarks are given by Angel to Tess in the novel **Tess of the D’Urbeville**. Hardy was

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1. **Desperate Remedies: p.3**
 2. **Desperate Remedies: p.94**

always dissatisfied by the emerging Industrialization and the extinction of village folk. He was at pain to find the transforming Wessex community along with the entire England.

The Conservation between Cytherea and Edward's father creates an upheaval in the emotions of Cytherea. Her emotional storm is identified with the external storm which comes when she is acknowledged about Edward's entanglement with Adelaide. The analysis of the rain sounds at night reminds us of the wind voices of Egdon Heath.

“The thunder, lightning and rain had now increased to a terrific force. The clouds, from which darts, forks zigzags, and balls of fire continually sprang, did not appear to be more than a hundred yard above their heads”¹

If Nature is benevolent then it is cruel and malignant also changing the destiny of the characters. The fire incident in the Trantern's Inn is one such example is **Desperate Remedies**. The fire was almost too near the back the Inn and to leave it unattended was a risk. The slowly smoking pile would show no sign of activity unless the autumn winds are blown. It was apprehended by the folk that a sudden breeze is liable to fan the flame Nature does few things directly. The breeze carried the ignited fragment upon the straw covering of

1. Desperate remedies, p.153

a long thatched heap or **“grave of mangel – wurzel lying in a direction at right angles of the house”**¹

Hardy describes the – house as inflammable as beehive where every atom in its substance, every feature in its construction, favoured the fire. **The autumn winds, tameless, swift and proud, still blew upon the dying old house which was constructed so entirely of combustible material that it burnt almost as fiercely as a Corn Rick**²

Hardy presents Cytherea as a symbol of beauty and sexuality hovered by the other characters. The scene in which she admires herself in the mirror shows her awareness of her own beauty Cytherea anticipates Tess in her combination of sexuality and passivity. She is also presented as a victim. **“The poignancy of Cytherea’s predicament is that she is deserted or threatened not only by those figures who conventionally menace the heroines of Gothic tales – the mysterious olden women, they would be possessor – but also by figures not normally found in such roles, her father and her brother”**³

Nature is taken for granted as a background and gorgeous with its division into four seasons which correspond to the burgeoning of Love & marriage

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1. Desperate Remedies, p.94
 2. Ibid. p.198
 3. Michael Millgate, **Thomas Hardy**: The Badley Head London, Sydney, Taironto, 1971, p.32

between Fancy and Dick Dew. The community of which Hardy writes in this novel is organic comprising of artisan and tradesman. The references are to the choir of village instrumentalists to which Hardy's father and grandfather belonged. Thus it came to an end, the year Hardy was born. Hardy nevertheless grew up in the ambience of its memory. The reference music art and dance are to symbolize the same feeling community.

The deliberateness with which Hardy took hold of the rustic themes with the intention of making it characteristically his own is shown by the opening of the novel which includes the voice of those trees which interested him right to **The Woodlanders** -

“To dwellers in a wood almost every species of tree has its voice as well as its features. At the passing of the breeze the fir tree sob and moan and no less distinctly they rock; the holly whistles as it battles with itself; the ash hisses amid its quivering; the beech rustle while its flag bough rise and fall, and winter which modifies the note, of such trees as shed their leaves does not destroy its individuality”¹

The novel appears as a woodland pastoral moving in time with the precession of the seasons and in isolation frame the world of great event. Hardy has concentrated on the image of Dance in the **“Winter”** section. This image of Dance is closely related to the theme of exchanging and choosing the partners.

1. **Under the Greenwood Tree**, p.3

The atmosphere of the quiet, country life has been established with charm and humour, enlivened by the brilliantly described gaieties of Christmas. As the story progresses Hardy deftly shifts his emphasis to the love of Dick Dewy and Fancy Day.

Fancy is described by Hardy in terms appropriate to a doll or a kitten idealized in appearance but a trifle skittish in personality. Her name is very much a part of her character. Her steadiness is dangerously undermined by her inveterate vanity and love of praise and pampering. Her education sets her rather apart in her own environment and thus education becomes the sign of social mobility making educated character superior and alienated from the village community. Fancy and Dick's engagement takes place in early summer, on **“a morning of lingering dews, when the grass is never dry in the shade. Fuchsias and dahlias were laden till eleven O'clock with small drops and dashes of water, changing the colour of their sparkle of every movement of the air; and else where hanging on twigs like small silver fruit”**¹

The scene of honey taking is a good example of Hardy's interest in the old ways and labours of the country. The ancient act of bee keeping was

1. **Under the Greenwood Tree**, p.134

revolutionized in the middle of the 19th Century by the invention of a smoking device for temporarily stupefying the bees, and by the invention of the box shaped hive containing removable frames, so that honey could be collected without killing the bees and they could be fed in winter. His hives are evidently of the old fashioned type of coiled straw, from which the honey could only be extracted from the bottom after removing all the bees. **“The importance given to the bees exemplifies Hardy’s extraordinary success in the evoking large patterns in terms of trivial details, rooting the symbolic in the domestic and everyday life. The bees prompt of the seasonal cycle to images of female domination. Their presence in the book depends upon the importance of honey in the rural economy at a period when sugar was an imported Luxury”**¹

The vividly described storm as autumn advances coincides aptly with the storm in Fancy’s feeling over the difficulties in the way of her marriage, and so helps to set the emotional atmosphere, a use of nature frequent in Hardy’s work. When Fancy is in despair at her father’s opposition nature chimes in her mood with a tremendous autumn gale. **“A single vast gray cloud covered the country, from which the small rain and mist had just began to blow down in wavy sheets, alternately thick and thin. The trees of the fields and plantation writhed like miserable men as the air wound’s its way swiftly**

1. Michael Millgate: **Thomas Hardy His Career as a Novelist** – The

Badley Head London Sydney, Toronto, 1971, p.50

among them: the lowest portion of their trunks that had hardly ever been known to move, were visibly rocked by the fiercer gusts, distressing the mind by its painful unwantedness, as when a strongman is seen to shed tears”¹

Fancy’s state of depression and dissatisfaction is well known and psychologically true to life and is echoed in the inclemency of weather. **Chance** is again malign, presenting her with the well groomed Vicar’s flattering offer, just as she has been disappointed by the sight of the disheveled Dick. The situation of the Vicar, and his doubts about the match are slighter, cruder version of the doubts of Dr. Fitzpiers in **The Woodlanders** about marriage with the cultivated but country born heroine Grace. But Mr. Maybold is a better man than Fitzpiers, Fancy more true to her love than Grace in the end, and the similar situations have very different outcomes.

At last Fancy discovers love to be stronger than vanity. Fancy succumbs to the temptation to marry the vicar on a day, but of course of wedding with Dick comes when the year has turned again, and is preceded by an idyllie picture of May time in the woodlanders. **“When**

1. Under the Greenwood Tree, p.165

the landscape appears embarrassed with the sudden weight and brilliancy of the leaves; when the night far comes and strikes up for the summer his tune of one note when the apple trees have bloomed and the roads and orchard grass become spoiled with fallen petals”¹ The hopeful fecundity of early summer appropriately replaces the cheerful cold of Christmas. The great tree of Yalbury is a little world of family life in itself. After the ceremony, the wedding procession goes **“Now among dark perpendicular firs, like the shafted columns of a cathedral, now through a hazel copse matted with primroses and wild hyacinths; now under broad beeches in bright young leaves”²**

Hardy takes the harmony with nature for granted in **Under the Greenwood Tree**; Dick comes late for his wedding because his bees swarmed and had to be tended to. His instinct is right since swarming bees on wedding day is a good omen. During the spring when nature blends with the community, wedding takes place. The wedding festivities take place in the shade of an ancient tree which is a symbol of fertility.

1. Under the Greenwood Tree, p.193

2. Ibid. p. 204

“Many hundred of birds had been born amidst the boughs this single tree; tribes of rabbits and horses had nibbled at its bark from year to year; quaint tufts of fungi had sprung from the cavities of its fork; and countless families of moles and earthworms had crept about its roots”¹

The educated Fancy showed her ability to make realistic compromises. The novel ends with loud and musical voice of the nightingale, and Fancy, **“thought of a secret she would never tell”²** The nightingale is both twilling her deceptiveness and as the bird of lovers, telling her to be deceptive for the sake of love.

The third novel of Thomas Hardy was **A Pair Blue Eyes** written when the craze for church restoration had just reached the remotest nooks of Western England, **“Where the wild and tragic features of the coast had long combined in perfect harmony with the crude Gothic art of the ecclesiastical buildings scattered along it, throwing into extra – ordinary discord all architectural attempts at newness there”³**

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1. Under the Greenwood Tree, p.204
 2. Ibid, p.271
 3. Thomas Hardy: **A Pair of Blue Eyes**: Surjeet Publications 1988. Preface (Hereinafter References to this book will be given under the title **A Pair of Blue Eyes** only)

In writing **Under the Greenwood**, Hardy learned to use his rural background and his rustic chorus while in writing **A Pair of Blue Eyes**, he handled characters on a large scale. In this novel we came across of pose style that became characteristic of Hardy's tragic mood. The place described in the novel is the, "**region of dream and Mystery. The ghostly birds, the pall like sea, the frothy wind, the eternal soliloquy of water of the bloom of dark purple cast that seems to exhale land to the scene an atmosphere like twilight of a night vision**"¹

A Pair of Blue Eyes is a society novel much was against the genius of Hardy as he was not at ease with this kind. While writing this novel Hardy had in his mind that he was writing for both serial and volume publication. Now at this point he began to think of himself as a fully professional author. It was during the composition of this novel that Hardy abandoned his career as an architect.

Hardy was under the pressure of serialization when he wrote **A Pair of Blue Eyes**, so the novel became, "**a kind of rig rag of information, ideas, descriptive vignettes, personal experience and fragments of the author's brief literary past**"² The major reasons for the failure of **A Pair of Blue Eyes**

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1. **A Pair of Blue Eyes.** p.21
 2. Michael Millgate: **Thomas Hardy: His career as a Novelist.** The Badley Head London Sydney Toronto, 1971. p.67

are equally the source of its interest.

The novel opens with a description of Elfride Swancourt. In her eyes one can see a sublimation of all of her. These eyes were blue, **“blue as autumn distance – blue as the blue we see between the retreating mouldings of hill and woody slopes on a sunny September morning. A misty and shady blue, that had no beginning or surface, and was looked into rather than at”**¹

Stephen Smith coming straight from London is a man with clothes smelling of city smoke, skin sallow from want of sun. But for Elfride he was the man that lurked in her imagination. She could judge that, **“such a face surely could not be nourished amid smoke, and mud, fog and dust”**²

Nearly every chapter of this novel begins with a realistic portrayal of nature against the background of which the character is drawn, thus contributing to the moods of the character. The church which is to be restored is viewed by Stephen Smith as: **“From the window of his room he could see, first, two bold escarpments sloping down together like the escarpments sloping down together like the letter V. Towards the bottom, like liquid in a**

1. **A Pair of Blue Eyes, p.1**
2. **A Pair of Blue Eyes, p.7**

funnel, appeared the sea, gray and small. On the silence of one hills, of rather greater altitude than its neighbour, stood the church which was to be the scene of his operations. Round the church ran a low wall; over topping the wall in general level was the graveyard. Not a tree could exit up there; nothing but the monotonous gray – green grass”¹

The Court of King Arthur’s Castle, the secrets of which is revealed when from her purse, “the bits of paper floated into the air like a flock of white birds”². In her mixture of intellectual precocity, emotional immaturity and unpractical idealism, she also anticipates sue bride head. In this novel we trace the change in her personality from her immature love for Stephen over whom she takes pleasure in exercising her sexual power, to her pathetic subjection to knight’s inflexible demands upon her.

The game of chess is introduced in the novel on an image of battle ground of sexual contest and will help in the further development in the novel. Stephen Smith learnt playing chess from a book lent to him by Mr. Knight, who

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1. A Pair of Blue Eyes, p.15
 2. A Pair of Blue Eyes, p.27

according to Smith was the noblest man in the world. The game offers Stephen an opportunity to express his love for Elfride.

Smith, who describes himself as ‘a rural builder’s son’ has a crushing sense of social inferiority. He has his way to make in the world without the advantage of wealth, education or connections. He loved Elfride, the daughter of a snobbish clergyman with aristocratic connections, we have once again the theme of **The Poor Man and the Lady**.

Stephen and Elfride decide to wed secretly to ensure that no one can ever separate them, Elfride mental state is expressed through Nature, **A green field spread itself on each side of the hedge, one belonging to the glebe, the other being a part of the land attached to the manor house adjoining”¹**

The secret journey of Elfride’s with Stephen to London makes Elfride customary vacillating and seized with misgiving they return unmarried to Cornwall, and Stephen leaves to go to India as an architect. **“On such a slender thread hangs the complication of the novel, as with Desdemona’s handkerchief; for, when Elfride later meets. Henry knight**

1. **A Pair of Blue Eyes**, p.84

Stephen's mentor, a cultured intellectual, he is particularly charmed with the innocence of Elfride"¹

The first time when Henry Knight beholds Elfride is expressed by Hardy in terms of nature.

"Knight could not help looking at her. The sun was within ten degrees of the horizon, and its warm light flooded her face and heightened the bright rose colour of her cheeks to a vermilion red, their moderate pink hue being only seen in its natural tone where the cheek, curved round into shadow. The ends of her hanging hair softly dragged themselves backwards and forwards upon her shoulder, as each faint breeze thrust against or relinquished it. Fringes and ribbons of her dress, moved by the same breeze, licked like tongues upon the parts around them, and fluttering forward from shady folds caught likewise their share of the lustrous orange glow"² A most remarkable scene in the novel brings out

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1. Richard Carpenter: **Thomas Hardy**, St. Martins Press, New York. 1964.
p.49
 2. **A Pair of Blue Eyes**, p.127

another side of her character and also present in dramatic form a basic theme of Hardy's writing. Knight had accompanied Elfride to the top of a huge coastal cliff which is the bizarre, highly improbably and weightily symbolic incident. Elfride's intention was to watch the ship bringing Stephen home to Cornwall. Trying to retrieve his hat, which was blown from his head. Knight finds himself unable to reascend the slippery slope. Cliff personality is described by Hardy.

“It's with Cliffs and mountains, as with persons; they have what is called a presence, which is not necessarily proportionate to their actual bulk: A little cliff will impress you powerfully; a great one not at all. It depends, as with man, upon the countenance of the cliff”¹

Elfride is unable to reach knight clanged to the ground and some bushes a hair breadth from death. When Elfride disappears from his view, this intellectual is left face to face with terrible reality. He could see the surface of the sea which was coloured according to his mood in a black vision. A white

1. **A Pair of Blue Eyes**, p.127

border to a black sea his funeral pall and its edging.

The nature was pitiless having only two voices. The nearer was the voice of the wind and the distant one was the moan of the unplummeted ocean below and a far – rubbing its restless flanks against the Cliff without a Name.

At this moment of experience knight's faith in Elfride was like a flower which will rootles sly live on. Time closed up like a fan before him. This powerful scene turns into melodrama very shortly, when Elfride reappears with a rope made from her under clothes and manages to save him. Knight comes to love even more when this girl has sacrificed her maiden modesty, albeit offstage, to save his life with her quick thinking symbolically knight's pride of intellect and his assumed position in life, has been suddenly stripped from him. He is spitted upon a rock, tormented by a driving rain that blows upward along the cliff, as sharp as one eagle's bear. Man's fragility and ephemerality are existentially brought before him as he stares at the fossil which unwinkilgly stares back.

Elfride's attraction towards a superior mind, her hesitation to confess her past conduct, knight's obsession with purity, the essential coldness of his adherence to principle – are the parallels with the novel Tess. Like Angel Clare, Henry knight, that only a girl who has never been loved by another can be the one for him.

The symbolic implication of the tower is understood when Elfride told Henry that the tower was her hope but it was meant for restoration. So it was moved and came down.

It is Elfride's misfortune, like that of later Hardy heroines to be filled by all the men on whom she depends. Neither Stephen nor knight, in fact, wants Elfride for herself.

Stephen, a queen knight is like a maiden of Spotless purity. The one man who is portrayed as wanting Elfride is Lord Luxellian, **“a manly, open and genuine look of administration”**. But he cannot give her the kind of intellectual companionship which she also needs. He is also associated with sickness and death throughout the novel. In the sense Elfride's death was a moral and aesthetic necessity. The novel ends with a scene in the Luxillian burial vault,

with Stephen and Knight willing Lord Luxellian weeping over Elfride's Coffin, **“the three men be loved but never understood her Ariel Spirit”**.

From the beginning, of his career, Hardy was interested in depicting the scenes of nature with his poetic imagination. His designs to protect nature according to human moods were also apparent. Actually he wanted to create the scenes of nature according to the designs of Fate lurking around his characters, smile and frowns of nature are frequently interwoven in the sea time of his narration so as to decide the Fate of his central characters. His superior poetic imagination in arresting the beauty of nature is descrambled at every next step in the course of his narration. Glooms of nature go on thickening with the advancement of Hardy's career in fiction writing.

