

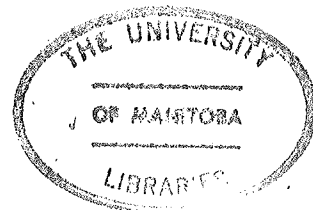
"THE ACHE OF MODERNISM":
A STUDY OF THE DIVIDED SELF IN HARDY'S LATER FICTION

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies
University of Manitoba

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Patricia D. Strugar

October, 1983



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But no, this heart will glow no more; thou art
A living man no more, Empedocles!
Nothing but a devouring flame of thought--
But a naked, eternally restless mind!¹

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Chapter One

The Edenic Worlds: Under the Greenwood Tree and Far From the Madding Crowd

Thomas Hardy can be regarded as a transitional figure in the development of the novel. Producing his major fiction in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, a time when philosophical, religious and cultural certitudes were being eroded, he depicts in the late novels a world of change and conflict. By means of examining the early novels, Under the Greenwood Tree (1872) and Far From the Madding Crowd (1874), in juxtaposition with the late works, The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886), Tess of the d'Urbervilles (1891) and Jude the Obscure (1895), one can see a movement away from the portrayal of man in primal harmony with himself and his environment towards the creation of characters who are self-divided and hopelessly severed from a stable external reality and the religious and philosophical certitudes that might have served them had they lived in an earlier age. This study will examine the theme of self-division in the aforementioned late novels. It will trace the development and eventual culmination of Hardy's treatment of the divided self and show the way in which his artistic techniques are modified to delineate the interior world of his characters.

Before discussing Under the Greenwood Tree and Far From the Madding Crowd as fictional presentations of an Edenic world, relatively untouched by change and conflict, it is necessary to provide a context of ideas in which to place the novels under analysis. One is then better able to view the development of Hardy's character portrayal from the

early works where his characters have a strong sense of inner stability to the late works, where his central characters suffer from the estranged and self-conscious "ache of modernism."² Hardy, as man and artist, spanned a period of rapid disruption and transition in philosophical, religious and social thought. In his major novels one can see his artistic vision shift from an early depiction of a harmonious and stable world to the presentation of a later one that is imbued with terror and the crisis of the alienated individual. Barry Schwartz comments upon Hardy as a transitional writer:

Hardy [can be seen] as a transitional figure, a man rooted in the Victorian tradition but so alienated by the scientific view of man, and the rapid industrialization taking place, that his sensibilities anticipate the fears of twentieth-century life and anticipate what is now a common psychological phenomenon: estrangement, alienation.³

While some of Hardy's early characters encounter conflicts, they do not experience the inner chaos and self-division of the men and women of the later works who dwell in a world that lacks supportive values. To read Hardy's two early Wessex novels, Under the Greenwood Tree and Far From the Madding Crowd, in comparison with The Mayor of Casterbridge, Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure, is to see "the glory and the freshness of a dream"⁴ attenuate and fade into the "strange disease of modern life, / with its sick hurry, its divided aims, / its heads o'er-tax'd, [and] its palsied hearts. . . ." ⁵ Hardy's last major novel, Jude the Obscure, depicts the initial stages of the "fear and trembling of the modern existentialist imagination."⁶ In this work Hardy paints a poignant picture of the human being imprisoned by his own consciousness, certain of only one thing: the fact of his own alienation from

both himself and his surroundings.

To Hardy, rural England, untouched by expansive industrialization and urban innovation, embodied characteristics of harmony and order. Hardy believed that the strong attachment to the land that is distinctive of unblemished rustic existence developed in the human being a firm sense of community and an ability to adapt his way of life in accordance with the environment. In such surroundings custom, legend, folklore and other sustainers of continuity and tradition flourished. Hardy comments on the way in which intrusions into the rural order disrupted the many outgrowths of rootedness:

The change at the root of this [the rural way of life] has been the recent supplanting of the class of stationary cottagers, who carried on the local traditions and humours, by a population of more or less migrating labourers which has led to a break of continuity in local history, more fatal than any other thing to the preservation of legend, folk-lore, close intersocial relations, eccentric individualities. For these the indispensable conditions of existence are attachment to the soil of one particular spot by generation after generation.⁷

While Hardy viewed change and its effects on rural England as inevitable, he nevertheless lamented the cost of this overthrow: the loss of a way of life resilient and vital in its solidarity and simplicity.

The Edenic myth and the myth of the fall of man informs several of the novels under discussion. In the early works, Hardy depicts a stable rural world that is Edenic both in setting and in terms of the human being's unified relationship with himself and his environment. In the later novels, the setting changes; nature is no longer described as being idyllic and unblemished. Further, in mythical terms, man has undergone expulsion from the garden. Alone and in terror, he must grapple with his own consciousness and his separation from his surround-

ings in a hostile fallen world.⁸

The vision of an Edenic rural world, with its quality of "attachment to the soil of one particular spot by generation after generation" (Madding Crowd, p. 39), is illustrated in Under the Greenwood Tree, published in 1872.⁹ When juxtaposed with the worlds of the later novels, the secluded and stable rural existence portrayed in this work "will come to seem distant and unavailable, a . . . memory by which to judge the troubled present."¹⁰ The evocative setting can be described as pastoral and Edenic. The novel abounds in rich and vivid representations of nature in its seasonal changes. In this world he creates, summer is fecund and vital, and winter is serene and restful. At no time is there conflict among the elements of the natural world; concord and the cyclical rhythm of continuity permeate the entire locality.

The rustics who are traditional inhabitants of this sequestered Eden live in simple and natural harmony with their environment. The opening of the novel shows the way in which these characters, because of their close proximity to nature, infuse it with vital human qualities:

To dwellers in a wood almost every species of tree has its voice as well as its feature. At the passing of the breeze the fir-trees sob and moan no less distinctly than they rock; the holly whistles as it battles with itself; the ash hisses amid its quiverings; the beech rustles while its flat boughs rise and fall. And winter, which modifies the note of such trees as shed their leaves, does not destroy its individuality.

(Greenwood Tree, p. 33)

These simple denizens of the wood do not see their surroundings as separate from themselves; trees sob, moan, hiss and quiver as though they were infused with the quickening spirit of human emotion.

Because the members of Mellstock are in this way attached to the natural environment, the novel is pervaded with a strong sense of community

and an unspoken awareness of human solidarity. All of these rustics live according to the cycles of nature and thus they have an instinctive understanding of one another. The early part of the novel, in its descriptions of the camaraderie in the tranter's cottage and the warmth and festivity of the Christmas singing rounds, depicts a harmony that becomes--in the later works--a mere nostalgic memory.

What happens in this rooted community during the course of the novel shows the way in which the traditional rural way of life ultimately triumphs over change and urban influence. One learns that the Mellstock choir, the embodiment of ancient custom and the cohesive force of the entire community, is to be overthrown by the decision of the new vicar, Parson Maybold, who desires to replace this ancestral establishment by a single organ-player.¹¹ The organist, who re-enters the rural world after exposure to sophisticated society, has, like the vicar, modern tendencies which cause disruptions (albeit slight) in the age-old community of Mellstock. Fancy Day captures the hearts of both the polished vicar and the guileless Dick Dewey, son of the local tranter. Following some frivolous and coquettish behavior on the part of Fancy, she eventually marries Dick and rustic harmony is restored.

There are two plot strands in the novel, one concerning the choir and the other involving the love relationship of Fancy and Dick. In both cases one can see "conflicts between new and old, between refinement and simplicity, between art and nature" which take place when "innovation encroaches on parish tradition in the double form of a new vicar and a new school-teacher."¹² The Choir, that "ancient body of minstrels" (Greenwood Tree, p. 104), characterizes the simplicity and natural harmony of the old order. Although lacking superficial refinement, its members embody

qualities of integrity, dignity and devotion to duty. Its function as a Choir is to sing in praise of the parish faith and to keep alive a deeply rooted connection with the past and the customs of Mellstock's forefathers.

Early in the novel there is a foreshadowing of the intrusion that is to overthrow the choir. Mail, a choir member, reflects:

Times have changed from the times they used to be. . . . People don't care much about us now! I've been thinking we must be almost the last left in the country of the old string players? Barrel-organs, and the things next door to 'em that you blow wi' your foot, have come in terribly of late years.

(Greenwood Tree, p. 51)

It is not long before such an innovation is instituted in Mellstock; Parson Maybold, the outsider with fashionable ideas, decides to dismiss the choir and establish Fancy Day as leader of the Sunday services. Although the choir recedes into the background of parish worship, Hardy makes certain that none of its respectability and dignity are lost; the description of the defunct choir in church on the day of Fancy's inauguration reveals its sad but dignified acceptance of innovation:

The old choir, with humbled hearts, no longer took their seats in the gallery as heretofore . . . but were scattered about with their wives in different parts of the church. Having nothing to do with conducting the service for almost the first time in their lives they all felt awkward, out of place, abashed and inconvenienced by their hands. . . . But, whether from prejudice or unbiassed judgment, the venerable body of musicians could not help thinking that the simpler notes they had wont to bring forth were more in keeping with the simplicity of their old church than the crowded chords and interludes it was her [Fancy's] pleasure to produce.

(Greenwood Tree, p. 179)

Although the choir is superseded, it will nevertheless remain a memory of rural custom and social integration to the folk of Mellstock.

In the second plot strand of the novel, which involves the courtship and ultimately the marriage of Fancy and Dick, Hardy again shows how modern refinement clashes with rural tradition. Fancy, who has been sent away from rustic surroundings by her father to become educated and cultivated, has unconventional ideas that conflict with the stable and conservative values of Dick. She is a vain coquette, frivolous and fickle in nature. She subtly betrays Dick, without his knowledge, by accepting the impulsive marriage proposal of Parson Maybold. When she finally retracts this irresolute commitment, she provides Maybold with an explanation for her initial affirmative response. Her statement is unwittingly revealing:

It is my nature--perhaps all women's--to love refinement of mind and manners; but even more than this, to be ever fascinated with the idea of surroundings more elegant and pleasing than those which have been customary. And you praised me, and praise is life to me. It was alone my sensations at these things which prompted my reply. Ambition and vanity they would be called; perhaps they are so.

(Greenwood Tree, p. 188)

It appears that in the case of this young woman, "refinement improves the surface of life but decreases moral worth by imposing on a character a seemingly false set of values."¹³

Fancy ultimately chooses Dick and the two lovers marry. While the rural world has suffered loss in the death of the choir, it nevertheless regains its sense of stability and continuity in the marriage of a cultivated and somewhat unconventional woman to a rustic who is steeped in tradition and rootedness. Squires comments upon this final triumph for

custom and rural existence: "Thus Fancy again reconciles herself to rural custom and is reabsorbed into the rural order. Stability is re-established because the influence of the urban world has been resisted."¹⁴ The novel closes on a note of merriment as the lovers celebrate their union under the greenwood tree, that ancient "symbol of the continuity of generations."¹⁵

There are conflicts in this novel, but they are slight in nature; they may be viewed as mere trifles when compared with the complexities that appear in the later works: the few incidents of discordance depicted in Under the Greenwood Tree are mainly external. The disharmony that arises between the choir and Parson Maybold can be seen in terms of the collision of two differing social modes of existence. The brief interval of disquiet that temporarily hampers the relationship of Fancy and Dick can be seen in a similar light; basically, it is a "class conflict between Fancy's urban standards and Dick's traditional rural standards."¹⁶