To Hardy the earth and its eternal expression, Nature are the permanent background against which man lives his brief life of pleasure and pain, and passes away making room for his successors. So long as he lives and moves among objects of Nature, it interprets him Hardy is suitably enshrined as a great writer, albeit no longer a popular one, as masterful reporter of the rural scenes: as a skillful creators of a host of interesting characters and above all as deep thinker if he is great, he is sure to be problematic showing new sides to new

generations, demanding that we wrestle with him as with as with an angel and take a few fall before we realize what sort of man he was. The conflict between the classes, the shifting economic and social patterns caused by the replacement of “stationary cottagers”, by migratory labourers and the introduction of machinery, as well as the problem brought about a restrictive code of social ethics and propriety, all these are reiterative themes in the writings of Hardy. Let us mark the words of Duffin thus: **“To call any one of the Hardy’s novels except Desperate Remedies the work of an apprentice seems presumptuous.**

Hardy was in a way, interested to produce masterpieces. So the first three novels are the preparatory one. Like most young writers, Hardy found it too difficult to break into print and was anxious to do anything to get his early poems published, he turned to fiction”¹

Hardy followed the advice of George Meredith, reader for Chapman and Hall, who refused to publish, the poor man and the Lady. Hardy was praised for the naturalness and warmth of the rustic scene and critics noted the description of scenic and atmospheric effect. **Desperate Remedies** gives us the fresh glimpses of Nature to explore the deep feelings of the characters. The beauty of Cytherea’s hair is described by Hardy as **“resting gaily upon her shoulders in the curls and were of shinning corn yellow colour”²**

The first half of the novel is clogged with epigrams, presumably intended to inspire confidence in the anonymous author’s breadth of worldly experience and seems Gothic in the gloomy ruin in the light and dark imagery. Hardy tries to expose the concealed relationship between the characters at an early stage in his novels. The best example of it is that Miss Aldclyffe’s first

1. H.C. Duffin: Thomas Hardy, Doaba House, Delhi, 1993. p.1

2. Desperate Remedies. p.8

name Cytherea not only links her directly with Cytherea Graye but hints at the fact that she is the mother of Aeneas Manston. Hardy pays a good deal of attention to the establishment of characterization, setting and social context. Hardy keeps the novel firmly focused on Cytherea, being, at the centre of the sensational novel. Her innocence and powerlessness claims the attention of the readers.

A responsive love for Edward Spring rove has made its appearance in Cytherea's bosom with all the fascinating attributes of first experience, not succeeding to or displacing other emotions, as in older hearts, but taking up entirely new ground, **“as when grazing first after sunset at the pole blue sky we see a star come into existence where nothing was before”**¹

Cytherea's mental state is expressed by Hardy in terms of nature when she moves to work as a maid at Miss Aldelyfee's Knapwater House. The house is remarkable for the sounds. One of them is the sound of the waterfall,

1. Desperate Remedies, p.34

which is heard in every room of the house, night or day, ill or well. The intrusion of the machines in the nature shown – through the horrid voice of pumping engine whose, **“whistling creak of cranks, repeated at intervals of half a minute, with a sousing noise between each a creak a spouse, then another creak, and so on continually.”**¹ Setting herself in a comfortable room she sat down by the open window and looked down upon the brilliant pattern of colours formed by the flower beds on the lawn richly crowded with late summer blossom. **“But the vivacity of spirit which had hitherto enlivened her was fast ebbing under the pressure of prosaic realities, and the warm scarlet of the geraniums, glowing most conspicuously, and mingling with the vivid cold red and green of the verbenas, the rich depth of the dahlia, and the ripe mellowness of the calceolaria, backed by the pale hue of a flock of mock sheep feeding in the open park”**² Nature created in her a pursuit for freedom,

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1. Desperate Remedies p.66
 2. Ibid. p.71

for outdoor employment, to sleep under trees or a hut and know no enemy but winter and cold weather, like shepherds and cow keepers, and birds and animals like the sheep, she saw under her window.

The abode of Miss Aldelyffe was like as imprisonment for Cytherea. She perceives the external world and the life beyond the knap water house. She, is not interested in the life of servitude and dependence but a free life in the lap of Nature. Winter here is a perfect image representing the cruelty of nature.

“The thunder, lightening and rain had now increased to a terrific force. The clouds, from which darts, forks, zigzags, and balls of fire continually sprang, did not appear to be more than a hundred yard above their heads”¹ The image of heat in its extended form is there in this scene and has its own importance in the development of novel. It reveals to us the arrival of Mrs. Manston, her taking refuge in the Three Tantern Inn and people believing that she is dead. This fire which has destroyed Mrs. Manston in symbolic of the destruction that is going to take place in the life of the characters. The only person who was selfishly and inhumanly but honestly

1. Desperate Remedies p.153

thankful for the recent catastrophe was Manston. This incident gives him way to woo Cytherea.

The suffering and illness of Queen makes Cytherea sad and depressing: **“The ordinary sadness of an autumnal evening service seemed in Cytheree’s eyes. She looked at all people as they stood and sang, warring backwards and forward like a forest of pine swayed by a gentle Breeze”¹**

Everything in the place was one embodiment of decay: the fading red glare from the setting sun, which came in at the west window, emphasizing the end of the day and all its cheerful doings, the mildewed walls, the uneven paving stones, the wormy pews, the sense of recent occupation and the dark, air of death which had gathered with the evening, would have made grave a lingerer mood than Cytherea was then. All these circumstances compel Cytherea, to marry Mansten on account of her brother’s wish.

Under this stress Cytherea falls asleep but it was a troubled sleep, she could not imagine her wedding to take place when Nature has grown fierce. The wind blew stronger with the breaking off and fall of a branch. The picture of Nature at this stage is a reminiscence of Gothic when she dreams that.

1. Desperate Remedies. p.259

“She was being whipped with dry bones suspended on strings, which rattled at every blow like those of an malefactor, on a gibbet..... She shifted and shrank and avoided every blow. She could not see the face of her executioner for his mask, but this form was like Manston’s.”¹

After marrying Manston Cytherea is still not at peace with herself. She behaves innocently like a stolen pet. The discovery that Mrs. Manston is still alive makes Cytherea hysterical Cytherea is saved only by a series of dramatic intervention and the revelation of Manston as the murderer of his first wife. Cytherea is presented as **“as protagonist of that more realistic exploration of the personal predicament of a vulnerable young women which is the novel’s other major aspect”²**

It would be wrong to try to make of **Desperate Remedies** was a false start Hardy realized this defect very soon in his second novel **Under the**

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1. Desperate Remedies. p.94
 2. Michael Millgate, Thomas Hardy: The Badley Head London, Sydney, Toironto. 1971.p.32

Green Wood Tree where he provides rustic scenes strung on a slender story of Arcadian passion. **Under The Green Wood Tree** was published in 1872, although it deals with a slightly earlier period, that of Hardy's own youth. It was a success, although not a best-seller, and is unique among Hardy's novels, in that he writes entirely within his proper range, his personal inspiration never flagging. From this point of view, despite obvious limitations craftsmanship, range and profundity, it is the most satisfying of all his books. Its key-note is rural charm and its appeal perennial. **"Under the Green Wood Tree can be read as a pastoral comedy. The fragility and deftness of its art gives evidence enough to refute those who consider Hardy a clumsy bucolic genius."**¹

His original title **The Mellstock Quire** refers to the novels account of the villager's old fashioned instruments choir and its dissolution. The insertion of the phrase from the song in Shakespeare's pastoral comedy **Much Ado About Nothing** – making the title **Under the Greenwood Tree** or the Mellstock Quire – calls attention not only to the love story but also to the

1. Robert Langhaum: Thomas Hardy in Our Time. St. Martins Press. p.70

artfulness of the novel.

The setting of **Under the Green Wood Tree** is so much the most vital aspect of the book, that the whole work might almost be described as a lyric poem of Dorsetshire country. Hardy was brought up here and Mellstock in his own native village. In Mellstock, the Tranters collage is the Hardy family's own home: **“a long low cottage with a hipped roof of thatch, having dormer windows breaking up into the caves, a chimney standing in the middle of the ridge and another to each end”**¹ Hardy gives the details of the garden trees and plants, and the creepers beat an back from the worm doorway, and he is obviously painting from life. Hardy has limited himself to the tale of Mellstock Quire and its problems along with the romance of Fancy Day and Dick Dewy. But we see that the principle focus is on the folk characters of the choir and their quaint ways. The part of the story concerning the choir shows particularly well his interest in love of the good old customs of the country side, his

1. Under the Greenwood Tree, p.7

consciousness of the changes going on in his life time, and his regret for the passing of the best in the old order. This is the theme which he stresses in his preface and which is worked out chiefly through the action, when the new vicar replaces the instrumentalists with an organ. Hardy focuses on the folk characters of choir and their quaint ways. He builds the rustic group line by line consisting of old grandfather William Dewy, his son Reuben, the Tranter, Dick Dewy, Michael Mail, Robert Penny, Elias Spink and Joseph Bowman and not otherwise important Thomas leaf. This choir group has a sort of collective mind and appears to use the first fully developed rustic group in Hardy's novels. We see them going round at Christmas, caroling to the neighbours, in the Church at the Tranter's house and finally to the Vicar house.

They discuss the subject themselves

so showing their consciousness of the dangers in organs. Their references are for art, music and dance showing the continuity of their community. We see the chair against their home backgrounds, drinking cider by blazing fire side, singing carols, enjoying Christmas party and dancing at a wedding. Above all,

the country side itself is described with loving and careful observation. Although the interaction of nature and humanity is not here developed to the point of depth and subtly which Hardy later achieved, the changing seasons provide the book with a formal structure which it would otherwise lack, and lend their atmosphere to the events of the plot.

Fancy is also presented as a self centered and capricious as were the later heroines. She permits her father to encourage Farmer Shiner. She tells Reverend May bold that she will marry him perhaps as much because he carries an umbrella and promises her a “pony carriage, flowers, birds”. We can see the hints of the dilemmas of Bathsheba and Eustacia because of her conflicting desires to be true to Dick and to be the wife of Vicar. Fancy is the link between the problem of replacing the choir and the romantic interest. Her situation is paradigmatic because he is loved by men of differing social stations.

Fancy Day and her friend Susan Dewy were pulling down a bough laden with early apples. There was a cloud on Fancy’s horizon now. Finding Dick coming forward she made a confession regarding her giving way to Mr. Shiner.

Autumn comes, and more difficulties come against a background of netting and honey making. Fancy’s personal vanity leads here to

the first autumn trouble and to a real crisis in her relationship with Dick. Dick calls Fancy for nothing but she is busy on altering a blue dress which she wants to wear on Sunday to church at her home. Dick wants for a long time but she goes on sewing. She admits that she waits to look nice for the young men of long puddle even in Dick's absence. He was angry at the vanity of Fancy and goes off nutting by himself very vigorously. He worked like a galley slave. Dress thus becomes an important issue in this novel suggesting moral superiority but rough appearance of villagers suggest their good heartedness.

Hardy's novel **A Pair of Blue Eyes** is in an unfinished form, appearing raw, the novel presents and insight into Hardy's imaginative process at this early step of his career displaying wide range of techniques, some of them developed in later novels, others not to be found elsewhere in Hardy's work.

The distinctive feature of this novel is that out of simple materials there has been evolved a result of really tragic power. The whole centres round the figure of Elfride, bred in the solitude of the West Country, the motherless and only daughter of a Cornish vicar; and the tragedy consists in the operation of quite ordinary events upon her sensitive and conscious but perfectly simple nature. Hardy has in this novel developed, with something of the ruthlessness of

George Eliot, what may be called the tragedy of circumstances, the power of mere events on certain kinds of character. By mere events we mean a sequence in the evolution of which no moral obliquity, no deliberate viciousness of choice, can be said to have had a share. For this another point of merit in Mr. Hardy's book, that he has kept up interest throughout in an unusual high degree, not only without a single crime or a single villain, but with men of honest hearts and high aims for the pillars of his story.

Luxellians who are going to play an important part in the later novel are described carefully in the beginning of the story amid nature when two men, sitting in a god-cart are moved along with the teeth of the wind. Amid the opening in the elms stretching up from fertile valley revealed a mansion known as Endelstow House of Lord Luxellian.

Hardy's interest in tracing the ancestry is revealed here when we see Mr. Swan Court tracing the history and origin of Stephen Smith. This idea of knowing about the forefathers and the origin of a family with thing of great interest to Hardy and is later developed on a large scale in Tess.

The novel, **A Pair of Blue Eyes** opens in a manner which, strongly recalls a turning point in the author's own life. He had gone down to St. Juliot, Cornwall, in 1870 on architectural business, and had there met Emma Gifford. Here also Stephen Smith meets Elfride under precisely similar circumstances. **“Elfride is Fancy day writ large a heroine who not only contemplates the desertion of her naive and youthful lover for a man of a greater intellectual powers and higher social status, but actually goes ahead with it”¹**

Mr. Swancourt proposed a drive to the cliffs beyond Targon Bay, a distance of three or four miles and Stephen's task was to take care of the earrings worn by Elfride. Stephen appears, **“dull as a flower without the sun”²** Stephen expresses his gratitude for manly knight, an older man who writes for the reviews and has assisted him with his programme for self education. Elfride on hearing the praise for the knight is jealous of him. She wants to rule his heart with absolute despotism.

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1. Normal Page; Thomas Hardy: Routledge Kegan Paul London & New York. p.95
 2. A Pair of Blue Eyes P.59

The earring which was to be taken care of missed and created problems for Elfride and Stephen. He goes in search of the earring. **“He strode away up the valley, under a broiling sun and amid the death like silence of early afternoon. He ascended with giddy paced haste, the windy range of rocks to where they had set, felt and peered about the stones and crannies, but Elfride’s stray level was nowhere to be seen”**¹

This fruitless search ends into the discovery of a cottage, between the fence and the stream, on a slightly elevated spot of ground, which the river took a turn. The characteristic feature of this snug habitation was its one chimney in the gable end, its squareness of form disguised by a huge cloak of ivy, **“which had grown so luxuriantly and extended so far from its base as to increase the apartment bulk of the chimney to the dimensions of tower. Some little distance from the back of the house rose the park boundary, and over this were to be seen the sycamore of the grove, making slow inclinations to the just awakening air”**²

1. A Pair of Blue Eyes. p.51

2. A Pair of Blue Eyes. p.84

Stephen's visit is sufficiently prolonged for him to romance and become engaged to Elfride; but her father, the reverent Christopher Swancourt, is a man of deep seated social prejudice whose hobby is genealogy. When it is finally revealed that Stephen is not a "gentleman" but the son of a master mason of the neighbourhood much worse naturally, than being the son of a master mason in distant parts – Mr. Swancourt refuses to countenance the marriage.

Elfride started her journey for Plymouth on one of the brightest morning of late summer. The weather was at its purples, the furze at its yellowest, the grass hoppers chirped loud enough for birds, the snake hissed like little engines, and Elfride at first felt lively. Nature corresponds to her feelings with which she is going to Plymouth.

She could not even wait for the pony to drink water. **"She was impatient it seemed as if Pansy would never stop drinking, and the repose of the pool, the idle notions of the insects and flies upon it, the placid waving of the flags, the leaf skeletons, like Genoese filigree, placidly sleeping at the bottom, by their contrast with her own turmoil made her impatience greater"**¹

Hardy's use of coincidence is the ill luck which seems to dog his protagonists Hardy used circumstantial accidents more impressively to show how trivial events may have far reaching effects upon human existence. Stephen's failure to realize that a marriage license obtained in London cannot be

1. A Pair of Blue Eyes. p.56

used in Plymouth. It changes the course of several lives. Elfride's journey to London with Stephen in the railway carriage is described by Hardy.

“The few battered clouds of the morning enlarged and united, the sun withdrew behind them to emerge no more that day, and the evening came to a close in drifts of rain. The water drops beat like duck shot against the window of the railway carriage containing Stephen and Elfride”¹

Misery enters with the realization of Elfride's past by Henry Knight who demanded honesty from Elfride. He took Elfride to the cliff on horse for Elfride to express her tender heatedness. She becomes a terror-stricken bird sitting on the horse back, like a sea-bird upon a sea wave.

At the denial of Henry that land and sky seem to suffer for Elfride. More nearly unique in Hardy's work, though perhaps with never before in the presentation for Farfrae and Henchard in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, is the handling of the Smith – Knight Relationship. Hardy's designs to protect nature according to the designs of Fate lurking around his characters, smile and frowns of nature are frequently interwoven in the tea time

1. Ibid. p.88

of his narration so as to decide the Fate of his central characters. His superior poetic imagination in arresting the beauty of nature is descramble at every next step in the course of his narration. What he began in his early novels was perfected in his mature novels, where the designs of nature became more effective. Glooms of nature go on thickening with the advancement of Hardy's career in fiction writing.

NATURE IN MINOR NOVELS

Hardy is not like any other novelist, and in no respect is he more important than in this: that he is a novelist born not made. His genius is observant, truthful, humorous, and at once masculine and shy. He has a telling instinct for the value of sex; his heroines are profoundly feminine; his heroes thoroughly, and at times comically, masculine. His shyness, connected as it is with an almost morbid keenness of observation, imparts to his humour a peculiarly delicate and delightful aroma; he never misses the comic aspect of a situation or episode, and yet he never enforces it by a coarse or unsympathetic touch; the light falls gently and sweetly upon it, and passes on.

This story is not Hardy's best, but it has much of his best work in it, and the subject is one calculated to show the author in his happiest light. The period when the **The Trumpet Major** was written was a period of creative writing regarded as a time adequate for the abnormal activity that was to come. Thus it is one of the most light hearted novel of Thomas Hardy. Let us mark the word of thus –

“Hardy's only full dress excursion into historical fiction creates in the reader much the same feeling of bucolic serenity as does the story of Mellstock. Quire, rather strangely so because the ostensible occasion of the novel is the much feared prospect of a Napoleonic invasion of the Wessex coast”¹

1. Richard Charpenter: **Thomas Hardy**: St Martin's Press, New York, p.106

The Trumpet Major is a historical novel and a love story, set in Hardy's favourite period of history that of the Napoleonic Wars, and in the Dorset Coastal area in which daily life is interrupted by the call to arms, and love and courtship proceed under the daily threat of invasion and conquest. Hardy's youthful imagination had been fired by stories of the Napoleonic era. Indeed the sources of **The Trumpet Major and The Dynast**y lay for back in the stories of the invasion scare in Dorset with which his paternal grand mother Mary Head, Hardy had regaled the family. The oral record of that exciting time formed part of what the novel calls, "**the unwritten history of England**"¹. Material for the composition of the novel was assembled not only in the British Museum but also in the houses, lanes and fields of Dorset, "**collected from old people still living or recently deceased**"², as Hardy informed the Royal Librarian in 1880, in fictionalizing the scenes of war preparation. Hardy in his poem, "**One We knew**", dedicated to his grandmother, Hardy affectionately recalled her stories.