Furthermore, Hardy creates in this novel characters who are quite simplistic since they are defined almost wholly by their social roles. Unlike the characters who figure in Hardy's later works the characters in Under the Greenwood Tree are not marked by psychological complexity. The author does not, to any great degree, explore consciousness and the internal workings of the mind. Fancy Day is the only character who is shown to experience some form of self-division; for a brief period of time she is torn between the desires for two opposing styles of life: the elegant existence offered by Parson Maybold, and the unrefined, but rooted way of life distinctive of Dick Dewey and all of Mellstock. Fancy's conflict is far removed from the distressing self-division of

characters like Tess, Jude or Sue. Fancy's division is slight, superficial and purely social; concerned only with appearances, she has no knowledge of inner complexity.

Hardy's portrayal of character in this novel is consistent with the entire world that he creates. In terms of myth, this world is the realm of man before the fall: the setting is Edenic and the characters are simple and integrated. When one compares Under the Greenwood Tree with the later works, it hovers as an enchanting recollection of primal harmony before the fall into consciousness.

Far From the Madding Crowd, published in 1874, draws a picture of a rural environment similar to that depicted in Under the Greenwood Tree. The title of the novel is drawn from the following verse of Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard":

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.¹⁷

The world portrayed in Far From the Madding Crowd is "sequester'd" and relatively unblemished by urban culture. The setting is once again pastoral and Edenic, a picture of an ancient world of agriculture and sheep-tending that is guided by the cyclical pattern of the seasons. Nature in this "flourishing rural community"¹⁸ is lush and vital, unscathed by modern innovation:

It was the first day of June, and the sheep-shearing season culminated, the landscape, even to the leanest pasture, being all health and colour. Every green was young, every pore was open, and every stalk swollen with racing currents of juice. God was palpably present in the country, and the devil had gone with the world to town.

(Madding Crowd, p. 175)

As in Under the Greenwood Tree, the rustics are described as living in harmony with their natural environment, a way of existence that is said to be unmodified by the passing of time. The sheep-shearing scene best delineates this sense of unity and timelessness:

To-day the large side doors were thrown open towards the sun to admit a bountiful light to the immediate spot of the shearer's operations, which was the wood threshing-floor in the centre, formed of thick oak, black with age and polished by the beating of flails for many generations. . . . Here the shearers knelt, the sun slanting in upon their bleached shirts, tanned arms and the polished shears they flourished. . . . This picture of to-day in its frame of four-hundred years ago did not produce that marked contrast between ancient and modern which is implied by the contrast of date. In comparison with cities, Weatherbury was immutable. The citizen's Then is the rustic's Now. In London, twenty or thirty years ago are old times, in Paris ten years, or five; in Weatherbury three or four score years were included in the mere present, and nothing less than a century set a mark on its face or tone. Five decades hardly modified the cut of a gaiter, the embroidery of a smock-frock, by the breadth of a hair. Ten generations failed to alter the turn of a single phrase. In these Wessex nooks the busy outsider's ancient times are only old; his old times are still new; his present is futurity. So the barn was natural to the shearers, and the shearers were in harmony with the barn.

(Madding Crowd, p. 177)

In conjunction with this rustic harmony, Hardy creates a character who consistently embodies the ideals of rural virtue; throughout the novel, Gabriel Oak functions as the traditional good shepherd. Oak stands firmly as a moral yardstick: he is representative of stability, endurance and integrity.

What happens to the rural world of Weatherbury and the age-old values by which it is governed is far more disruptive than the slight conflicts that occur in Under the Greenwood Tree. As the novel opens

Oak encounters and falls in love with Bathsheba Everdene. Although she initially rejects not only Gabriel, but also the deeply passionate Mr. Boldwood, harmony exists until an invader enters the picture. Sargeant Troy, a dashing and insidious military man, courts Bathsheba, and because of her naivete and adolescent desire for glamour, she marries him. He soon deserts her as he did his previous mistress, Fanny Robin.

Troy, the polished sophisticate, is clearly much more treacherous than the undeceiving Parson Maybold. The sargeant's moral laxity and insouciant demeanor are reflected by both his deeds and description: he gambles, neglects his duties on the farm, verbally abuses Mr. Boldwood, and is irresponsible in human relationships. At one point, Hardy provides a concise character sketch:

He was a man to whom memories were an incumbrance, and anticipations a superfluity. Simply feeling, considering and caring for what was before his eyes, he was vulnerable only in the present. His outlook upon time was as a transient flash of the eye now and then: that projection of consciousness into days gone by and to come, which makes the past a synonym for the pathetic and the future a word for circumspection, was foreign to Troy. With him the past was yesterday; the future, tomorrow, never, the day after.

(Madding Crowd, p. 197)

This passage heightens the reader's awareness of Troy's irresponsibility; for a man who lives only for the moment, moral commitment is anathema. In this way, Troy stands in sharp opposition to Oak and the rural world of stability and continuity.

To a degree, harmony is restored once Troy disappears from the rustic world. The sargeant returns to Weatherbury in an attempt to reclaim his wife, and Boldwood, overcome by passion, murders him. The novel, though, does not end on this note of disaster. The rural order

is allowed to re-establish its equanimity in the marriage of Bathsheba and her first lover, the long-suffering and constant Gabriel Oak.