"She told of that far back day
When they learnt astounded
Of the death of, the king of France:
Of The terror; and then Bonaparte's unbounded."

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1. Norman Page: **Thomas Hardy**, Routledge & Kegan Paul, p.27
 2. Thomas Hardy: **The Trumpet Major**, Penguin Classics, p.67

(Hereinafter References to this book will be given)

**Ambition an arrogance.
Of how his threats woke war like preparations
Along the Southern Strand,
And how each night brought
tremors and trepidations
Lest morning should see him land”¹**

Hardy’s deepest imaginative investment is the conjuring up of the invasion scare, but the novel does bear traces of characteristic effects and devices in its handling of relationships. Anne Garland, significantly deprived of a protective father and provided with a girlishly irresponsible mother, is, in the originating movement of the novel, sitting at a window of the mill house working at a hearth rug. Looking out from the open casement towards the mill pond and the bare downland beyond, the heroine is surprised by the sudden arrival of two cavalry soldiers, followed by **“a whole column of cavalry marching order”²** arriving, as soon becomes clear to camp on the downs. Later in her observation of the **“panoramic procession of the troops wheeling off on parade”³**. It is a moment which inscribes the status and role of the heroine as a girl deprived of **“thriving male relatives”⁴**, simultaneously drawn towards and

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1. Thomas Hardy’s: Poem – **One we knew**
 2. A Trumpet Major, p.62
 3. Ibid, p.76
 4. Ibid, p.113

withdrawing **‘prim and stiff’**¹ from, the events outside. The arrival of the troops was, **“on the fine summer morning, when leaves were warm under the sun and the more industrious bees abroad, diving into every blue and red cup that would possibly be considered a flower. The large, smooth mill pond with water, with its flowing leaves and spots of forth was stealing away like Time, under the dark arch, to tumble over the great slimy wheel within.”**²

Anne Garland is wooed by John Love day who has arrived with the soldiers to Overcome. He is the son of the Miller who gives a party on the arrival of John. John is a trumpet major and a musician. In the party we also came across Festus Derriman of Oxwell Hall which is described by the novelist in terms of nature and rural background.

“At first looked like a neglected meadow, being a rotten one, without a bottom rail. The dry bard mud of the opening was marked with several horse and cow tracks. Beyond this geological record appeared a carriage road nearly grown over with grass.”³

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1. A Trumpet Major, p.77
 2. Ibid. p.61
 3. A Trumpet Major, p.95

Festus Derriman is the nephew of Benjamin Derriman, a man of twenty three with a naturally divided disposition into two—the boastful and the cantankerous. He is also attracted towards Anne in the party.

Education makes Anne and her mother again important as at that time in the history of Overcombe one solitary newspaper occasionally found its way into the village to Mr. Derriman at the Hall. Mrs. Garland was the assigned lady to read it aloud old Mr. Derriman. One day Anne took charge of reading the newspaper and was followed by Festus on her way back. Anne took refuge in Nature in order to escape from Festus. She took a long route from the fields in a different direction to escape like a ‘dove’.

Anne was so flurried by the military incidents attending her return home that she was almost afraid to venture alone, outside her mother’s premises. Anne had not the slightest wish to throw her heart away upon a soldier, turned, **“into the inner garden from day to day, and passed a good many hours there, the pleasant birds singing to her, and the delightful butterflies alighted on her hat and the horrid ants running up her stocking.”**¹

1. A Trumpet Major, p.130

The life of the villagers is disturbed by the news of the passing of the king from the village. Anne, Mrs. Garland, John Loveday and Miller plan to see the king where Mrs. Garland and Miller Loveday took no heed of the time, **“and what it was bringing to earth and sky, so occupied were they with themselves; but Anne in her place and the trumpet major in his, each in private thought of no bright kind, watched the glory of the east through all its tones and changes. The world of birds and insects got lively, the blue and the yellow and the gold of Loveday’s uniform again became distinct; the sun bored its way upward, the fields the trees and the distant landscape kindled to flame, and the trumpet major, backed by a lilac shadow as tall as a steeple, blazed in the rays like a very good of war.”**¹

The entire description is about the passing of night and approaching day light, the third suitor of Anne, Bob Loveday a sailor has finally decided to renounce the marine life and take the charge of the mill. He came at Overcombe for his marriage with Maltida Johnson. Maltida being alien to the village life, is unable to appreciate Nature. She was unable to express much about the glory

1. A Trumpet Major, p.130

of the hill, the shimmer of the foliage or of the wealth of the glory of the sea.

She took interest in social matters and theatres.

The marriage ceremony is cancelled because of the elopement of Maltida but Mrs. Garland and Miller Loveday are united in the wedding lock so that the effect of the calamity is lessened. Bob Loveday gave up the thought of Maltida and advanced towards Anne. He made an Aeolian harp of large size of her. Every night during the mournful gales of autumn, the strange mixed music of water and wind and stringmet her ear, swelling and sinking with an almost supernatural cadence. The harp was invented on the request of John who was very musical. The harp shows the musical inclination of Hardy in the novel.

Festus also expresses his love for Anne and very soon after this there is an alarm showing that the French have landed. Festus informed the group that the report of invasion was wrong, upon which all believed accidentally, Anne was left all alone in a cottage and finally traced by Festus. She ran on the horse of Festus leaving him behind and was saved by John Loveday. The incidents with Festus were enough to have malice in his heart for Bobe Loveday and John Loveday.

Maltida and Festus arrange a conspiracy against Bob. They informed the press about Bob. Bob runs to save his life and is found by Anne in the Lap of Nature safe and protected. Bob recovers very soon in twenty four hours. He reviews his position as a patriot. He grew weak because of the influence of Anne and her beauty. Finally he decides to go on his duty considering sea as his home. He realizes that he had caused great misery to his brother John by making advancements with Anne. Therefore, he decides to go to his previous job leaving Anne for John.

But Bob's departure made Anne's existence on the land negligible. She dreamt of sea and thought that she belonged to sea. Every moment of the wind was under her observation. She acquired knowledge of the directions and places. For her the ship containing Bob was 'a floating city'.

At last she is able to gather love in the form of Bob when he returns finally to assist his father in the mill. Hardy has successfully presented the contrast between the idealized devotion of John Loveday and the different kinds of sexuality represented by Bob and Festus. No doubt Ragger Ebbatson is right in remarking the novel having **“a vein of tragedy running through it the**

unhappiness and despair of unrequited love.”¹ Hardy knew well the rural tradition in which he has set his novel and he has presented an affectionate picture of a small community set ablaze by the threat of Napoleon.

Hardy wrote **Two On a tower** after he had recovered from his illness. He and Emma began looking for a permanent home outside London and moved into a house in the small east Dorset town of Windborne. Before he wrote this novel he visited Green-witch observatory. Although this book is one of the least important work's of Hardy, but we can consider it perhaps the best of all the lesser ones. It lacks the perfection of form of **Under the Greenwood Tree**, but it has full Hardian qualities in much greater variety and an artistic excellence providing a constant delight.

The preface shows that Hardy considered man's place in the spatial universe in **Two on a Tower**, “**Hardy chose the title Two on a Tower off hand and subsequently disliked it. Yet it does emphasize both the importance of the tower itself, that claustrophobic vestibule of space, and the persistent concentration on the two central characters.**”²

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1. The Trumpet Major, p.143
 2. Norman Page: T. Hardy, p.111

Lady Constantine is the Lady of the manner and inhabits the Great House; she is unhappily married to a husband who has illuded her and has set off to hunt lions in Africa, having first made her promise not to go into society during his absence. When the novel opens she is, **“like a Tennysonian high born lady, consumed by an almost killing ennui,”**¹ which contrasts with the ardently questing intellect of Swithin. Living in the heart of the country, she is nevertheless completely detached from rural society and indifferent to its occupation and pleasure.

Swithin pursues his astronomical activities in an old tower on her land. The topography of **Two on a Tower** is extremely, almost allegorically simple; but its few land marks have suggestive overtones. Nearly all the events of the story occur at the tower or at the Great House, from which it is visible. The description of the hill and the tower with its sighing, Hardian tress below built up an impression of isolation and of loneliness.

“It had been built in the Tuscan order of classic architecture, and was really a tower, being hollow with steps inside. The gloom and solitude which prevailed around the base were remarkable. The sob of the environing tress were here expressively manifest and moved by the light breeze, their thin stems rocked in seconds, like inverted pendulums, while some boughs and twigs rubbed the pillar side.”²

1. Michael Millgate: T. Hardy His Career as a Novelist, p. 183

2. Two on a Tower, p.3

The drama of these two socially unequal characters is played out against a background both of the course of human history, which links the life and emotions of prehistoric man with those of his late Victorian descendant and of the immensities of space revealed by the telescope.

At the first encounter between the languid lady Constantine and the young astronomer Swithin, the essential conditions of their relationships are immediately established.

“What do you see-something happening somewhere?” Yes, quite a catastrophe! he automatically murmured without moving round. ‘What?’ ‘A cyclone in the sun’ the lady paused as it to consider the weight of that event in the scale of terrene life. ‘Will it make any difference to us here?’ she asked”.¹

This is the fundamental opposition: Swithin’s mind is focused on higher things, often too the detriment of human feelings and loyalties; Lady Constantine’s concerns are earthly; but she proves capable of transcendent self-sacrifice. Swithin, says Hardy, **“was a scientist and took works literally, there is something in the inexorably simple logic of such men which partakes of the cruelty of the Natural Laws that are their study.”**²

1. Two on a Tower, p.7.

2. Ibid, p.312

Lady Constantine, as we see is also undergoing the same process of building a new nest. The possibility of that young astronomer becoming a renowned scientist by her aid was a thought which gave her secret pleasure. The same image of building and mending the nest is continued when Swithin asked Lady Constantine about the glass, to which she replied, **“perhaps it was dropped from the clouds by a bird”**.¹ Swithin in return desires Lady constantine to be a friend by kindred pursuits.

The natural landscape prepares the reader for the calamity caused by the forces of nature on Swithin. The discovery made by Swithin was announced forestalled by an American astronomer by a period of about six weeks. He fell asleep out of sheer misery and weariness. His feelings of dismag and weariness were intensified by Nature –

“The March rain pelted him mercilessly, the beaded moisture from the heavily charged locks of health penetrated him through back and sides, and clotted his hair to unsightly tags and tufts.”²

This exposure made Swithin delirious from the chill. The severe blow of cold made Swithin ill and Lady Constantine reached his house, she could perceive illness all around in the nature by the eight watered dying plants, in

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1. Two On a Tower, p.49
 2. Ibid, p.75

the row of eight flower pots, denoting that something was wrong in the house.

This sorrow will not last longer in the life of Swithin and Lady Constantine. The Clouds of misfortune and misery shed as soon as Swithin comes to know about a comet. Hardy used nature to describe the vitality of Swithin at this moment:

“The Strenuous wish to live and behold the new phenomenon, supplanting the utter weariness of existence that he had here to fore experienced, gave him a new vitality. The crisis passed; there was a turn for the better; and after that he rapidly mended. The comet had in all probabilities saved his life. The limitless and complex wonders of the sky resumed their old power over his imagination; the possibilities of that unfathomable blue ocean were endless.”¹

The comet was like splendid marvel for Swithin. The news of Sir Blunt’s death frees Vivette from the bonds she was in, leaving her free to court Swithin. Swithin overhears the conversation of the rustic characters and realizes that in thinking of the heaven above he did not perceive the Earth beneath. He could not realize the flood of passion within him for Vivette after overhearing the villagers.

1. Two On a Tower, p.80

Swithin expresses his love in the celestial terms:

“Your eyes are to be my stars for the future”¹

He has been drawn from a celestial study to the study of Lady Constantine. He was now no longer a match for this celestial material. **“Scientifically he had become but a dim vapour of himself; the lover had come into him like an armed man, and cost out the student, and his intellectual situation was growing a life and death matter”².**

As soon as they decide to marry Hardy introduces Swithin’s state of mind reflected in the natural objects. He could behold the day as one of the most beautiful day. This happiness in the lives of the two characters is a welcoming news in the novel. But Hardy also introduces two more characters with this news. One is the brother of Lady Constantine and the other is the dead uncle of Swithin.

Lady Constantine and Swithin marry in secret, somewhat implausibly continuing to live apart until Swithin has made his name and his fortune. Hardy also introduced a new character, the Bishop of Melchester, who-not realizing of course, that she is already married-becomes a suitor for Lady Constantine’s hand. There’s one more revelations that her first husband is indeed dead but that, owing to a misunderstanding, his death was originally reported as

1. Two On a Tower, p.106

2. Ibid. p.111

having taken place earlier than was in fact the case; she is, therefore, not legally married Swithin, concerning whose legacy, and the condition attached to it, she was meanwhile attached. Hardy describes Lady Constantine after leaving Swithin with his career trying to save her situation.

“In her walk home, pervaded by these hopeless views, she passed here, the dark and deserted tower. Night in that solitary place, which would have caused her some uneasiness in her years of blitheness, had no terrors for her now. She went up the winding path and the door being unlocked, felt her way to the top. The open sky greeted her as in times previous to me and to the equatorial period; but there was not a star to suggest her in which direction Swithin has gone.”¹

The circumstances of Lady Constantine forced her to marry, the Bishop who also dies after some time. Swithin comes to know about the marriage of Lady Constantine, her becoming mother and then the death of the Bishop. He returns intending to marry her. Lady Constantine dies of shock in his arms leaving her son behind.

The action of the second half of the novel is a huddle of surprises, reserves and improbabilities. Hardy, has also tried to show the inner tensions and perplexities of Lady Constantine who stands contrasted to Swithin in terms not only of age but of physical and intellectual type. Not only the two characters are

1. Two On a Tower, p.281

contrasted but deliberate and almost diagrammatic manipulation of this kind extends to the handling of setting and the grouping of characters.

The novel thus neatly sustains its pattern of contrast. Moreover Hardy in this novel touches some themes which will dominate the scenes of his later novels e.g. the nature of true marriage, and its relationships to the religious ceremony and the legal contract which ensures its social acceptance.

The Hand of Ethelberta was written with an effort to write a social satire on the upper class. Hardy wrote this novel in order to assert his individuality and to avoid being typed as of the school of George Eliot. The novel is subtitled **A Comedy in Chapter** but in spite of some resolute attempts at witting dialogue, humorous situation and epigrammatic comment, one's reflection on closing the book is that Hardy's pursuit of the comic spirit is somewhat less than half hearted.

Ethelberta is one of a family of ten; their mother is a bedridden invalid, their father 'in service' as a butler, and, therefore, living outside the family home. Hardy treats Ethelberta's career almost as a parable of social revolution. She is a symbol of intelligence and education getting employment as a governess her beauty has involved her in a run away marriage with the son of the household, who has promptly died and left her a penniless widow while hardly more than a girl. Hardy made Ethelberta both a widow and poor which was an unusual situation for a 19th century heroine giving her possibilities of social

freedom. She is a woman of strong purpose, masculine command and a powerful ambition.

Julian is the man who knows Ethelberta thoroughly. He receives an invitation to play the harp at Wyndway house. Hardy uses animal imagery to describe the playing of the instrument. His fingers tapping about upon the keys as mechanically as fowls pecking at barley corns. It had been a long and weary night for Julian and his sister. After a ball performed overnight the morning appears as a transformation scene.

“A huge inflamed sun was breasting the horizon beyond a sheet of embayed sea which, to her surprise and delight, the mansion overlooked.”¹

Throughout the novel we find Ethelberta calculating her ambition more than contending her motives. She always tries to support her family in order to uplift her brothers and sisters. For their sake she can face a miserable future.

Hardy treats the emotions arising from socially embarrassing family circumstances with tact and delicacy. For these reasons she cannot marry Julian, though the latter is sincere in his purpose.

Hardy tries to draw the contrast between urban and rural life by comparing and contrasting Nature. Here is a city sunset:

“Just as the hour of the sun’s lowest decline, when it was fading away. yellow and mild as candle light and when upper windows facing

1. Thomas Hardy: The Hand of Ethelberta. Mac & Co. Ltd. p.42

northwest reflected to persons in the street dissolving views of tawny cloud with brazen edges, the original picture of the same being hidden from sight by soiled walls and staty slopes”.¹

After **The Trumpet Major**, Hardy set to work on another study of social interrelationships, **A Loadicean**, the basic idea behind this novel was to work out a romance between George Somerset, an ardent young architect, and Paula Power, a lukewarm girl. Hardy himself classified **A Loadicean** as a “**novel of ingenuity**”.²

Paula Power, the Loadician is a modern young woman living in the ancient semi ruin of Stancy Castle, once the home of the aristocratic family of de Stancy. Her own father had been a railway contractor of strong non conformist views.