At the point of her second marriage, one can see that Bathsheba has grown as a human being as a result of her suffering and despair during the course of the many events that take place in the novel. The depth of her character is much more striking than that of the vapid Fancy Day. For example, the suffering that Bathsheba experiences when she is driven to spend the night in a swamp after Troy's departure (Madding Crowd, p. 329) exists worlds apart from the levity and flightiness of the coquettish Fancy. Because of these trials, Bathsheba matures and is able to establish a sound relationship with Oak, a bond that has greater depth than the simple union of Fancy and Dick. Hardy describes the love of Bathsheba and Oak:

Where, however, happy circumstance permits its development, the compounded feeling proves itself to be only the love which is strong as death--that love which many waters cannot quench, nor the floods drown, beside which passion usually called by the name is evanescent as steam.

(Madding Crowd, p. 419)

As in Under the Greenwood Tree, rural harmony and stability are re-established at the end of the novel. Yet the victory is hard-won. The upsets and intrusions involving death, destruction and resulting human misery are far greater than those slight disorders that occur in the Mellstock community. Also, the characters in Far From the Madding Crowd are more sharply drawn than those in Under the Greenwood Tree. In these ways, there is a progress in the development of characterization and action from the earlier work.

Although the major characters who figure in the Weatherbury world

are more individualistic and embody more substance than those of Mellstock, they are nevertheless relatively simple. Troy is a colourful figure, but he is more of a character type than an intricate personality. Oak, too, despite his stability and probity, nevertheless, does not embody qualities that constitute a probing and restless spirit. And Bathsheba, although she suffers and matures, still remains quite externally defined. As Howe suggests, "Bathsheba, by far the most striking figure in the novel, is presented almost entirely from the 'outside'; she is not, after all, a likely candidate for psychological probing."¹⁹ Bathsheba is no Sue Bridehead. Hardy does not illustrate her character by means of exploration of the inner workings of her mind; nor does he delineate in any of her responses to external events the moral and spiritual dilemmas of one who is burdened by a consciousness of the plight of the human condition. Rather, Bathsheba is seen for the most part in action. Hardy carefully describes her interaction with, rather than her internal reaction to, those persons and events which affect her sphere of existence. Never does Hardy reveal the stream of her consciousness as he does with Tess and Sue.

In fact, the novel can be described in terms of external action; Howe aptly summarizes:

It is not a book to stir the deeper passions, like Tess, nor to assault one with grating intensities, like Jude; it remains mostly on the plane of external conduct and brute action; and it can be fully enjoyed only by those readers sophisticated enough to content themselves for a time with the pleasures of surface representation. . . . The values of the book emerge not from the moral reflections or psychic discoveries of the characters, but from the controlled patterns of action itself.²⁰

From the mysterious disappearance of Fanny Robin to the astonishing

reappearance of Sargeant Troy, events pile one atop the other until the culminating act of murder by Boldwood. Many of the events that take place in the novel are community oriented. There may be individual crises, but they are always seen in relation to the locale of Weatherbury as a whole. No person is an island in this milieu and thus every character's deeds and actions have ramifications for the entire community.

Although one can see in Under the Greenwood Tree and Far From the Madding Crowd differences in both artistic vision and techniques of portrayal, when compared with the later works to be discussed, these two novels contain many similarities. Both works paint a picture of men and women who were born into a world far from the "darkling plain" of confusion and suffering, alienation and estrangement, those internal turmoils that unrelentingly plague such characters as Tess, Sue and Jude. Here in Mellstock and Weatherbury the human being is not confronted with bitter existential reality; rather he is still "rooted in one dear perpetual place,"²¹ unaware of change and its effects upon human consciousness.

Footnotes

¹ Matthew Arnold, "Empedocles on Etna," Matthew Arnold: Selected Poetry and Prose (New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1958), p. 43, ll. 327-330.

² Thomas Hardy, Tess of the d'Urbervilles (London: Macmillan London Ltd., 1974), p. 163.

³ Barry N. Schwartz, "Jude the Obscure in the Age of Anxiety," Studies in English Literature: 1500-1900, 10, No. 4 (Autumn, 1970), 800.

⁴ William Wordsworth, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, eds. E. De Selincourt and Helen Darbishire (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1947), Vol. 3, p. 279, l. 5.

⁵ Arnold, "The Scholar-Gipsy," Matthew Arnold: Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 73, ll. 203-05.

⁶ David J. DeLaura, "'The Ache of Modernism' in Hardy's later Novels," Journal of English Literary History, 34, No. 3 (September, 1967), 396.

⁷ Thomas Hardy, "Preface," Far From the Madding Crowd (London: Macmillan London Ltd., 1976), pp. 38-39. All subsequent parenthetical references are from this edition and will be abbreviated within the body of the thesis as Madding Crowd.

⁸ The mythical fall of man into knowledge and self-consciousness is discussed by Northrop Frye in A Study of English Romanticism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), pp. 17-18. He states: "Man has 'fallen,' not so much into sin as into the original sin of self-consciousness, into his present subject-object relation to nature, where, because his consciousness is what separates him from nature, the primary conscious feeling is one of separation. The alienated man . . . is cut off from nature by his consciousness."

⁹ Thomas Hardy, Under the Greenwood Tree (London: Macmillan London Ltd., 1974), p. 8. All subsequent parenthetical references are from this edition and will be abbreviated within the body of the thesis as Greenwood Tree.

¹⁰ Irving Howe, Thomas Hardy (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), p. 45.

¹¹ In Under the Greenwood Tree, Hardy expresses chagrin at this loss: "One is inclined to regret the displacement of these ecclesiastical

bandsmen by an isolated organist (often at first a barrel-organist) or harmonium player, and despite certain advantages in point of control and accomplishment which were, no doubt, secured by installing the single artist, the change has tended to stultify the professed aims of the clergy, its direct result being to curtail and extinguish the interest of parishioners in church doings." "Preface," p. 27.