The opening chapter of the novel reveals Somerset’s views on art. He considers all styles extinct and all architecture as a living art. He was not aware of the fact that, “**in practice, art had at all times been full of shifts and compromise as every other mundane thing; that ideal perfection was never achieved by Greek Both or Hebrew Jew, and never would be, and thus he was thrown into a mood of disgust with his profession**”.³

1. The Hand of Ethelberta, p.238

2. Normal Page: **Thomas Hardy**, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, p.106

3. Thomas Hardy: A Loadicean, Mac. London. 1951. p.6

There hero's quest for a career open to his talents, his concern with the ethics of architectural restoration, his enthusiasm for theological argument all are parallel to the life of Hardy. Like Somerset, he had been a young man of eclectic intellectual interests, and there may be autobiographical elements in the hero's reflections on **“the years when poetry, theology, and the reorganization of society had seemed matters of more importance to him than a profession, which should help him to get big house and have good income”**.¹ Paula Power appears to Somerset as a modern type of maidenhood and she looked, **“ultra modern by reason of her environment”**.²

Stancy Castle appears to be one of the most interesting characters in the novel operating effectively physically and symbolically the potentialities of architect as a source of moral and social criteria. The central issue here is that of restoration. The conflict of the old and new is reflected through Nature when Hardy describes, **“the morning sun sparkled on the equipage, its newness being made all the more noticeable by the ragged old arch behind”**.³ Paula lays the charge of restoration of the castle in the hands of Somerset as she is deeply impressed by his profound scholarship.

Somerset describes Paula as representing the march of mind, **“the steamship and the railway and the thoughts that shake mankind”**.⁴ We could

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1. Ibid, p.10
 2. Ibid, p.41
 3. A Loadicean, p.84
 4. Ibid, p.101

feel the admiration rising in him for Paula. Somerset plans to walk and discovers the tunnel. The tunnel is described by Hardy as – **“The vertical front of the tunnel, faced with bricks that had once been red, was now weather stained..... The tunnels mouth in the middle of the speck of light before him appeared as a speck of black; and then a still whistle, dulled by millions of tons of earth, reached his ears from thence. It was what he had been on his guard against all the time a passing train; and instead of taking the trouble to come out of the tunnel he stepped into a recess, till the train had rattled past.”**¹

The second book entitled **Dare and Havill** reveals the character of Dare and Havill. Havill enters the novel as a professional rival of Somerset. Dare and Havill join hands against Somerset because for Havill he is his professional rival and Dare is his rival in love. As Dare and Havill were doing treachery with Somerset, Nature was present to show its protests in the form of winds and rain.

“The sky was overcast, the trees shivered and a drop or two began to strike into the walker’s coats from the east. The rains beat upon the windows with a dull dogged pertinacity which seemed to signify boundless reserves of the same created, and the candles waved. The weather had in truth, broken up for the season, and this was the first night of the change”.²

The later part of the novel involves a huddle of arrivals and departures, telegrams, guilty secrets blackmail and unexpected encounters. But still, inspite

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1. A Loadicean, p.105
 2. A Loadicean, p.158

of all this we have some beautiful passages of nature description; Nature which is seen from the artist's point of view. Paula while travelling reaches Stress burg and she is in her bedroom of an old fashioned hotel, looking through the window on the strange, philosophical stocks. The birds were crossing and recrossing the field of grass. **“Behind the long roofs thus visible to Paula over the window sill with their tiers of dormer – windows rose the cathedral spire in airy open work, forming the highest objects in the scene; it suggested something which for a long time she appeared unwilling to utter; but natural instinct had its way”**.¹ The scene reminds Paula of Somerset who can study Gothic architecture at such a place.

In the final chapter, after the couple is united, the castle burns down. They resolve to leave it as a ruin and to build a new castle beside it, both now being prepared to accept ‘the modern spirit’, in its architecture embodiments. Michael Millgate describes the burning down of the Stancy Castle as an **“appropriate exorcism of the ghost of an unfortunate line”**.²

Finally, Paula insists to be the representative of the modern spirit, representing neither the sense and understanding, nor the heart and imagination; but what a finished writer call, **“the imaginative reason”**³, hints for the ambition of Hardy while writing the novel.

1. A Laodicean, p.330

2. Michael Millgate, **Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist**, The Badley Head. 1971. p.170

3. A Laodicean. p.481

There is a class of novels which we are compelled by critical canons to call good, and which, nevertheless, we read only with a certain effort, and from a sense of duty. There is another class, which a conscientious regard for literary integrity warns us to call bad, but which, notwithstanding we cannot help finding extremely readable and there is a third class, which are both readable and good; and it is to this class that **The Trumpet Major** belongs. The period when **The Trumpet Major** was written was a period of creative writing regarded as a time adequate for the abnormal activity that was to come. Thus it is one of the most light hearted novel of Thomas Hardy. **“Hardy observes a smiling landscape, quaint and crotchety characters, and a love entanglement which we are sure can bring no really dire consequences in its train”¹.**

This novel is the most carefully researched work because, **“The Trumpet Major Note Book”** contains notes made by Hardy in the British Museum. **“Perhaps the most rewardable aspect of the book in its portrayal of a fragment of society narrowly circumscribed but depicted with considerable delicacy of social nuance, from the position of Anne’s mother, widow of an artist, in a twilight rank between the benighted villagers and well developed gentry, and the grotesque mire squire Derriman, personally ludicrous but commanding respect by virtue of his hereditary status down to engaging comedy of the rustic caught up in excitements and perils of war”².**

1. Richard Carpenter: Thomas Hardy: St. Martin’s Press, New York. p.106

2. Norman Page: Thomas Hardy, Routledge & Kegan Paul. p.106

Anne Garland's personality is described as a **“simple, charming, young woman in whom lurked a real firmness, unperceived at first, as the speck of colour lurks unperceived in the heart of the palest parsley flower”**¹.

The arrival of the army had its impact on Anne Garland as well as on the rustics of Dorsets like the Miller who was in this garden and welcomed the troops by offering them cherries which hang in clusters under their dark leaves. More and more troops are arriving **‘like a cloud of dust,’**² reflecting the sun through the haze in faint flashes, stars and streaks of light; they formed a lively spectacle as they rode along the high ground in marching order, **“backed by the pale blue sky, and lit by the southerly sun”**³. The entire community is affected.

“Men in distant gardens, women in orchards and at collage doors, shepherds on remote hills, turnip hoers in blue-green enclosures miles away, captain with spy glasses out of sea, were regarding the picture keenly”⁴

‘History’, Hardy was to note a few years later, **‘is rather a stream than a tree’**⁵ and it is in the antithetical images of stream and mill that the novel makes its central binary opposition between stability and change. The scrupulous description of Overcome Mill foregrounds the symbolic role of the mill as a

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1. A Trumpet Major, p.62
 2. Ibid. p.63
 3. A Trumpet Major. p.64
 4. A Trumpet Major, p.65
 5. F.E. Hardy, the Life of T. Hardy, Mac. 1972. p.172

a work place embodying and immemorial agrarian way of life. Miller Love day has readily accepted the change enjoying the arrival of the troops. Overcombe Mill is a representation to the encroaching industrialization which can be felt by the music of the mill, the wheels, the cogs of which being of wood, produced notes that might have borne in their mind a remote resemblance to the wooden tones of the stopped diapason in an organ. The flour from the grinding room invisibly made its presence in the house of Miller being the blessed stuff of life and not the nasty dirt. Overcombe Mill is the centre of activity in the novel. Page after page we realize the effect of soldiers on the life of rustics.

Miller is ready to accept the change brought by the army but the old Derriman representative of the Oxwell House opposite views. According to him the soldiers are **“rot and now hedges will be broken and hen’s nests robbed and sucking pigs stole”**¹

This discrimination in the opinion of two beings dwelling in the same community may be because Miller Love day’s sons, are soldiers who have not acquired the character of army. While Benjamin Derriman is acquainted with Festus Derriman who is a typical soldier in all traits. Hardy has not only described the activity of the soldiers but also highlighted their moral character. They became familiar with the villagers being gentleman of a gallant and most affectionate nature. They naturally turned their heads and smiled at a pretty girl passed by, **“thus courtship began to be practices in Overcombe”**²

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1. A Trumpet Major. p.97
 2. Ibid p.129

In the midst of history, yet marginal to it, the novelist places his love story. Hardy turns the plot upon his favourite motive of a woman perused by a number of men, but the resultant drama of mismatching is tipid and manufactured, the heroine constrained to exist silently in a world dominated and preserved by the male implements of sword and pen. Anne Garland is an absent centre, and her suitors exert little power over heroine or readers.

The vivid description of the garden shows the harmony and interrelationship of the two families of Mrs. Garland and Miller Love day. Anne loved to linger in the lower half of the garden farthest from the road and the most sheltered part which was well watered by three small brooks that ran with a tinkling sound from side to side. Anne spoke to John Loveday as a brother owing to his good nature and moral qualities. Mrs. Garland too was making advancements towards Miller.

Hardy has made clear this aspect of the book in the Preface of **Two on a Tower** – **“This slightly built romance was the outcome of a wish to set the emotional history of two infinitesimal lives against the stupendous background of the stellar universe and to impart the readers the sentiments that of these contrasting magnitudes, the small might be the greater to them as man.”**¹

1. Thomas Hardy, **Two on a Tower**, London, Macmillan Co. Ltd. New York, St. Martin's Press, 1964. Preface. (Here in after References to this book will be given under the title Two on a Tower)

Swithin St. Cleeve is a beautiful youth who combines a passion for astronomy with worldly innocence. He is the son of a socially unfortunate marriage between a curate and a farmer's daughter, both dead; he has received good education but lives in his grandmother's humble collage. We can observe the recurring pattern of modest organ combined with talent and ambition to produce social self-consciousness in the heroes of these novels.

Swithin mind is full of the horrors and **"immensities"**¹ of astronomical knowledge, Lady Constantine's of what she only half-ironically calls **"such ephemeral trivialities as human tragedy"**², his subject is **"celestial"**³ hers **"lamentably human"**⁴. Yet when Lady Constantine suggests that the less must give way to the greater, she is not resolving but only raising, as Swithin's reply emphasizes, that central issue which Hardy later formulated in his 1895 Preface.

"Swithin's mind is always focused on higher things, often to the detriment of human feelings and loyalties"⁵.

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1. Two On a Tower. p.35
 2. Ibid. p.36
 3. Ibid p.35
 4. Ibid p.35
 5. Ibid p.35

Lady Constantine wants to discuss problems related to her personal life. But Swithin tries to give her the idea of the size of universe. By figures of speeches and apt comparisons, he took her mind into leading strings compelling her to follow him into wilderness of which she had never in her life realised. He tells her about the concept of size in Nature.

“There’s a size at which dignity beings, further on there’s a size at which grandeur begins, further on a size at which ghastrliness begins..... And to add a new weirdness to what the sky possesses in its size and formlessness, there is involved the quality of decay for all the wonder of these everlasting stars, eternal spheres, and what not, they are not everlasting, they are not eternal; they burn out like candles.”¹

Hardy gave one copy of the novel to Edmund Gosse hoping that at least he would appreciate the attempt to **“make vehicle of romance”²**. Hardy stressed the scientific aspect of the book but he did not forget that the night sky held, even in an age of science, **“pattern sterotyped in history and legend”³**, that the stars were inescapable associated with ancient mythologies and with lingering and perhaps inextinguishable superstitions, that the heavenly bodies had always provided a rich source of imagery, especially for the poetry of love.

1. Two On a Tower, p.34

2. Hardy to Gosse, Dec. 4, 1882, Quoted by Purdy in his book Thomas Hardy. London, 1969. p.44

3. Two On a Tower. p.297

As Lady Constantine gazes down at the sleeping figure of Swithin, legend and science merges in her thoughts. **“Looking again at him her eyes became so sentimentally fixed on his face that it seemed as if she could not withdraw then. There lay, in the shape of an anxious, no amoros, no gallant but a guileless philosopher. His parted lips were lips which spoke, not of love, but of millions of miles; those were eyes which habitually gazed not into the depths of other eyes, but into other worlds. Within his temples dwelt thoughts, not of woman’s looks, but of stellar aspects and the configuration of constellations. Thus, to his physical attractiveness was added the attractiveness of mental inaccessibility. The ennobling influence of scientific pursuits was demonstrated by the speculative purity which expressed itself in his eyes whenever he looked at her in speaking, and in the child like faults of manner which arose from his obtuseness to their difference of sex”.**¹

Lady Constantine tries to help Swithin by providing him a new telescope. The day appeared to her bright and the meaning of nature changed when she was trying to assist Swithin. **“There was a bright sun overhead on that afternoon of early spring, and its rays shed an unusual warmth on South west aspects, though shady places still retained the look and feel of winter. Rooks were already beginning to build new nests or to mend up old ones”.**²

1. Two On a Tower. p.45-46

1. Ibid. p.44

Swithin makes a discovery with the valuable aid of the equatorials gifted to him by Lady Constantine. Swithin parted from her with a promise to call on her soon as his discovery was in print. It is very difficult to describe the tremulous state of Lady Constantine during this interval. She took, warm interest in Swithin making his hopes her own. She waited feverishly for the flourish of trumpets afar, by which she expected the announcement of his discovery to be greeted. But it was not as she had wished. Here Hardy employs his resources of Nature to intensity the feelings of Lady Constantine. The days when Lady Constantine is waiting of Swithin are described by Hardy as –

“A long array of wet days passed their dreary shapes before her, and made the waiting still more tedious. One of these occasions she ran across to the tower, at the risk of severe cold. The door was locked.

Two days after she went again. The door was locked still. But this was only to be expected in such weather. Yet she would have gone on to his house, had there not been one reason too many against such precipitancy. As astronomer there was no harm in their meetings; but as to a woman and man she feared them.

Ten days passed without a sight of him; ten blurred and dreary days, during which the whole landscape dripped like a mop, the park trees swabbed the gravel from the drive, white the sky was a zinc coloured archivault of immovable cloud.”¹

1. Two On a Tower p.72

Hardy wants to make clear to the readers of the artificiality of the upper class society. The rural and the rustic still fed the pulse of Nature.

Hardy has tried to handle masterly the ball and after it he also describes a dinner party where the conversation was chiefly about a volume of music, tender and humorous rhapsodies. It is during this episode that Hardy draws the character of Lady well and neigh minutely.

Ethelberta parts with Julian and prepares for an evening excursion with Picottee to Farnfield Park – estate of Mr. Neigh. She is interested in the exact size and nature of the estate as a necessary information.

On reaching Farmfield park, she was charmed with the spot. This mansion is concealed in the fog which stands for complexities and confusion. **“The fog concealed all objects beyond a distance of 20 yards and there about, but it was nearly full moon, and though the orb was hidden, a pale diffused light enabled them to see objects in the foreground. In the enclosure, and on the site of the imaginary house, was an extraordinary group. It consisted of numerous horses in the Last stage of decrepitude, the animals being such mere skeletons that at first Ethelberta hardly recognized them to be horses at all, they seemed rather to be specimens of some attenuated heraldic animal.”**¹

But this was not the only revelation. There was one more enclosure. Ethelberta looked through the crevices and saw that in the midst of the yard stood trunks of trees, **“as if they were growing, with branches also extending**

1. The Hand of Ethelberta. p.199

but these were sawn off at the points where they began to be flexible, no twigs or boughs remaining. Each torso was not unlike a huge hat stand and suspended to the pegs and prongs were Lumps of some distance which at first they couldn't recognize; they proved to be a chronological sequel to the previous scene. Horses skull, ribs, quarters, legs and other joints were hang there on, the whole forming a huge open air larder emitting not too sweet a smell.”¹

The experience at such a sight was intensely melancholic and depressing. The spectacle was sufficient to take decision not to marry Neigh. Eventually Ethelberta marries Lord Mountclere but this marriage proves that Hardy has lost his direction. In the epilogue, we learn that he has been effectively brought under her away so that she is **“Lord and Lady both”**. She sacrifices herself for her family. An evident flaw in her logic is that the family is really doing quite well in the country. The plan conceived by her for the family in all ill conceived scheme. It is through her situation that Hardy underlines once more his conservative theme that it is tempting fate to get out of ones social class, an invitation to instability of life and to probable disaster.

The stress of immediacy and uncertainty which the novel, with the historian's perspective of hind sight, finally dramalizes in its impact upon a remote rural community invaded by a defending army.

1. The Hand of Ethelberta. p.200

According to Michael Millgate, **“A Loadicean was written in the interval between Hardy’s first meeting with Arnold in Feb 1880, when he seems to have found him unduly opinionated, and second, in 1884, when he liked him much better. Hardy had in his mind not only the essay on “Pagan and Medieval Religious Sentiment.”**”¹

Somerset takes the view of the castle with a vague consciousness so that when he proceeded to explore the lower part he found himself precipitated downwards to a distance of several feet. He found spider web around him. Behind the webs he could see sundry names and initials cut in the stone. He could see **‘two bright and clean’**² names – De Stancy and W. Dare. The incident is highly significant as later in the novel. Somerset will fall in the web of William Dare, the illegitimate son of Captain de Stancy.

Arnold defines the modern spirit in terms of **“the sense of want of correspondence between the forms of modern Europe and its spirit between the new wine of the 18th and 19th centuries, and the old bottles of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, or even of the 16th and 17th.”**³

Somerset moved examining the Nature and in a quarter of an hour he was again at the point where the wire left the road. Like Hardy, Somerset is also encouraged to visit the castle which represents the decline of aristocracy giving rise to modernization and new aristocrats. Miss de Stancy, the previous owner of

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1. Norman Page: Thomas Hardy, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, p.106
 2. A Loadicean, p.101
 3. Michael Millgate: Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist. The Bodley Head. 1971. p. 175.

the castle had a touch of rusticity while Paula Power is characterized by urban aristocracy. Paula's occupation of Stancy castle is an example of the changing old order in country manors and mansions. Paula is described as a **“modern flower in a mediaeval flower pot.”**¹

Somerset is inherited for lunch at De Stancy's residence. His journey to their home is described in terms of Nature by Hardy as –

“The warmth of the summer noon did not inconveniently penetrate the dense masses of foliage which now began to overlong the path, except in spots where as ruthless timber felling had taken place in previous years for the purpose of sale. It was that particular half hour of the day in which the birds of the forest prefer walking to flying, and there being no wind, the hopping of the smallest songster over the dead leaves reached his ear from behind the undergrowth. As he reached Myrtle Villa, he was impressed by the air of healthful cheerfulness which pervaded it”²

The second book concludes with Captain De Stancy admiring secretly Paula Power in her pink, flannel costume, **“bending, wheeling and undulating in the air like a gold fish in its globe”**³

The third book, de Stancy presents de Stancy as a completely transformed man ready to break his vow. He plans to see Paula with Charlotte.

1. A Loadicean. p.72

2. A Loadicean. p.92

3. Ibid p.195

Hardy uses the image of fire to heighten the fire of passion in the heart of Captain de Stancy – **“And then Pauls saw emerge into the red beams of the dancing fire, from behind a half drawn hanging which screened the door, the military gentlemen.”**¹

At this point of the story, we have Somerset and Captain de Stancy as two wooers for Paula. From this point of view, the novel is full of plotting, in both senses of the word, to delay, to in-ordinate lengths and the eventual union of hero and the heroine: intrigue, accident and coincidence are supplied in abundance. We have a ruthless uncle of Paula from abroad who makes, the course of true love even rougher. The fourth and fifth books are, however, irredeemably clumsy in execution: the lovers, kept apart by a series of misunderstandings produced by Dare. The trail across Europe from one centre to another where the heroine is followed at a distance by the hero.

The novel tells us the movements of Paula which are away from the values and principles for which her father stood. The novel also shows the determination of Somerset as he decided to accept no return for his labours but the pleasure of presenting them to her as a love offering. It is true that the confirmation of Paula’s choice for Somerset is precisely the outcome of that process of self discovery – externalized in the conflict of suitors and ideas reflected through Nature.

1. A Laodicean. p.212

NATURE AND FATE IN THE NOVELS OF HARDY

Hardy combines the most observant eye for minute and humble details in ordinary landscape. There is no book of Hardy that does not abound in Nature pictures, some delicately sketched, some composed of broad masses of colour, but all carefully observed by a consummate artist. But their chief quality lies in their relation to human destinies. Nature and man are constantly engaged in expressing the same thought.

Hardy shows in places a wonderful, even uncanny knowledge of the signs and symptoms of Nature. Secrets that are instinctively known by the brute creation, and not altogether hidden from people living in close touch with Nature. The coming on of winter with its accompanying Frost and snow-storm in '**Stealth measured glides, the moves of a chess-player**' step by step is wonderfully described in Tess of the D'Urbervilles.

Unlike Shakespeare Hardy had no belief in the concept that "**Character is destiny**" Shakespeare's tragic heroes meet their doom because of some inherent flaw in their character-Macbeth because Vacillation of the mind, Othello because of his deep-distrust and shocking jealousy and not because of elemental forces of Nature. But Hardy was a fatalist. He believed that there was an external force working against men, force which could be named as fate, chance or will of the Divine Power, a force against

whom man was pitted in an external struggle and always lost.

Therefore, Hardy explained human suffering in the world in terms of fatalism. He believed that our life is ruled by Fate. This fate expresses itself in the form of Nature, Chance and circumstances. This Fate does not give us enough freedom of action. The result is that a man has to wage a mighty struggle against an overmastering Fate. And the tiny man is always a victim to the vagaries of Fate. This Fate is entirely indifferent to the lot of man. As a man suffers more than he is happy, this Fate seems to be malignant. But in reality, it is only indifferent.

Nature is employed by Hardy to exercise an active influence on the course of events in his novels. Nature's influence is a shaping influence on the dispositions of human beings. Hardy observes Nature patiently, attentively and analytically. His nature pictures are correct and accurate. But his eyes are more sensitive towards the cruelties perpetrated on the living beings. He has sympathy for animals and birds and also with the vegetable world. But very often he realizes that there is some mischievous force behind Nature and it does not allow much happiness to the living beings. Hardy establishes emotional relationship between Nature and the events and finally intends to show that Nature is also an emblem of Fate.

What Hardy is fundamentally concerned with in his novels is the universal

predicament of mankind. Some part of human misery is inherited in the scheme of Nature and universe, and some part is supplied by the choices of his characters. In Hardian scheme of universe, it appears to be a handiwork of some mysterious force taking delight in the plight of living beings. Nature in its various manifestations is also an agent in fulfilling the dark designs of Fate. Though Hardy repeatedly denied the name of philosopher for himself, his designs to understand the pain of life upon this planet are well evident. Hardy wrote in 1902.

“Pain has been and in no new sort morals in nature can remove pain from the past and make it pleasure for those who are its infallible estimators, the bearers thereof. The exoneration of an Omnipotent Mother by her retrospective justice becomes an absurdity when we ask. What made the forgone injustice necessary to her Omnipotence”¹.

So, it becomes clear that Thomas Hardy was preoccupied with the painful happenings at every next door in the human society as well as in chilly and stormy forests. To his mind Nature serves as an agent for the doom of his characters. The comment of Lord David Cecil is noteworthy in this connection:

“However, Hardy’s attitude towards Nature was not wordsworthian. He did not believe that Nature has any Holy plan or healing power. Being influenced by the theory of evolution he found much in Nature that was

1. Dr. Samuel Johnson: Lives 102

cruel and antagonistic to man”¹.

Thomas Hardy wanted to bring the classical spirit of tragedy in the changed circumstances of the Wessex life. **The Return of the Native** descended from Hardian imagination with classical overtones of Sophoclean grandeur. In this novel, Hardy wanted to show how innate causes, lying beyond human intelligibility, become the cause of sufferings and great human minds with the enormity of aspirations and ambitions are caught in the net of circumstances and turn to tragedy. **“Not the deliberate ironies, little tails of widows or widowers, contain the irony of human life as we live it in our self-aggrandized gravity, but the big novels. The Return of the Native, and the others”².** Hardy discovers the cause of sufferings, though heavily unintelligible it is, in the laws of nature. Hardy shares this quality with the great writers like Shakespeare or Sophocles – **“Setting behind the small action of his protagonists the terrific action of unfathomed Nature; setting a smaller system of morality, the one grasped and formulated by the human consciousness within the vast uncomprehended and incomprehensible morality of nature or of life itself,**

1. David Cecil: The poets and story Tellers. London 1967. p.52

2. D.N. Lawrence, **“The Real Tragedy”**, published in Hardy, The Tragic Novels (ed) R.P. Draper, Casebook series, Macmillan, 1975. p.70-71

surpassing human consciousness”¹

In **The Mayor of Casterbridge**, Nature drags Henchard towards his ill fate. The man of character is led by his natural instincts under wild passion and strong-headedness. Even the natural surroundings and changing weather conditions play havoc with Henchard and force him to the road of destruction. His own nature becomes his enemy. Nature is quite indifferent to him. His choices are very often foiled and frustrated and he becomes the victim of the circumstances developing around him. He is so simple in his attitudes that his own wife Susan succeeds in keeping the secret of Elizabeth’s birth, which is revealed to him through her letter accidentally after her death. This chance happening is contrived by Nature. His strong fatherly passion is foiled by the mockery of chance, causes emotional breakdown of this man of character.

“Misery taught him nothing more than defiant endurance of it. His wife was dead and the first impulse for revenge died with the thought that she was beyond him. He looked at the night as at a friend. Henchard, like all his kind, was superstitious, and he could not help thinking that the concatenation of events this evening had produced was the scheme of some sinister intelligence bent on punishing him”²

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1. D.N. Lawrence, **“The Real Tragedy”** published in Hardy, *The Tragic Novels* (ed) R.P. Draper, Casebook series, Macmillan, 1975. p. 70-71.
 2. *The Mayor Of Casterbridge* p.83

Michael Henchard, after eighteen years of his hard life of masculine energy he rose to the height of the Mayor of Casterbridge. At this time he got companionship of Farfrae for better economic gains, and reunification with his wife Susan and his daughter Elizabeth Jane. But some sinister power was bent upon not allowing that happiness to Henchard. Farfrae's social activities and his frequent mixing with the people carried his fame high. Now it became the cause of jealousy for Henchard. At this stage he got the knowledge that Farfrae was going to organize a fair for social get together. He thought it better to arrange for a better fair, that too, free of charge and, thus, to bring down the fame of Farfrae. But the scheme of Henchard was not acceptable to the sinister power supervising him at this moment. Elements of Nature are used to turn the Fate of this man of character. Henchard wished he had not been quite so sure about the continuance of a fair season. But it was too late to modify or postpone and the proceedings went on. At twelve O'clock the rain began to fall, small and steady, commencing and increasing so insensibly that it was difficult to state exactly when the dry weather ended and wet established itself.

Thus Nature showed her brownish face and proved Henchard a ridiculous figure in the eyes of the people. It is ironical that the same Henchard, who hoped to attain the grandeur of patron by bearing all the expenses of a friendly fair, becomes the subject of censure and ridicules. Although there was no feeling of competition in the mind of Farfrae, but it has been forced into the mind of Henchard by the casual and jocularly comments of the layman's talks.

Perhaps Nature contrived to show the better face of Farfrae in order to darken the one of Henchard. Nature smiled when Farfrae's fair was to begin.

“But towards six the storm abated and a drier breeze shook the moisture from the grassbents..... All the town crowded to the walk such a delightful idea of a ballroom never having occurred to the inhabitants before. Among the rest of the onlookers were Elizabeth and her mother – the former thoughtful, yet much interested, her eye beaming with a longing lingering light”.¹

This bring face of Nature at the time of Farfrae's fair and festivity adds salt to the sours of Michael Henchard. Not only does his reputation is soiled but his faculty of reason is also shadowed. His jealousy with the success of Farfrae affair, in which even his daughter Elizabeth and his wife Susan also took delight, preys upon his mind and makes him neurotic to the extent that he openly speaks about the dismissal of Farfrae from his business affairs. This decision becomes fatal to him in the next course of events.

Henchard wants to make Farfrae shallower by **“undersell”** and over purchase. For this purpose he contemplates the probable weather conditions because the trade of corn in those days depended entirely on the weather changes

“The season's weather seemed to favour their scheme. The time was

1. The Mayor of Casterbridge. p. 68

in the years immediately before foreign competition had revolutionized the trade in grain; when still, as from the earliest ages, the wheat quotations from month to month depended entirely upon the home harvest. A bad harvest, or the prospect of one, would double the price of corn in a few weeks; and the promise of a good yield would lower it as rapidly”.¹

Michael Henchard worked out his plan accordingly and made mighty purchases by investing all his cash, Value and also by engaging this banker’s money. All round him were stunned at this madness in purchase of wheat corn Henchard did not want to allow any purchase to Farfrae for his obvious reasons. But Nature played ducks and drains and the objectives of Henchard were sorely defeated.

“When his granaries were full to choking, all the weathercocks of Casterbridge creaked and set their faces in another direction, as it tired of south-west. The weather changed; the sunlight, which had been like tin for weeks, assumed the hues of topaz. The temperament of welkin passed from the phlegmatic to the sanguine, an excellent harvest was almost a certainty and as a consequence prices rushed down”.²

It appears that the Nature decided the Fate of Henchard. All his riches were snatched away by a little transformation in Nature’s face. He has

1. The Mayor of Casterberidge. p.122

2. The Mayor of Casterbridge. p.124

put to heavy loss as he could not wait due to the pressure of banker's money. He sold his corn at lower prices. Nature then hit him again. When he had sold of his corn, Farfrae began to purchase at cheaper prices. Suddenly Nature assumed phlegmatic character and the stormy wet rains began to dance as if they were waiting for Henchard's ruin.

In **Tess of the D'Urbervilles** the work of Nature as Fate becomes more prominent. Tess lives in the Lap of Nature and she is quite obedient to the laws of Nature and the claims of social living. She wants to cope up with the hardship of her family as a responsible girl, the eldest among her brothers and sisters. She is meek submissive and honest to the core of her heart. But she is pushed down, rebuffed and kicked by Nature again and again. On the social level, Tess is a daughter of the soil, almost timeless and anonymous. She walks on the Wessex soil like a figure which is part of the landscape, a fieldswoman pure and simple, in winter guise.

The ill Fate of Tess begins from here and the splashing of blood on her face and skirt becomes symbolic for the same things in her life to follow. Here she cries, **“it is all my doing all mine”**.¹ The later developments in the novel show that Tess's life is ended with the actual charge of murderess, for which she is hanged. She is forced by the circumstances to adopt a course of wounding Alec and making a hole in his body and consequently blood spouting out of the wound and splashing on her face and skirt. Thus, the ill fate has began

1. Tess of the D'Urbervilles. p.24

to work in the lap of Nature when darkness rules on the slopes of blackmoor
value, **“it is because we be on a blighted star, and not on sound one, is it
Tess?”**¹

When Tess has been compelled by the circumstances to approach the D’Urberville family at the slopes of Trantridge, Alec gets interest in her physical charms. He himself comes to receive Tess from her home, a gesture which could not be put aside notwithstanding the feeling of John Durbeyfield to the contrary. Tess mounts the wagon of Alec in a reluctant mood, but the mind of Alec has been reeling in the wild gust of animal passion.

“Sometimes a wheel was off the ground, it seemed, for many yards; sometimes a stone was sent spinning over the hedge, and flinty sparks from the horse’s hoofs outshone the day light”.²

Nature favoured Alec’s intentions under his aroused passion and allowed the ill-designs of Fate to operate. **“She was silent, and the horse ambled along for a considerable distance, till a faint luminous fog which had hung in the hollows all the evening, became general and enveloped them. It seemed to hold the moonlight in suspension, rendering it more pervasive than in clear air, whether on this account, or from absent mindedness or from sleepiness she did not perceive that they had long ago passed the point at which the lane to Trantridge branches from the highway**

1. Tess of the D’Urbervilles. p.23

2. Tess of the D’Urberville’s p.42

and that her conductor, had not taken the Trantridge track”.¹

Once Tess received a blot on her character in the dark and dreary aroma of Nature, she is doomed to meditate about her dark future. She weeps bitterly and utters that it was too late for her to understand meaning of what Alec wanted. Even the colour of Nature changes on her return from Trantridge.

She came to Marlott as a half-sunken woman. Her mother asked her to take advantage of this situation and to save her dark future. But Tess, courageous as she was, stood against all material advantages. She loved her honour more than anything. She told this thing before Alec, who blinded by his passion for Tess, still hoped that she would approach him in the time of her need. Tess views for Alec was of dislike. She said – **“I have said so often it is true. I have never really and truly loved you, and I think I never can, she added mournfully, perhaps of all things, a lie on this thing would do the most good to me now; but I have honour enough left little as it is, not to tell that lie”.**²

Tess suffers an account of the irrational act of Alec under his wild passion. She conceives and gives birth to this unfortunate child. Of course, she has broken no law of Nature, although at the social front her present status has undergone a drastic change. She is no more respectable in the eyes of social folk around her. But this small young woman has courage enough to decide her

1. Ibid. p.57

2. Tess of the D’Urbervilles – p.59

future on her innovative lines. She feels that she is now tied with the destiny of this innocent child, who is also the product of Nature. But even this compromise sought by Tess is not permitted by Nature. This child becomes seriously ill and it dies soon. But before its death, Tess wants to Christianize it, so that its soul may be saved from the Satanic influence. Having been not permitted by the social laws of Christianity, she decides to practice her own Christianity under the solemnity of her own. She plays the part of the priest and utters a few relevant Biblical verses to Christianize the child with the name of “**Sorrow**”.

“So passed away sorrow the undesired – that intrusive creature, that bastard gift of shameless Nature who respects not the social law; a waif to whom eternal time had been a matter of the day merely, who knew not that such things as years and centuries ever were”.¹

Now Tess wants to begin a new life of her own spiritual strength amidst her poverty, which has found a long sojourn around her. She moves towards Talbothays, dairy farm to work as a milk-maid with a view to earning her livelihood and a little help to her younger brothers and sisters.

The blooming Nature in and around Talbothay’s dairy farm

1. Tess of the D’Urbervilles. p.74

enkindles the soft emotion of love between Angel Clare and Tess. Angel looks at Tess, as a very fair creature of Nature and is drawn towards her with an irresistible passion. **“The ready bosom existing there were impregnated by their surroundings”**.¹ The forces of Nature and love tempt Tess towards a nobler life of conjugal happiness. Although she resists herself as much as she can, but the persuasiveness from the side of Angel Clare is too heavy to allow her own resistance Nature tickles the inherent feminine tissues of love in her heart and soul. But the force of natural love harboured in the heart of Tess drags her towards Angel Clare, who does not give her more time to speak things against herself as she wants to do at several occasions. Fate rules in the form of Chance.

One thing is still more important about Hardy’s art in the delineation of Tess’ character. Nature is exhibited time to time as a living being showing her face in those colours which match the impending doom of this innocent lady. The pattering of red and white is very often visible in the background of Nature as depicted in the novel and also in the events taking place in it. Tess is depicted as a white beauty in white frock. But she very often

1. Tess of the D’Urbervilles. p.107

encounters red from the beginning to the end. When Tess reaches the D'Urberville house we read the following –

“It was of recent erection, indeed almost new-and of the same rich red colour that formed such a contrast with the evergreens of the lodge”.¹

Mysteriously, inevitably, this house will play a part in her destiny. And if this house contains her future rapist so it is another red house which contains her executioner for the prison where she is hanged is **“large red-brick building”**. In this manner Red marks the house of sex and death.