¹² Michael Squires, The Pastoral Novel: Studies in George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, and D. H. Lawrence (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1974), pp. 110, 111.

¹³ Ibid., p. 113.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 114.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 119.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 112.

¹⁷ Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard," Major English Writers of the Eighteenth Century, ed. Harold E. Pagliaro (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 846, ll. 73-76.

¹⁸ Howe, Thomas Hardy, p. 53.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 55.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 52.

²¹ W. B. Yeats, "A Prayer for my Daughter," The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats (London: Macmillan London Ltd., 1973), p. 213.

Chapter Two

Character is Fate: The Mayor of Casterbridge

The Mayor of Casterbridge, published twelve years after Far From the Madding Crowd, reflects Hardy's changed attitude towards human existence. His vision has darkened and he has abandoned the stable and simple harmony of the earlier works. In this novel Hardy explores "the great nineteenth-century myth of the isolated, damned and self-destructive individualist"¹ who must face the terror of his own existence in an alien and hostile world. Henchard's world is far removed from the simple rural paradise depicted in Under the Greenwood Tree and Far From the Madding Crowd. In The Mayor of Casterbridge the alienation is of two kinds, for not only is man severed from his environment, but he also undergoes the "crisis of the individual psyche,"² destructively and fatally divided against itself. Hardy, in reference to Novalis, comments that "character is fate,"³ and one can see, throughout the course of this novel, the way in which certain qualities inherent in the nature of Henchard contribute to his own downfall and death. Rather than delineate characters who are socially and psychologically stable, as in the previously discussed novels, Hardy moves towards the "region of interior landscape,"⁴ probing the inner complexities of Michael Henchard's estranged existence.

Before entering into an analysis of Henchard's self-division, it is important to consider both the setting and the inhabitants of the world that surrounds him. For while in Under the Greenwood Tree and Far

From the Madding Crowd man existed in simple harmony with his environment, in The Mayor of Casterbridge the interaction is far more discordant and complex. Hardy not only creates a new kind of character, but an environment that differs sharply from those of the above-mentioned earlier novels.

Casterbridge, the town wherein Henchard lives most of his days, is no Mellstock or Weatherbury. It is not a rural village, a "sequestered [spot] outside the gates of the world,"⁵ but rather an urban centre in the rural community of Wessex. Only rarely is it described as being in harmony with nature. First of all, the reader is not allowed to ignore the corrupt and sinister aspects of days gone by. Throughout the novel, there are "frequent allusions to the corrupt and criminal past."⁶ The Roman amphitheatre, connected with barbarism, murder and brutality, casts an ugly shadow on the present:

Apart from the sanguinary nature of the games originally played therein, such incidents attached to its past as these: that for scores of years the town-gallows had stood at one corner; that in 1705 a woman who had murdered her husband was half-strangled and then burnt there in the presence of ten thousand spectators. Tradition reports that at a certain stage of the burning her heart burst and leapt out of her body, to the terror of them all. . . . In addition to these old tragedies, pugilistic encounters almost to the death had come off to recent dates in that secluded arena. . . .

(MC, p. 101)

A comment by Buzzford, a grain dealer, further supports the depravity of Casterbridge's "grisly past"⁷:

Casterbridge is a old, hoary place o' wickedness, by all account. 'Tis recorded in history that we rebelled against the king one or two hundred years ago, in the time of the Romans, and that lots of us was hanged on Gallows Hill, and quartered, and our different jints sent about the country like butcher's meat. . . .

(MC, p. 83)

Past acts of butchery and violence permeate the present with a sense of corruption and evil.

As Paterson points out, even the Casterbridge of Henchard's time is described in terms of decay:

The pollution of the provincial capital is . . . suggested in the imagery of damp and decay that conditions the atmosphere of the novel. . . . In the early chapters, for example, the mayor has sold the bakers grown wheat, wheat damaged by damp, and debased the bread of an embittered population. Later, when the weather turns to defeat his speculations, the air feels "as if cress would grow in it without other nourishment." Imagined as the "mildewed leaf in the sturdy and flourishing Casterbridge plant," Mixen Lane, the haunt of criminals and the very sign and symptom of the town's moral disease, is described in nearly symbolic terms as stretching out "like a spit into the moist and misty lowland." Shortly thereafter, the secret of Lucetta's past will spread through the town "like a miasmatic fog."⁸

Further, the river running through Casterbridge is associated with death and corruption for it is spanned by two bridges to which gravitate "all the failures of the town; those who had failed in business, in love, in sobriety, in crime" (MC, p. 247). Thus the setting of Casterbridge, with its vile past and decayed present, exists realms away from the warmth of the tranter's cottage in Under the Greenwood Tree or the idyllic seclusion of Weatherbury in Far From the Madding Crowd.

The inhabitants who dwell in present-day Casterbridge are closely connected to the dark and corrupt aspects of the novel's environment. Most notably, there is in this town none of the human solidarity that binds together the characters in Mellstock or Weatherbury. There exists an upper stratum of the town's citizens which is sharply separated from the lower. Yet those who thrive economically and socially exist according to the standards of the market, which are those of competition, rivalry and exploitation.

Even Lucetta, who is socially superior to the harsh and struggling world of business, is associated with various forms of corruption, as particularized in the house that she chooses for a home.⁹ Hardy describes the decay of the structure, as well as the dark aspects of its environs:

Originally the mask [of the archway] had exhibited a comic leer . . . but generations of Casterbridge boys had thrown stones at the mask . . . and the blows thereon had chipped off the lips and jaws as if they had been eaten away by disease. . . . By the alley it had been possible to come unseen from all sorts of quarters in the town . . . the old bull-stake, the old cock-pit, the pool wherein nameless infants had been used to disappear.

(MC, pp. 168-69)

Like her abode, Lucetta also has a dark and questionable past that suggests a degree of moral laxity.

When one turns to the low rungs of the Casterbridge world, one does not find a brotherhood of idyllic peasant life. Instead, there is the utter iniquity and disintegration of Mixen Lane:

Much that was sad, much that was low, some things that were baneful, could be seen in Mixen Lane. Vice ran freely in and out of certain of the doors in the neighbourhood; recklessness dwelt under the roof with the crooked chimney; shame in some bow-windows; theft (in times of privation) in the thatched and mud-walled houses by the shallows. Even slaughter had not been altogether unknown here. In a block up an alley there might have been erected an altar to disease in years gone by.

(MC, p. 278)

In this underworld that reeks of vice and cruelty, one sees the lowest and basest forms of human life. Ultimately, the depravity of Mixen Lane emerges to destroy other levels of society by means of the barbarous and horrendously primitive skimmington-ride. There is corruption and discordance throughout the society of Casterbridge. The simple rural harmony

of Under the Greenwood Tree and Far From the Madding Crowd has been replaced by alienation, exploitation and divided aims. This, then, is the world that Michael Henchard is connected with for a major portion of his life.

Hardy's view of man and his environment has become far more complex than in the early novels. In these idyllic early works, outsiders invade and disrupt rustic harmony. But in The Mayor of Casterbridge, a lonely and alienated wanderer comes upon an urban centre that is already disturbed and tarnished with corruption. In the novel Hardy portrays a different world and a different man, neither of which is "sustained by the enduring rural context."¹⁰

The opening pages of the work reveal the complex factors that will ultimately lead to Henchard's undoing. Unlike the characters who inhabit Mellstock or Weatherbury, Henchard is depicted as a man uprooted from a supportive human community. Unemployed, and searching for a means of economic sustenance, he wanders towards the village of Weydon-Priors in Upper Wessex. Henchard is not only an itinerant, severed from a community, but he is also estranged and alienated from his family. Hardy describes the lack of communication between husband and wife:

What was really peculiar . . . in this couple's progress . . . was the perfect silence they preserved. They walked side by side in such a way as to suggest afar off the low, easy, confidential chat of people full of reciprocity; but on closer view it could be discerned that the man was reading, or pretending to read, a ballad sheet, which he kept before his eyes. . . . Whether this apparent cause were the real cause, or whether it were an assumed one to escape an intercourse that would have been irksome to him, nobody but himself could have said precisely; but his taciturnity was unbroken, and the woman enjoyed no society whatever from his presence.

Henchard is seen by the reader as a man who is absorbed in his own world, existing deliberately apart from the one person to whom he should be most closely knit. Frederick Karl comments on the way in which this absence of communication foreshadows Henchard's lifelong loneliness: "They (Henchard and Susan) walk along the road together, yet alone, and their isolation here foreshadows their inability to connect personally, even though they later do remarry. . . . Henchard must always be alone and isolated."¹¹

Henchard, who exists separate from others and is self-absorbed, also embodies a conflict between "the dual parts of the self alone."¹² An incident which occurs in the early chapters of the novel reveals this conflict that is to burden Henchard all of his life. With his wife and infant child, Henchard enters a tent during the declining hours of the Fair Day at the village. Against the wishes of his wife, he consumes several bowls of furmity laced with liquor. Stupefied by the alcohol, Henchard allows his hostility to erupt, and in a rash and impetuous moment he decides to auction off his wife and child. What begins as a drunken man's speech of foolish and irresponsible wrath ends in the sale and subsequent disappearance of his spouse and offspring. A sailor who enters the tent offers Henchard five guineas and the deed is done. Henchard, proud and defiant, makes no attempt at retraction; instead, he falls into a drunken stupor.

Henchard is stung with bitter regret when he regards the situation in the harsh light of day. He is overcome by guilt and shame, enters the local church and swears an oath of abstinence:

I, Michael Henchard, on this morning of the sixteenth of September, do take an oath before God here in this solemn place that I will avoid all strong liquor for the space of twenty-one

years to come, being a year for every year that I have lived. And this I swear upon the book before me; and may I be strook dumb, blind, and helpless, if I break this my oath.

(MC, p. 49)

Diligently and with heavy heart, Henchard attempts to find his lost wife and child. After months of fruitless investigation, he concludes that the pair has emigrated, and he gives up his careworn search.

In the events that take place in these first two chapters, one can see the conflicting dualities embodied in the character of Henchard. There are negative qualities in Henchard's nature that stand in fierce opposition to his need for love and companionship. In the early pages of the novel, he treats his wife with an indifference that alienates her from him. The passionate temper, rashness and exulting pride which result in the sale reveal a nature that drives away love and human unity, and brings about destruction and loneliness. Yet his remorse concerning the thoughtless sale, his severe vow of abstinence and his assiduous search for his lost family reveal a man of integrity and responsibility. Further, his desire to find Susan and Elizabeth-Jane shows his need and care for human relationships. Realizing his mistake, he longs to be reunited with his family.

Henchard is "a split individual."¹³ There is a part of him that longs for reciprocal love between himself and others, a tendency which is natural and affirmative. But he also has a negative and destructive will which annihilates love and forces him into a world of isolation and alienation. Throughout the remainder of the novel, Hardy shows the way in which Henchard--"caught between [these] uncontrollable forces, one part trying to gain love and life, the other unable to effect an attachment, caught by death"¹⁴--suffers from a division until the destructive tendency attains

the ultimate victory.