Heredity as a part of Nature is also made felt during the progress of the novel. Under the law of retribution, Tess is becoming the victim of repulse, although her own actions are within the range innocence. Lionel Johnson makes much of Hardy's belief in heredity. He thinks that the troubles of Tess began long before she was born, in the lawless lives of her aristocratic ancestors whose blood still runs all too warmly in her veins.

There are grander conceptions and profounder teachings in Hardy than this of the bitter farce of life, but it is constantly before him, his mind is so thoroughly impregnated with the, that it must be recognized as the most

1. Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p.31

distinctive feature of his philosophy.

Whatever may be Hardy's opinions of life in general and human society in particular; there is no question about his feelings towards Nature. He knows that however, the tyranny of existence may irk, there is always a sure retreat to a priceless treasure that worm nor rust may corrupt and to which no thief can break through and steal a paradise so vast that even the grimy and plastered fingers of man can but soil it here and there and not everywhere.

Adversities are frequently caused in the happy lives living in the lap of Nature. Hardy's most loving characters are nursed and bred in the lap of Nature but their aims and objectives are foiled bitterly and unnecessary harm is caused. But whatever the causes and despite phases of sunny contentedness and exuberant festivity, Hardian man or woman is basically pushed to complexities of unexplained nature and nothing but misery, pain, death and destruction is the net result.

Hardian imagination roams to capture the essence of the tragic fate of his

fellow beings on this blighted planet of human relations. In whatever may the human live, react and plan for happiness, they are crossed by the forces of Nature having their indifferent courses. Impulses, ambitions aspirations, and instincts are natural to mankind. The people, men or women, have to take certain decisions for the furtherance of life upon this planet, but all such steps create the scenes of human sufferings. Hardy tries to project the classical tortures of human wills in the background of his well familiar Wessex life. Let us mark what D.H. Lawrence comments in his connection thus.

“The difference is that whereas in Shakespear of Sophocles the greater, uncomprehended morality, or Fate, is actively transgressed, and holds, and punishes the protagonist, whilst the greater morality is only passively, negatively transgressed, it is represented merely as being present in the background, in scenery, not taking any active part, having no direct connection with the protagonist Oedipus, Hamlet, Macbeth set themselves up against, or find themselves up against, or find themselves, set up against the unfathomed moral forces of nature, and out of this unfathomed force

comes their death. Whereas Anna Kareena, Eustasia, Tess, Sue and Jude find themselves up against the established system of human government and morality, they cannot detach themselves, and are brought down”.¹

Egdon Heath plays an important role in forcing the tragic scenes in **The Return of the Native**. It is that primitive and primeval earth, where the instinctive life, heaps up. Closed to the body of things, there can be heard the stir that stir that makes us and destroys us. The heath heaved with raw instinct. There is some specific design of Thomas Hardy is depicting the Egdon Heath, whose dark soil was strong and crude and organic as the body of a beast. Out of this body of this crude earth are born Eustasia, Wildeve Mistress Yeobright, Clym and all others. The Heath is quite indifferent to what these characters suffer. What matters if some are drowned or dead and others are preaching or married. They are one year's accidental crop, now blooming and now blown up. The Heath persists: its body is strong and fecund and it may bear many more crops besides this. Here is the dark, deep and black source from whence all these little contents of lives are drawn. The contents of the small lives are spilled and

1. D.N. Lawrence, **“The Real Tragedy”** published in Hardy, *The Tragic Novels*, R.P. Draper, Casebook series, Macmillan, 1975. p.70-71

wasted. There appears to be savage satisfaction in it. Three people die and are taken back into the Heath; they mingle their strong earth again with its powerful soil. Egdon is not futile; it sends forth life on the powerful heave of passion. It cannot be futile, for it is eternal. What is futile is the purpose of man.

In *The Mayor of Casterbridge* Henchard's

every good action contrived by his imagination as appropriate under the concerned circumstances becomes disastrous.

In *Tess*, Nature in its variegated shapes plays very effective role in crushing human beings and fulfils she designs of fate, which as some semester power hints, dogs and destroys the happy lives full of happiness and rollicking laughter. The natural setting, changing weathers, landscape features, chance happenings, natural instincts of love, cumulative effect of heredity all create the effect of doom in the novels of Hardy.

In ***The Mayor of Casterbridge***, the developments of the incidents after this episode must be judged in the background of deep psychological stress that

menaced the interior cells of this man of character. Let us mark what Hardy writes at this point:

“Her husband regarded the paper as if it were a window – pane though which he saw for miles. His lip twitched, and he seemed to compress his frame, as if to bear better. His usual habit was not to consider whether destiny were hard upon him or not-the shape of his ideas in cases of affection being simply a moody I am to suffer, I perceive’..... this much, scouring, then, is it for me?” but now through his passionate head there stormed this thought – that the blasting disclosure was what he had deserved.

.....
He remained unnerved and purposeless for near a couple of hours; till he suddenly said, ‘Ah – I wonder if it is true!’”¹

“He jumped up in an impulse, picked off his slippers, and went with candle to the door of Elizabeth Jane’s room, where he put his ear to the key hole and listened. She was breathing profoundly. Henchard softly turned the handle, entered and shading the light, approached the beside. Gradually bringing the light from behind a screening curtain he held it in such a manner that it fell slanturise on her face without shining on her eyes. He

1. D.N. Lawrence, **“The Real Tragedy”** published in Hardy, *The Tragic Novels* (ed) R.P. Draper, Casebook series, Macmillan, 75, p.72-74

steadfastly regarded her features. They were fair; but this was an unimportant preliminary.

In sleep there come to the surface buried genealogical facts, ancestral curses, dead man's traits, which the mobility of daytime screens and overwhelms. In the present statuesque repose of the young girl's, countenance, Richard Newson's was unmistakably reflected. He could not endure the sight of her, and hastened away."¹

Prior to this Michael Henchard has already faced a lot of trauma in his life amidst the uncertainties his own nature and apathy of natural surroundings. His strong-headedness once caused separation of his wife and the chance arrival of Newson made the joke of selling his wife in the effect of liquor, a reality for which he repented heavily in the morning, when the rays of the sun pierced through his eyes and opened them, and which later on he coped up with his solemn vow and tremendous use of energy in agricultural gains and multiplication of well earned wealth. The incident of Able Whittle's not wearing proper dress under the strong command of Henchard and Farfrae's strong social norm to disallow him to work in that condition created a rift in between Henchard and Farfrae. Farfrae let it go but Henchard felt it badly. Now he wanted to bring down the image of Farfrae, which he thought, had risen high due to the reins of business given in his hands.

1. D.N. Lawrence, **"The Real Tragedy"** published in Hardy, The Tragic Novels (ed) R.P. Draper, Casebook series, Macmillan, 1975. p.74-75

“The morning came. The sky which had been remarkably clear down to within a day or two was overcast, and the weather threatening, the wind having an unmistakable hint of water in it. In an hour the slight moisture resolved itself into a monotonous smiting of earth by heaven, in torrents to which no end could be prognosticated. A number of people had heroically gathered in the field, but by three O’clock Henchard discerned that his project was doomed to end in failure. The hams at the top of the poled dripped water smoke in the form of a brown liquor; the pig shivered in the wind, the grain of the deal tables showed through the sticking tables – cloths, for the awning allowed the rain to drift under at its will, and to enclose the sides at this hour seemed a useless undertaking. The landscape over the river disappeared, the wind played upon the tent – cords in ‘Aeolian improvisations, and at length rose to such a pitch that the whole erection slanted to the ground, those who had taken shelter within it having to crawl out on their hands and knees.’”¹

Nature runs its own course and man’s desire to turn its course towards what his chance desires and instinctive urges dictate meets nothing but frustration. Elizabeth-Jane has soft feelings towards Farfrae and Susan has contemplated a match of her daughter Elizabeth with Farfrae. Notwithstanding every other thing, Farfrae does also find the beauty of Nature manifest in the sweet figure and sober habits of Elizabeth. But Michael Henchard’s strong-headedness and wild decisions put a check in the course of these happenings and this in turn disturbs his own happiness.

1. The Mayor of Casterbridge. p.67

Lead by his instinct a dwarfen Farfrae, in business matters, Michael Henchard wants to act as a Tycoon, but falls flat on the ground with the contrivance of Nature once again to foil his purpose. **“Prices were like the roads of the period, steep in gradient, reflecting in their phases, the local conditions, without engineering leveling or averages.”**¹

It was the month of June and the weather was very unfavourable. Henchard himself estimated the weather conditions and read a **“disastrous garnering.”**

He was also backed by Jopp. But in order to feel more certain in his strategy, he went to local astrologer who lived in a remote area and who was called **“Wide-Oh”** behind his back and **“Mr. Fall”** to his face. Let us see the face of Nature around the hut of this man, who read fate in the clouds.

“In a lonely hamlet a few miles from the town-so lonely that what are called lonely villages were teeming by comparison there lived a man of curious repute as a forecaster or weather – prophet. The way to his house was crooked a miry-even difficult in the present unpropitious season. One evening when it was raining, so heavily that ivy laurel resounded like distant musketry, and an outdoor man could be excused for shrouding himself to his ears and eyes, such a shrouded figure on foot might have been perceived travelling in the direction of the hazel-copse which dripped over the prophet’s cot. The turnpike road became a lane, the cart-track, a bridge path, the foot-away overgrown. The solitary walker slipped here and there, and stumbled over the natural springs formed by brambles, till at length he reached the house, which with its garden, was surrounded with a high, dense hedge.”²

Michael Henchard covered his face as not to disclose his identity, but the prophet was clever enough to recognize him and to his utter surprise he

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1. The Major of Casterbridge. p.122
 2. The Mayor of Casterbridge. p.122

announced that he had the vision or his approach, and therefore, but second plate on the table for supper. In this manner, Henchard was charmed by the announcements of his strange figure who commented thus:

**“I’ve worked it out already, any you can know it at once.....
By the sun, moon, and stars, by the clouds, the winds, the trees and grass,
the candle flame and swallows, the smell of the herbs; likewise by cat’s eyes,
the ravens, the leeches, the spiders, and the dung-mixen, the last fortnight is
August will be-rain and tempest.”¹**

The stormy wet rains, were waiting for Henchard’s ruin. **“The fact was, that no sooner had the sickless began to play that the atmosphere suddenly felt as if cress would grow in it without other nourishment.”²**

This became high time for Farfrae’s profit as the prices were now sufficient, **“to pile for him, a large heap of gold where a little one had been.”³** The fact further added soreness to the ill Fate of Michael Henchard. From the development of incidents and events in the background of weather changes as part of the scheme of Nature it appears that somewhat invisible is hostile to this man of character and his wealth, status and reputation are at stake. Henchard himself feels thus:

“At this turn of scales he remained silent. The movements of his mind seemed to lend to the thought that some power was working against him. ‘I wonder’, he asked himself with eerie misgiving: ‘I wonder if it can be that some body has been roasting a waxen image of me. Or stirring an unholy brew to confound me!’ I don’t believe in such power, and yet-what if they should have been during it.”⁴

In Hardy’s novel ‘Tess’, the scene of the village Marlott, where Tess lives and walks on is presented with its pristine natural beauty thus.

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1. The Mayor of Casterbridge. p.123
 2. Ibid. p.126
 3. The Mayor of Casterbridge. p.122
 4. Ibid. p. 172

“The village Morlott lay amid north-eastern undulations of the beautiful Vale of Blackmoor aforesaid, an engirdled and secluded region, for the most part untrodden as yet by tourist or landscape painter, though within a four hours, journey from London. It is vale acquaintance is best made by viewing it from the summits of the hills that surround it..... This fertile and sheltered tract of the country, in which the fields are never brown and the springs never dry, is bounded on the south by the bold chalk ridge that embraces the promises of Hasmbledon Hill, Bullbarrow, Nettlecanbe Tout, Dobgury, High Story and Bubb Down.”¹

Tess enjoyed the life of Marlott in the company of the minds. Even from the dreary chores of her house-management, she could get a little time for village festivity of May-Day dance, a kind of club revel or club-walking. Like a responsible girl of her family, she helps her mother in rearing the younger ones and in managing the affair of her father as haggler. But her store feelings about the difficult circumstances around her are visible during her talks with his brother Abraham on her way to Casterbridge.

“Did you say the Stars ware worlds, Tess.”

“Tess”

“All like ours?”

“I don’t know, but I think so –

They sometimes seem to be like

1. Hardy’s – Tess of the D’Urbervilles p.5

the apples on our stubborn-tree
Most of them splendid and sound
a few blighted.”

“Which do we live on a splendid
one or a blighted one?”

“A blighted one”

“This very unlucky that we didn’t pitch
on a sound one, when there were so
many more of ‘em”

“Is it like that really, Tess”, said Abraham,
turning to her much imposed, on
reconsideration of this rare information.

‘How would it have been if we had
pitched, on a sound one?”

“Well. Father wouldn’t have coughed
and crept about as he does, and
wouldn’t have got too lippy to go
then journey, and mother wouldn’t
have been always wishing and never
getting finished.”¹

1. Tess of the D’Urbervilles, p.21

The discovery of the rich ancestry of the Durbeyfield family led John Durbeyfield to come up in high spirits and take large quantity of liquor at Rollivers' inn. He could be brought back only by Tess's interference and persuasions. But the over dose of liquor incapacitated him to move for the haggler business. The sense of responsibility compelled Tess to carry the wagon by herself in the company of Abraham, her younger brother. But as ill Fate had planned, she felt drowsy, her horse, Prince carried the wagon to the wrong track and it collided against the one coming from the opposite direction. Prince, which was the only source of a little earning for the sustenance of the family, is wounded seriously and the blood sports out of it in a gush.

The pointed shaft of the cart had entered the breast of the unhappy Prince like a sword, and from the wound his life's blood was spouting like a stream, and falling with a hiss into the road.

In her despair Tess sprang forward and put her hand upon the hole, with the only result that she became splashed from face to skirt with the crimson drops. Then she stood helplessly looking on. **“Her face was dry and pale, as though she regarded herself in the light of a murderess.”**¹

Though beautiful in appearance, the Blackmoor Vale creates many hurdles in the life of Tess. The rise of the slopes is too steady and so the decline of the road is also sharp. Tess, who mounts the wagon of Alec in a reluctant

1. Tess of the D'Urbervilles. p.23

mood, but she could not do otherwise as it was an overwhelming gesture from the side of one of the newly found in their lineage, and the one with whom she was going to get employment for the sustenance of her family, now in utterly wretched condition. And the steep slopes and the sharp declines of this part of Wessex aggravated and fan-fueled his passion all the more.

“The aspect of the straight road enlarged with their advance, the two banks dividing like a splitting stick; one rushing past at each shoulder. The wind blew thorough Tess’s white muslin to her very skin, and her washed hair flew out behind she was determined to show no open fear, but she clutched D’Urberville’s rein arm.”¹

“Don’t touch my arm! We shall be thrown out if you do! Hold on round my waist!..... She had not considered what he had been doing; whether he was man or woman, stick or stone, in her Voluntary hold on him.”

But this was enough to arouse the passion of Alec to have more and more touches of the feminine beauty. He longed for a kiss and having been rebuffed by Tess he threatened her for galloping on the steep decline. These things continued and Alec had perhaps resolved in his mind to taste the honey of Tess’s feminine tissues. He got this opportunity during that fateful night in the forests of the chase and despite himself came near and nearer and still nearer to Tess, who in her sound sleep, did not know what was happening.

1. Tess of the D’Urbervilles.p.42

2.

“The Time was not long past day-break and the yellow luminosity upon the horizon behind her back lighted the ridge towards which her face was set..... It was always beautiful from her; it was terribly beautiful to Tess today for since her eyes last fell upon it she had learnt that the serpent hisses, where the sweet birds sing, and her views of life had been totally changed for her by the lesson. Verily, another girl than the simple one she had been at home was she who, bowed by thought, stood still here and turned to look behind her. She could not bear to look forward into the Vale.”¹ Tess becomes a sane and objective thinker and wants to assert that the dying child has every right to become one with God under the scheme of Nature.

Tess, who played the role of the priest to Christianize the dying child and gave the name “Sorrow”. This bastard gift of shameless Nature passed away, **“to whom the collage interior was the universe, the week’s weather climate, new born babyhood human existence, and the instinct to suck human knowledge.”²**

But Nature persistently pursues her and does not allow that inward relief, which she has been longing to attain. Now, nature smiles around her and captivates her for certain ominous designs, which are not apparent at present. However, Nature is beautifully depicted in its gorgeous colours.

“The season developed and matured. Another year’s

1. Tess of the D’Urbervilles. p.59
2. Tess of the D’Urbervilles. p.74

installments of flowers, leaves, nightingales, thrushes, finches and such ephemeral creatures took their position, where only a year ago others had stood in their place when these were nothing more than germs and inorganic particles. Rays from the sunrise drew forth buds and stretched them into long stalks, lifted up sap in noiseless streams, opened petals, and sucked out scents in invisible jets and breathings Tess had never in her recent life been so happy as she was now, possibly never would be so happy again.”¹

Nature and love tempts Tess towards a nobler life of pure happiness. **“Amid the oozing fatness and warm of ferments of the Fromvele, at a season when the rush of juices could almost be heard below the hiss of fertilization, it was impossible that the most fanciful love should not grow passionate.”²**

The rosy cheeked, bright eyed quartet looked so charming in their light summer attire, clinging to the roadside bank like pigeons on a roof slope, that he stopped a moment to regard them before coming close. Their gauzy skirts had brushed from the grass innumerable flies and butterflies which unable to escape remained caged in the transparent tissue as in an aviary. Angele’s eye at last fell upon Tess, the handsomest of the four; she being full of suppressed laughter at their dilemma, could not help meeting his glance radiantly. The most

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1. Tess of the D’Urbervilles. p.102
 2. Tess of the D’Urbevilles. p.107

attractive way of wooing from the side of Angel Clare propels the heart of Tess as much as it could do to any woman.