Henchard, as the socially and economically thriving mayor of Casterbridge, "is not so thriving in mind as it appears he might be from the state of his pocket" (MC, p. 110). As mayor, he is thrust into the very midst of the town's competition, exploitation and turmoil. As previously discussed, Casterbridge and its inhabitants do not embody the simplicity and solidarity of rustic life. Henchard, the man of business, is an obvious success. But Henchard's success and respected position in this town of unrest and corruption hardly compensate for the emotional emptiness he suffers "on account [of] the loneliness of [his] domestic life" (MC, p. 108). Separated from his wife and daughter years ago, Henchard lives alone, almost entirely isolated from the rest of the town.

Henchard is placed in a moral dilemma when he becomes aware of the return of his wife and daughter. Having previously established a liaison with another woman, he does not know what to do concerning Susan. Henchard finally decides to remarry her out of a sense of obligation. Hardy describes the shallowness of his affection for her:

Lest she should pine for a deeper affection than he could give he made a point of showing some semblance of it in external action. Among other things he had the iron railings, that had smiled sadly in dull rust for the last eighty years, painted a bright green, and the heavy-barred, small-paned Georgian sash windows enlivened with three coats of white. He was as kind to her as man, mayor, and churchwarden could possibly be.

(MC, p. 116)

Outwardly, he treats her with kindness and respect but, inwardly, there is no profundity of feeling. Although he previously suffered many years of loneliness, he cannot now establish a connection with his wife. Thus he remains alienated from her throughout their second marriage.

Although this estranged man cannot establish a bond of love where he should, in marriage, he longs desperately for the love and companionship of Donald Farfrae, the young man who he thinks will fill an emotional void in his life. Hardy creates the character of Farfrae to function as one of the major foils for Henchard in this work. Farfrae may be a wanderer, divided between the romance of his homeland and the business world of Casterbridge, but on the whole he is a stable and integrated character who adapts well to given circumstances. Paterson describes him: "Farfrae . . . [stands] for the claims of reason and thought, for the spirit of moderation that is prepared to come to terms with merely human possibilities."¹⁵

This is the man, then, that Henchard lights upon when, by coincidence, he is led to believe that Farfrae has responded to his advertisement for a corn-factor's manager. At first, it appears that the mayor so strongly desires Farfrae for this position because of the latter's astute "judgment and knowledge" (MC, p. 79) in the world of the corn trade. However, later, in a revelatory statement, Henchard exposes the underlying reason for his desperate need of Farfrae's assistance: "To be sure, to be sure, how that fellow does draw me! . . . I suppose 'tis because I'm so lonely. I'd have given him a third share in the business to have stayed" (MC, p. 87).

As soon as Farfrae consents to remain in Casterbridge, Henchard begins to develop an emotional dependence on the young Scotchman. In his early encounters with Farfrae, Henchard strives for intimacy by revealing personal details of his past such as the sale of his wife and his liaison with Lucetta. At one point, Hardy describes the pair walking together:

. . . Donald and Mr. Henchard were inseparables. When walking together Henchard would lay his arm familiarly on his manager's shoulder, as if Farfrae

were a younger brother, bearing so heavily that his slight figure bent under the weight. . . . In Henchard's lonely life he evidently found the young man as desirable for comradeship as he was useful for consultations.

(MC, p. 119)

Henchard's love of Farfrae is thus seen as both oppressive and possessive, for the loneliness of his life causes him to "try to seek happiness through possession of another person."¹⁶

One soon learns that Henchard is still bitterly divided. When he attempts to mortify Abel Whittle for his tardiness by sending him to work without his breeches, Farfrae intervenes and, out of a sense of compassion, sends the humiliated man home. Henchard is incensed; his pride and rash temper take control of him, causing him to strike out against his reasonable companion. Henchard willfully distances himself from Farfrae, the one human being whom he loves. His wrath is fed by jealousy when he discovers the town's respect and admiration for Farfrae. The fiasco that occurs on fair day, when Henchard's entertainments are destroyed by rain, and all of Casterbridge congregates in Farfrae's tent to dance, results in the separation of the two friends. In a paroxysm of jealousy, Henchard dismisses Farfrae as his manager. Thus the self-divided Henchard--in allowing pride, jealousy and anger to overrule him--destroys the love and camaraderie that he so longs for.

As a result of his self-destructive rejection of Farfrae, Henchard is left alone. In the competitive world of Casterbridge, Farfrae sets himself up independently of Henchard, and the separation is complete. But the inner void, or that which caused Henchard to crave the friendship of Farfrae, causes him to seek love elsewhere. He turns to Elizabeth-Jane, whom he thinks to be his daughter. Hardy describes Henchard's empty life and the glimmer of hope to be found in Elizabeth-Jane: "Henchard's

wife was dissevered from him by death; his friend and helper by estrangement; Elizabeth-Jane by ignorance. It seemed to him that only one of them could possibly be recalled, and that was the girl" (MC, p. 150). Yearning for her love, he tells her that he is her true father. However, she begins to weep and Henchard is thrown into a state of agitation:

Don't cry--don't cry! . . . I can't bear it, I won't bear it. I am your father; why should you cry? Am I so dreadful, so hateful to 'ee? Don't take against me, Elizabeth-Jane! . . . Don't take against me. . . . I'll do anything, if you will only look upon me as your father!

(MC, p. 151)

This desperate statement comes from the part of Henchard's soul, suffering from "ontological insufficiency,"¹⁷ that needs the love and tenderness of another human being in order to fulfill itself.

Yet Henchard, unconsciously, will not allow himself to love. Elizabeth-Jane offers love to her supposed father but it is not reciprocated because Henchard discovers that this young woman is really not his daughter, but the offspring of Susan and the sailor, Newson. Rather than tell her the truth of the situation--for "he was far too self-willed to recede from a position, especially as it would involve humiliation" (MC, p. 156)--and thus perhaps establish new grounds for a lasting relationship, Henchard turns away from Elizabeth-Jane with no explanation.