Let us mark the occasion.

‘Dear darling Tessy!’ he whispered, putting his arm around her and his face to her flushed cheek. **‘Don’t for Heaven’s sake, Mister me any more. I have hastened back so soon because of you.’**¹

“Tess’s excitable heart beat against his way of reply and there they stood upon the red-brick floor of the entry, the sun slanting it by the window upon his back, as he held her tightly to his breast: upon her inclining face, upon the blue veins of her temple, upon her naked arm, and her neck, and into the depths of her hair. Having being lying down in her, clothes, she was warm as a sunned cat. At first she would not look straight up at him, but her eyes soon lifted and his plumbed the deepness of the ever varying pupils, with their radiating fibrils of blue, and black, and gray, and violent, while she regarded him as Eve at her second waking might have regarded adam.”²

At this stage, there is a lot of struggle within Tess. Her consciousness about what has gone through and the claims of Nature fuming around her, create internal pressures within her. Her Ego and Super Ego seem to win over her Libido for quite sometime. She decides to suppress her natural claims of love and writes positive ‘No’ to Angel in response to his tide of love. But this is not enough to check the advancement of Nature in the form of her Fate, which has decided to ruin her in some way or the other.

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1. Tess of the D’Urbervilles. p.105
 2. Tess of the D’Urbervilles. p.128

“Her refusal, though unexpected did not permanently daunt Clare. His experience of women was great enough for him to be aware that the negative often meant nothing more than the preface to the affirmative.”¹

Tess is conscious about her past and she wants to remain honest to her present.

“Tess why did you say “no” in such a positive way”

.....

“Don’t ask me. I told you why-partly. I am not good enough – not worthy enough.”²

Having been failed to reveal her past in her talks and conversations with Angel, she decides to write a letter about her past on the eve of the marriage day. But Fate’s working will not give her that much of liberty. It appears that this red colour of nature logs her, disturbs her and finally destroys her. In the May dance all the girls including Tess appear in white except that Tess “wore a red ribbon in her hair.” In this simple colour contrast is the embryo of the whole book and all that happens in it. Let us mark the following.

“The ripe hue of the red and demkine absorbed the evening sunlight, which the while-coated animals, returned to the eye in rays almost dazzling, even at the distant elevation on which she stood.”³

This dark red and dazzling white is something seen, it is something there, it is an effect on the retina. It is a configuration of matter. In looking at this landscape, Tess in fact is seeing the elemental mixture which conditions her own existence. At the time when the prince is wounded, the red life blood splashes from the hole in its body and when Tess tries helplessly to cheek it her white dress and white face are tintured and spotted with blood stains. Red encraches upon white and the Design of Fate is explicitly present in these happenings.

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1. Tess of the D’Urbervilled. p.128-130
 2. Ibid. p.131
 3. Tess of the D’Urbervilled. p.4

The combination of red and white in human figures as well as Nature is perceptible throughout the novel. When first she was to approach the leaning smoking Alec D'Urbervilles, he forces roses of red colour and strawberries on her pushing a strawberry into her mouth pressing the roses into her mouth, pressing the roses into her bosom. Hardy deliberately describes that D'Urberville is one, **“who stood fair to be the blood-red ray in the spectrum of her young life.”**¹

At a time when Alec presses roses in her cap, Tess, begins to bleed from the rose pressed. She takes it as an omen and she is right because later on she will again wake up to find that he was drawn blood-in a way which determines her subsequent existence. After rape we are constantly seeing the colour red. The man, who writes up the words promising damnation, is carrying **“a tin pot of red paint in his hand.”**² As a result, **“these vermilion words shone forth.”**³ Shortly after when Tess is back at home, Hardy describes a sunrise in which the sun **“broke through chinks of cottage shutters, throwing stripes like red-hot pokers upon cup-boards, chests of drawers and other furniture within.”**⁴ Hardy further writes –

“But of all ruddy things that morning the brightest were two board arms of painted wood..... forming the revolving Maltsee cross of the reaping machine.”⁵

1. Tess of the D'Urbervilles. p.81
2. Ibid. p.81
3. Ibid. p.81
4. Tess of the D'Urbervilles. p.86
5. Ibid.

We will later see Tess virtually trapped and tortured on a piece of red machinery and her way will take her past several crosses until she finds her own particular sacrificial place. At every place, the red in nature in pursuing Tess for the final reed in the form of the blood of Alec, which again splashes on her skirt and frock after she has given desperate strike with a knife. She goes to the gallows on account of this and sentenced as murderess. Nature has clogged her and destroyed her by the presence of red colour every-where around her.

Hardy makes the reader conscious about the sin of cruelties committed by the D'Urberville ancestors in this part of Wessex. When Alec trespasses the chastity of Tess during her sleep. Hardy makes the reader conscious about certain things in the heredity and environment of Tess.

“Why it was that upon this beautiful feminine tissue, sensitive as a gossamer, and practically blank as snow as yet, there should have been traced such a coarse pattern as it was doomed to receive: why so often the course appropriates the finer thus, the wrong man the woman, the wrong woman the man: Many thousand years of analytical philosophy have failed to explain to our sense of order. One may indeed admit the possibility of a retribution lurking in the present catastrophe. Doubtless some of Tess of D'Urbervilles's mailed ancestors rollicking home from a fray had dealt the same measure even more ruthlessly towards peasant girls of their time. But thought 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 mind the matter. As Tess's own people down in those retreats are never tired of saying among each other in their fantastic way: it was to be.”¹

At other places also the force of heredity is brought to show its teeth upon the fermented events around Tess. When Angel Clare pours his passion of love despite her reluctance in the matter, he carries the situation to the marriage day. Tess becomes a dazzling beauty and ascends in beautiful wagon specially hired for this purpose. In her thoughtful mood, Tess develops fancy of horrible nature. Let us mark the conversation between Angel and Tess.

‘I fancy seem oppressed, Tessy’, said Clare.

“Yes, she answered, putting her hand to her brow. “I tremble at many things. It is all so serious, Angel: Among other things. I seem to have seem this carriage before, to be very well acquainted with it. It’s very odd- I must have seen it in dream.”²

“Oh-You have heard the legend of the D’Urberville coach – that well known supersition of this country about your family when they were very popular here, and this lumbring old thing reminds you of it.”

“I have never heard of it to my knowledge”, said she, “What is the legend – may I know it”.

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1. Tess of the D’Urbervilles. p.87
 2. Tess of The D’Urbervilles. p.243
 - 3.
 - 4.

“Well—I would rather not tell it in detail just now. A certain D’Urberville of the Sixteenth or the seventeenth century committed a dreadful crime in his family coach; and since that time members of the family see or hear the old coach whenever – but I will tell you another day – it is rather gloomy.”¹

In the novel, we are twice given hints that Tess’s sufferings are related to the crime of one of her ancestors. Just after the wedding, as Tess sits in the carriage she feels that she has seen the carriage before. She seems to be very well acquainted with it, although the only explanation that she can think of, is that she, **“must have seen it in a dream.”²** Angel tells her that she must have heard of the legend of the D’Urberville Coach. Tess, oddly-enough, has not heard of the legend and entreats Angel to tell her about it. Angel just tells her that some ancestor of hers, **“committed a dreadful crime in his family coach; and since that time members of the family see or hear the odd coach whenever- But I’ll tell you another day.”³** The incompleteness of the account adds a sinister touch to the legend and when Tess asks whether members of her family see the coach before their death or when they have committed a crime, we are inclined to feel with the author that the furies are demanding retribution. A little before the beginning of the last phase, Tess again hears **“a carriage and horses.”⁴**

In utter poverty and wretchedness, she has waited for Angel’s forgiveness.

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1. Tess of The D’Urbervilles. p.243-244
 2. Tess of The D’Urbervilles. p.224
 3. Ibid. p.224
 4. Ibid. p.397

Now she is on the point of losing all faith. The tempter has found an opportune moment and Tess finds that only by listening to him she can make reparation to the family. She has proof enough that the family would not have driven away from home like this if she, the sinner, had not been living with them. **“Even since the occurrence of the event which had cast a shadow over Tess’s life, the Durbeyfield family..... had been tactily looked on as one which would have to go when their lease ended, if only in the interests of morality.”**¹

These protectors of morality are heartless enough to resent Tess’s trying to restore the obliterated grave of her baby and they scold Tess’s mother for “harbouring” her sinful daughter in the house. Joan offers to leave the place and they are relived that their village will be saved from pollution, by the presence of one who had sinned against society, though not against nature. So,

Tess rightly reflects that had, **“She not come home her mother and the children might probably have been allowed to stay on as weekly tenants.”**²

Just as this, when she is more inclined towards desperation than faith, she hears the coach. But it is only Alec, who says that perhaps, she heard the D’Urberville’s coach. He also tells her that.

“This sound of a non-existent coach can only be heard by one of D’Urberville blood, and it is held to be of ill omen to the one who hears it. It has to do with a murder, committed by one of the family, centuries ago

1. Tess of The D’Urbervilles. p.395-396
2. Ibid. p.396

One of the family is said to have abducted some beautiful woman, who tried to escape from the coach in which he was carrying her off, and in the struggle he killed her-or she killed him.....”¹

At the time when Tess’s father breathes his last, the tenancy that stood in his name expires and the entire family becomes rudderless. They have to vacate the hurts in which they were living. The small piece of land for the little sustenance of the family also stands lost for them lawfully. At the social front the reputation of the family has undergone a drawn change due to the happenings with Tess and, therefore, the villagers are not ready to tolerate them as weekly tenants. Family, the entire family has to vacate the premises. Hardy writes at the occasion with the ancestral Sine in view.

“Thus the Durbeyfields, One D’Urbervilles, saw descending upon them the destiny which, no doubt, when they were among the Olympians of the country, they had caused to descend many a time, and severely enough, upon the heads of such landless ones as they themselves were now. So do flux and reflux – the rhythm of change-alternate and persist in everything under the sky.”²

Fate in the novels of Hardy appears different forms. Sometime it appears as a natural force. Henchard’s plans for making himself rich are frustrated by a bad harvest: here Fate takes the shape of weather. Sometimes Fate appears as some innate weakness of character. Jude’s life is ruined because he has been endowed at birth, through no wish of his own, with an intensity of sexual temperament which he cannot control and which ruins him. Chiefly, however, Fate in Hardy’s novels appears in two guises – as chance and as Love. Of these chance is the most typical.

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1. Tess of the D’Urbervilles p.398
 2. Tess of The D’Urbervilles. p.394

CONCLUSION

Love for Nature and the use of natural objects for different literary purposes have been common features of the English literary geniuses. The English people have generally enjoyed the natural background and the same has flowed in their writings. William Wordsworth achieved high watermark as the poet of Nature. Several other poets and writers have also dwelt on the scenes of nature and have picked up their images from the variegated aspects of Nature. Thomas Hardy is such a great novelist that he fuses real poetry in his narrative art. He was the child of the Wessex region and the natural surroundings of this region captivated the poetic eyes of Thomas Hardy time to time. More over Thomas Hardy has projected a view of life, gloomy and serious. He has discovered a definite scheme of life in the suffering of mankind. In order to project his view of life he takes help of natural surroundings of the Wessex region. Sometimes nature is presented with smiling face, another time it is shown with a gloomy face, but everytime it contributes the tragedy of mankind.

The influence of Nature in the early novels is social, as it is related to the behaviour pattern and mannerisms of the characters. People living in a particular society are affected through a particular way of Nature that governs the society. Here Nature is scattered forming a social background in which the characters live. If one tries to violate the social background formed by Nature, one will be

punished by Nature.

Desperate Remedies is the first published novel of Thomas Hardy, giving ample evidences of nature paintings. Here, Hardy describes the characters using the imagery of nature which continues up to the last novel written by him. Hardy draws a beautiful picture of brilliant patterns of colours formed by flower beds on the lawn creates a feeling of freedom in Cytherea. She craves for outdoor employment, to sleep under the trees of knowing no enemy except winter and cold weather. Her passion for outward life reveals that she is not interested in the life of servitude and dependence.

Under the Greenwood Tree shows a remarkable improvement in the author's painting of nature and association with Nature. Here he appears to be a changed man who has become more intimate with Nature as he is able to discern the voices of every species of trees.

The novel is remarkable in its successful attempts at bringing close the beginning, development and maturity of the love with the rhythmic pattern of season cycle.

Hardy enlarges his vision of Nature from earthly nature to the stellar Nature portraying human figures against a starry sky. The Mellstock choir group is the first rustic group having a collective mind speaking of the truth ominous in Nature. They are very much the product like the trees

and animals. Hardy gives importance to the lower animals like bees in this novel as they can be used to evoke large patterns in trivial terms. Their integral life, hard work and domesticity relate them to the rustics.

In **Under the Green-wood Tree**, Hardy learnt to use his rural background and rustic chorus while in writing **A Pair Of Blue Eyes**, he handled characters on a large scale. Here we come across the prose-style that becomes characteristic of Hardy's tragic mood reflected in terms of Nature. Hardy describes the church that is to be restored in terms of Nature because it is a place of social gathering. Church stood near the sea appearing gray and small with a grave-yard nearby.

A Pair of Blue Eyes is significant for the cliff adventure. Elfride Swan Court goes twice to the cliffs. When she goes with Stephen she loses her earnings and undergoes a vain search. The missing of earnings signifies Elfride missing Stephen for Henry knight. She goes with Henry to the cliff for the second time, when Henry meets with an accident and hang by the last outlying knot of stered herbage from a vertical height of the cliff without, a name. Henry views the bubble of man's precarious being and struggles weakly under the empty Wessex sky.

A contrast between Nature and the images drawn from Industrial and modern life reveals the importance of purity and innocence that is related to Nature. In **Despite Remedies** when Miss Aldclyffe does not know about Cytherea's growing love for Edward, considers her as a fresh spring meadow. Similarly in **A Pair of Blue Eyes**, Stephen coming from London is a man with clothes smelling of city smoke and skin sallow from want of sun.

The Trumpet Major is the seventh novel of Hardy presenting a genial and happy love-story, more soberly realistic than the foregoing in its picture of family life and of the fickle sailor lover. The anxiety and suspense prevailing in the southern countries during the Napoleonic terror is a leading motive. The most rewardable aspect is that the details are described from the position of Anne's mother, widow of the artist.

The arrival of army is illustrated by Hardy as the clouds of dust forming a lively spectacle against a pale blue sky lit by southerly Sun. History presented as a stream in this novel makes its central binary opposition between stability and change.

Oxwell House, once a place of aristocratic values and natural

way of leading life, looks like a neglected meadow. Hardy's view on soldiers are also depicted in this novel as people robbing the nests of hen and stealing the young one's of pigs.

The artistic presentation of Nature when Anne spends her hours in the garden inside the mill listening to the sighing birds, beholding butterflies along with the tickling sound of the brook. The harp made by John Loveday tunes every night during the mournfull gales of autumn with the music of water and wind, swelling and sinking with a supernatural cadence.

Two on a Tower is a fanciful and unreal story with strong dash of poetry. It portrays human drama and the vastness of the stellar universe. Hardy's main intention in this novel is to bring forward the significance of human beings in comparison to the adventures of the space.

Tower is the most important place in the novel stretching towards the sky as a vestibule of space. Nearly all the events occur at the Tower or at the Great House from which it is visible. The topology of the novel is simple but its few landmarks have suggestive overtones like the leisured description of the hill and the Tower with its sighing Hardian tress below building an impression of isolation and loneliness. Swithin is preoccupied with higher things. Hardy although presents Swithin as an astronomer of the scientific

age, but he did not forget that the stars were inescapably associated with ancient mythologies and perhaps in extinguishable superstitions.

The Hand of Ethelberta is usually dismissed as the most brittle and superficial of Hardy's work but it is important so far as the thought is concerned. Ethelberta, a poetess of love charms and accomplishment is the central character in this novel. In her case she turns even marriage to be a means of realizing the welfare of the family.

Hardy presents comparison between urban and rural life by picturing Nature. He depicts the picture of sunrise in London and compares it with sunset in the country side.

Hardy seems to be autobiographical in this novel because like Somerset, Hardy also had been a young man of electric intellectual interest. He also reflected on poetry and theology as a matter of more importance than a profession. Winds and rain are the symbols of Nature's menacing forces. The spider web in which Somerset is entangled signifies the trap in which he will fall later. Nature reminds Paula of Somerset when she is travelling abroad.

Far From the Madding Crowd presents rustic characters

and evocative description of sheep raising along with the correlation between man's repetitive and sometimes frenzied activities and the calmly placeable forces of Nature.

Nature is presented as a force in the form of the wind beating about and playing its various tunes upon the grass and trees on Norcombe Hill. The Norcombe Hill is a shape approaching the indestructible forming only a background and not, like the Egdon, a leading character in **The Return of the Native**.

The animal kingdom is enlivened by the process of lambing the ewes, protecting and caring those little specks of life. The result of the energetic force of the pet dog of Oak is fatal resulting in the death of all the lambs.

The great storm scene after the marriage of Bathsheba and Troy throws light on the growing crisis, presenting men, women and the landscape acting and reacting on each other. Oak could understand the language of Nature, so he is able to save the cornrick.

The Return of the Native presents a tragic story against a background suggesting the insignificance of mortality with reference to time. Egdon Heath is one of the most animated description of Nature in English Literature. It appears that there is only Egdon Heath while other characters are only sniveling round it. It appears as a force, full of action forcing man to love, to hate, to despair or to philosophic mind. Egdon Heath personifies nature which

is the emblem of the impersonal fate. The Heath is permeated with dingy and dark atmosphere. It is an extended image of nature of which man is a vital part.

Hardy has not forgotten to give voice to the Egdon Heath in the form of plaintive November winds bearing a resemblance to the ruins of human song. Egdon Heath is revengeful as it will engulf the happiness of its defectors or enemies like a hydra headed monster.

It seems strange that in **The Mayor of Casterbridge** which is no doubt a master piece, nature does not enter as powerfully as in the other three masterpieces. This does not mean that nature is neglected in this novel. We must not forget that Henchard was a hay-trusser who, later on became the mayor.

Henchard's fall cannot be fully ascribed to the paralysis of will or the keeping of the power in abeyance. Nature plays havoc with him most probably to teach him lesson that wrong actions must invite retribution. Henchard's rash act under the strong influence of alcohol is one of the most immortal acts. The remarriage of Henchard with Susan was a reparatory act of his own but even then Nature's violence against him goes unabated till he reaches the point from where he has begun amidst insults and the thwartations.

The rivalry between Henchard and Farfrae is reflected through Nature many times in the novel. Every time Nature supports Farfrae which is evident in the scene when Henchard's entertainment is destroyed by heavy rain with the winds playing on the tent chord in Aeolian unprovisation.

The second blow of Nature on Henchard is in the form of the change in weather not according to the forecaster. Nature can change the course of events after the prediction of an expert. Fate expressed itself as hostile weather which is Henchard's ruin. The forecast goes in vain and Henchard loses heavily.

The Woodlanders is the extension of the images of trees present in **Under the Greenwood Tree**. Here the woods are forceful in giving life and death to the woodlanders. The woods symbolize a place of innocence, safety and natural fertility. Nature in this novel represents the post-Darwanian view point. South has been identified with the trees. He claims that the birth of the trees coincides with that of his own. So, when the tree is felled, he dies. This shows the interdependence between the natural life and the human life.

There are two basic groups in the novel-one that of woodlanders and the other of ex-urbanities who are un deliberately subjected

to a wide range of misfortune which nature and society can bring. We see that the nature in the masterpiece acts like a force shaping the moods of characters, colouring their disposition, dominating their Destiny.

Nature in the later novels becomes inseparable from human nature. Human beings and Nature are united in the later novels so that we cannot differentiate between the two.

There can be no better example of this oneness of nature and character, other than **Tess of the D'Urbervilles**. Tess is not only the pure woman, the country girl but she is the entire agricultural community in the moment of ruin. She is identified with nature on social, rural and urban levels. Her character is defined and justified by metaphors of flora and fauna, with the changing face of the earth which directs and reflects her emotional life.

Jude the Obscure is unexpectedly most modern turning away from agricultural setting and pastoral myth to a restless world of cities and psychological insecurities. In this novel, Nature serves the purpose of heightening the somberness of atmosphere filling the minds of the readers with lugubrious thoughts.

Jude's ambition to get higher education is the root cause of all his troubles.

Besides his frantic efforts to reach the level of educated man, he answers to the call of sex and marriages. This goes against the will of Nature and he is ultimately punished.

In **Jude the Obscure** nature is seen as red in tooth and claw. The working of Nature in the village home of Jude is bleak and repellent.

In **The Well Beloved** Hardy has subjected, the Platonic mysticism of beauty to critical examination presenting his philosophy of love. The true order of beauty is to begin to love from the beauties of earth and mount upwards for the sake of that other beauty, step from fair forms to fair practices and from fair practices to fair notions and finally from fair notions up to Absolute Beauty.

Hardy seems to conclude that aesthetic quest is fruitless since nothing ethereal or earthly exists in the objective scene to fulfill it. Beauty is a subjective illusion endowed on the figure of the beloved by the refined and unconscious sexual desire of the lover which discovers her to be suitable for gratification. Social wisdom, Hardy thought,

ought to discipline out desire and guide our actions. It can greatly alleviate, if not quite cure, much of many suffering.

In the microcosm of Hardy's novels there is un question a power-conscious or unconscious, personal or impersonal – that controls, influences, at least hampers and hinders the doings of man. And yet so convincing is the narrator's art, so intensely conceived are the situations that it is impossible to feel that other than this could have happened. Neither fear nor enthusiasm can make him swerve an inch from the iron course of the inevitable sequence of things which is as his theme.

Hardy's views regarding the role of nature in the cosmos are shaped by first, John Stuart Mill's famous essay on Nature second by Schopenhauer's, "**The World as Will and Idea**", and third by Charles Darwin's **Origin of Species**. These three words were like the big boulders thrown into the still waters of a lake which dropped with a loud splash and disfigured the calm and smooth surface. Schopenhauer shook the foundation of the idea of God while

Mill gave a loud voice to the Cruelty of Nature. Charles Darwin, on the other hand, referred to the presence of blood in Nature and innumerable killings in Nature regarding Man as the final product of natural selection. Nature in the early novels of Hardy forms the social background. The plots of these novels have touches of Hardy's powerful sketching of village life, rustic groups and nature. We find fresh glimpses of Nature to explore the deep feelings of characters realistically and impressionistically Nature in the early novels is integral to the action and so it is not aesthetically commendable.

Desperate Remedies, the novel does not abound in Nature paintings, but it definitely shows the tendency of the novelists. The fire episode in the novel is significant as it presents Nature as a cruel and malignant force. The house on fire is compared with the bee-hives and corn which are highly combustible. Fire in his scene serves as a symbol of destruction that is going to take place in the life of the characters.

Nature is also portrayed with Gothic reminiscences when Cythera dreams that she was being whipped with dry bones suspended on strings blowing with every rattle like those of a male-factor on a gibbet.

In **Desperate Remedies**, Hardy appears to be man recently come in the company of Nature through his minute observation knowing every whim of nature.

The novel- **Under the Greenwood Tree** shows a remarkable improvement and it turns out to be true to its promise and we have the love story of Dick Dewy and Fancy Day which sprouts and matures under the green wood tree ending with the voice of Nightingale which serves the purpose of clarinet at the time of marriage. The novel is divided into five parts Winter, Spring, Summer, Autumn and conclusion. There is no sign of love in winter, it germinates in Spring is nurtured in summer and matures in autumn which finally leads to a happy conclusion.

It seems that the two lovers dance to the tunes of the season and rhythm of nature. Although Trees enjoy a still life, yet they seem to be most akin to humanity. They come near men in their amenability to birth, growth decay and death. The book begins with the detailed description of trees personifying human beings living among them and ends with trees becoming a social symbol. The objects of Nature such as birds, rabbits, moles, insects, which inhabit nature, are replaced by the villagers who seek shelter in nature to celebrate occasions like child-birth and marriage.

The ghostly birds, the pall like sea, the frothy wind, the eternal soliloquy of water and the bloom of dark purple coast seem to exhale land to the scene an atmosphere like twilight of a night vision. Hardy describes the place near the church, with no trees, as it was a place of social gathering, only the gray-green grass grew there.

Hardy presents his characters in the vast background of Nature with all metaphysical meaning and silent to human hopes. Struggling for lie at the Cliffs, Henry views the fossilized creature's eyes dead and turned to stone in the rock, with the deep sea of death waiting below engulf him: In this situation knight symbolizes man aware of his place and time feeling the sea as a funeral, when he is a hair's breadth from death.

Henry and Stephen both fail to get Elfride because both of them do not want her for her self.

They seek an adjunct to their own personality. Stephen desires a queen and knight, a spotless purity Lord Luxellian who is imbued with the social customs of the place, can only give companionship to Elfride but he is also associated with sickness and death.

In the minor novels of Thomas Hardy, the role of nature is depicted, from the artist's point of view. In all the four minor novels, the depiction of nature is not as it was in the early novels. Nature is a matter of rare mention in these novels but whenever he paints a natural picture he puts artistic colour to it.

Overcombe Mill is presented as a work place embodying an immemorial agrarian way of life and encroaching industrialization in the form of the music of the machines.

Maltida Johnson, being alien to the rural life, elopes as she was unable to express the glamour of the hill, the shimmer of the foliage or the wealth of the glory of the sea.

The human world of hopes and fears is superfluous in the impersonal universe with enormous balls of fire whirling and floating in the infinite emptiness. The awareness of this superfluity implies to the average man absolute pessimism but strong and courageous man is not disheartened at this awareness.

Swithin has been drawn from his celestial study for the sake of Love for Vivette Constantine. She appears as a star to Swithin.

There are three groups in the novel represented by the Great House and its

inhabitants, the village in the Bottom and the villagers and the Tower itself where Swithin resides. His movement between Weylland Bottom and Weylland House dramatize the social dilemma from which the Tower offers him at least the illusion of escape.

Ethelberta is different from Hardy's other women characters-neither capricious, not submissive, neither erotic nor neurotic. Instead she is a woman of strong purpose, masculine command and powerful ambition. All these traits of her character are visible when she runs to see the conclusion of the struggle between the duck and the hawk. The struggle is remarkable for the Darwinian quality of survival symbolizing Ethelberta's struggle and appetite for life.

Julian, his sister, faith, and even the family of Ethelberta represent simple country life in communion with Nature. The superfluity of the urban life is depicted through the Farnfield park mansion of Mr. Neigh. The mansion is concealed in the fog which symbolizes the complexity and confusion concealing the reality of the place. It also reveals the rottenness on which metropolitan leisure and elegance are based.

The novel ends with the marriage of Lord Mountelere and Ethelberta, but it appears as if Hardy lost direction in this novel. Ethelberta sacrifices herself for her family but the family was doing well in the country. It is through her situation that Hardy underlines once more his conservative theme that it is tempting fate to get out of one's social class but actually it is an invitation to instability of life and to probable disaster.

Hardy works out a romance between George Somerset, an ardent young architect and Paula Power, the lukewarm girl in **A Laodicean**. Hardy here illustrates his view on art considering all styles extinct and all architecture as a living art. According to Hardy art is full of shifts at all times as every other mundane thing. Ideal perfection is never achieved in art.

Paula Power is a modern maid who refuses baptism by total immersion. She has occupied Stancy Castle, which exemplifies the changing order in country manors and mansions. Contrary to it is Myrtle Villa where the

air of cheerfulness pervades. Stancy Castle appears to be one of the most interesting characters in the novel operating effectively physically and symbolically the potentialities of architect as a source of moral and social criteria.

The final act of burning the old Stancy Castle is significant as both Somerset and Paula are prepared to accept the modern spirit in its architectural embodiment.

When we come to the masterpieces written by Hardy, we immediately realize the force exerted by Nature in these novels. The characters in these novels are enmeshed in the situation compounded out by their own weaknesses and they fall in the clutch of circumstances but retain their individuality and force.

Hardy's interest in the stellar space deepens with the novel **Far From The Madding Crowd**. The stars exert a force in this novel because they help Oak in finding the direction as well as time. He always carefully examined

the sky, to ascertain the time of night from the attitudes of the stars. The novel is significant for the portrayal of outdoor nature, to a very large extent by night under black and starry skies.

After receiving the Valentine, Boldwood emerges brimming with passion. He finds the sunrise harmonizing with his flood of passion. Bathsheba lit him up as the moon lights a tower. Her valentine is like a speed thrown of on the hot bed of tropic intensity. Bathsheba is a man who lives in accordance with Nature fully conscious of reality, ready to modify and improve.

The gargoyle scene is another example of disastrous forces of Nature punishing Tray by rejecting his offerings. He tried to beautify the earth but forces of water had wrecked the ground which is an image of barrenness not just of the grave but also of the womb of posterity.

Eustacia is presented as the Queen of Night. Her first appearance is a mysterious figure like a natural addition to the summit of the Barrow where darkness and rain are in harmony with her mood. The entire imagery used for Eustacia is drawn from natural phenomenon enveloped in mystery.

Clym Yeobright is presented as the child of Edgon working as a furze-cutter in harmony with the force of nature and the entire animal kingdom including bees, butterflies, grass hoppers, flies, birds and other animals.

The Reddleman is the spirit of the Health and for Thomasin Edgon is an impersonal ground Edgon wearies out the mother of Clym and pills her with an adder from its own boson. It is a part of nature enmity that she should be bitten by the snake on her way home.

The setting of the novel, (**The Mayor of Casterbridge**) is against an agricultural background. Henchard's house, his granary and agricultural implements are enough to convince the reader of the environment amidst which he and later on Farfrae lived. It is more as foil and Fate that Nature has entered the novel.

Casterbridge presented in the novel is a complement of rural life around. It was a town with com fields but having Roman features. Lucetta is an invader in this agricultural community. Therefore, in the Skimmity ride which is one of

the great accomplishment in the grotesque, Lucetta is enmeshed and she dies in the last. It is the punishment given to the persons, who are immoral, by the rustics of Mixen Lane. In the last chapter, Henchard is like a man returned to his natural home preferring to lay down under a hay rick, to sleep profoundly and awakened by the bright sun. His financial ruin is the example of the harshness of Nature because he was deprived of wealth through agriculture which mainly depends on Nature.

In **The Woodlanders**, the peace of the Woodland is disturbed by two persons whose place should be rather in London or Paris. Lady Charmond and Dr. Fitzpier are characters separated from the rich sources of organic life. They lack the natural virtues present in Marty and Giles.

Giles and Marty understand the life of the trees. Giles is described by Hardy as the true brother of Autumn stained from top to bottom with cider. He represents the happy innocence of the woods and is killed during the storm in woods.

Grace Melbury is the representative of a balance between the woodlanders and the urban characters. She belongs to the wood solely. The story is of people wondering through a darkened wood with baffling pathways and unexpected encounters and above all the lives of good people, destroyed by selfishness. Giles's death signifies the loss of some precious organic vitality loss to this fallen world.

The use of stellar space is extended from **Two on a Tower and Far from the Madding Crowd** to **Tess**, when she and Abraham go in the starry night with the honey to face the hardest blow of nature in the form of killing of their horse, Prince, which will change the entire course of Tess's life. The basic myth of the **Woodlanders** is reiterated with some difference in **Tess**.

The novel is remarkable for its persistent unity of mood and action. It is also remarkable for the way landscape is continually brought to life in order to deepen and intensify the experience of Tess. The unity of nature and Tess is reflected in the schematic, way in which each stage of Tess's life is set. Hardy calls these stages as 'Phases' as though she was a natural phenomenon like the

phases of moon. Her childhood and innocence is in the tame and mild vale of Blackmoor; her education is in the sensual paradise garden of Talboothays Dairy; her period of desolation in the dreary and unforgiving Flint comb-Ash stripped off comfort and vegetation as she is of love and hope; and finally her sacrificial consummation on the altar scene of Stonehenge.

Alec is the representative of the newly developed aristocracy assuming the old names replacing old heritage by new culture. If Alec sacrifices Tess to his lust, Angel sacrifices her to his theory of womanly purity. If one obeys a natural law, the other obeys a social law. It is outside Wessex that Angel has access to that wisdom which makes him review, his behavior towards Tess.

Nature has accentuated the solitude of Jude. Here and there we meet with rain and wind amid which Jude wonders, the cumulative effect of which is to intensify his difficult situations.

The cause of Hardy's disturbance in **Jude the Obscure** is not the scorn of nature but the cold cruelty of society towards an individual member.

The marriage of Jude and Arabella is an example of a bad marriage binding together as it does persons of such antagonistic natures as Arabella a coarse butcher-girl and Jude whose heart bleeds even for crawling earth-worms.

The marriage of Sue and Philliston is certainly not a bad marriage but Sue deserts Philliston. She is a supersensitive neurotic case, not a healthy individual fit for natural social existence. Philliston appears truly creative from the ethical point of view by his views on marriage and morals, and in his courage to go against conventions. The turning point in the novel appears with Father Time Killing Sue's children. Nature is sure to bring forth children although man may never want them. But when they are born, it is the parent's prime duty to look well after them. Not soulless custom or social institution but new souls growing up under the heartless heavens require, somewhere in the land of exile, a home with natural parental affection.

Jocelyn Pierston in **The Well Beloved** is engaged in a similar pursuit. His beloved is not a physical being. She is a spirit, a dream, a frenzy, a

conception, an aroma, an epitomized sex, a light of the eye, an abstract principle as it were, manifest now in this woman, now in that. His trouble is that this essential Well Beloved had not remained the occupant of the same fleshly tabernacle in her career so far. Each mournful emptied shape stands even after like the nest of some beautiful bird from which the inhabitant has departed and left it to fill with snow. The three vices in his view are interpenetrated with her essence, which he loved.

Hence, the quest for beauty must be abandoned along with all assertive desires in order to bring about the realization of inward serenity. Pierston feels relived and happy when near the end of the novel, this curious curse had led him such a dance just after a will-o-the wisp, dies in him with dawn of wisdom.

In our opinion it is wrong to assume that the rejection of optimism implies the adoption of pessimism. Pessimism often signifies not a belief in bad universe, but a mental state of unrelieved despair. It is our firm belief that in Nature man is endowed with freedom. Therefore, it is for man to decide,

whether to work out an ethical harmony with his world, or to worsen further the divorce between the two, whether to maintain his natural wages or to transform them into a better shape, suitable to his surrounding, to languish dissatisfied upon the desert pining of greenery and flowers, or to make the desert itself a beauty-spot by desiring nothing more than its dry stands to be happy, in short, in the human situation in spite of its religious or to be miserable on their account.

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