Blinded by pride and a sense of having been wronged, this divided man destroys the love that he sought so desperately. Instead of showing kindness towards Elizabeth-Jane, he treats her cruelly, lashing out at what he considers to be her lack of refinement. She, a long-suffering and passive creature, who serves as a foil to the passionate Henchard, stoically accepts his harsh criticisms of her behavior. Henchard's anger at Elizabeth-Jane lapses into indifference, and this attitude ultimately

drives her away: "Absolute indifference had taken the place of irritability; and his coldness was such that it encouraged her to departure, even more than hot temper could have done" (MC, p. 169).

But the need for love again arises in Henchard; he shifts his sentiments and attempts to make amends with Elizabeth-Jane:

Look here . . . don't 'ee go away from me. It may be I've spoke roughly to you--but I've been grieved beyond everything by you--there's something that caused it. . . . I can't tell you now. But if you'll stop, and go on living as my daughter, I'll tell you all in time.

(MC, p. 173)

Only when it is too late does Henchard offer to explain his behavior and to establish a new relationship with Elizabeth-Jane. Pride and anger are forced into the background while the divided man is consumed by a desire for companionship.

Henchard suffers internal emptiness and anguish at the loss of Elizabeth-Jane: "His bitter disappointment at finding Elizabeth-Jane to be none of his and himself a childless man, had left an emotional void in Henchard that he unconsciously craved to fill" (MC, p. 175). He turns to Lucetta with whom he had a previous liaison. He approaches her but finds that she is not as accessible as she was in the past. This only causes Henchard to desire her more: "He was discovering that the young woman for whom he once felt a pitying warmth which had been almost chilled out of him by reflection, was, when now qualified by a slight inaccessibility and a more matured beauty the very being to make him satisfied with life" (MC, p. 200).

Henchard's treatment of the woman he longs for is not marked by love and tenderness, but instead by a fierce and aggressive need to possess her. His behavior towards Lucetta and later towards Farfrae, in the wrestling

match, can be likened to that of the bull that he subjugates in order to save the lives of Lucetta and Elizabeth-Jane. Karl comments on the symbolic significance of Henchard's encounter with the animal: "Henchard is recognizably the bull, or at least suggestive of the bull in its brazen fierceness and then its flinching half-paralysis once a stronger force masters it."¹⁸ Like a wild bull, Henchard, in a desperate act of rashness and pride, forces a vow of marriage from Lucetta by threatening to reveal her past life in Jersey. By such an act Henchard loses the love of yet another person.

Like the bull in its subjugated state, passive and beaten, Henchard returns to Lucetta with a humbler heart, offering an indefinite engagement. But it is too late; she is already the wife of Donald Farfrae. Henchard's painful awareness of this loss, combined with his economic failure and his exposure by the furmity-woman, places him in a state of wretched despair. He stands overlooking the water on one of those bridges to which gravitated all the failures of the town. Henchard is offered a chance for salvation, but the self-annihilating man rejects it. Donald Farfrae, now Henchard's social and economic superior, meets him on the bridge and offers him companionship and acceptance: "What I propose is this. . . . Come and live in your old house. We can spare some rooms very well--I am sure my wife would not mind at all--until there's an opening for ye" (MC, p. 250). Henchard, although deeply touched by this offer, is governed by his haughty pride and walks away from Farfrae.

Henchard's vow of twenty-one years of abstinence from liquor ends, and he begins drinking once again. From this point on, he "enters a tragic universe of his own making,"¹⁹ wherein he becomes totally alienated from society. Driven by drunkenness, jealousy and hatred, he, again bull-like

in his aggressiveness, forces the Casterbridge journeyman to sing the cursed one hundred and ninth psalm. In his heart, he desires the wicked words to be directed against Farfrae.

Henchard degrades himself by appearing disgustingly in front of the Royal Personage, and thus he "allows his former employee to sweep him aside as a foolish meddler."²⁰ As a result of this self-inflicted humiliation, an incident occurs which painfully exposes Henchard's fatal self-division. Henchard, furious at being treated in such a manner by Farfrae, decides that he will get revenge by means of physical violence. He lures Farfrae up to a granary, and with the ferocity of a wild bull, demands that they wrestle for their lives. When Henchard realizes that he can take Farfrae's life, his aggression is subdued; he allows the man to go free, overcome by regret at the brutality and wickedness of his deed. Suddenly hate and a desire for violence dissipate, as Henchard says:

God is my witness that no man ever loved another
as I did thee at one time. . . . And now--though
I came here to kill 'ee, I cannot hurt thee! Go
and give me in charge--I care nothing for what
comes of me!

(MC, p. 297)

In this single act, one is able to see the self-division and the ambivalence of Henchard's character; the love that Henchard once felt for Farfrae is in conflict with his temper, pride and rashness. These self-destructive qualities ruin any chance for a relationship between Henchard and the once beloved Farfrae.

This attempt on Farfrae's life has destructive ramifications for others besides Henchard. The skimmington-ride takes place, whereby Henchard and Lucetta are exposed as objects of ridicule. Here, one sees the ugliness of a community, far distant from the integrated and stable worlds of Mellstock and Weatherbury, as it rises up to destroy others.

Lucetta, pregnant at the time and in a weakened condition, falls ill at the sight of the effigies. Her hold on life becomes more precarious and she longs frantically for the presence of her husband. Farfrae hesitates to return to her because he believes that Henchard's wild request that he return home is merely another form of deceptive allurement that will endanger his life. By the time he does arrive at Lucetta's bedside, her life has waned considerably. Lucetta dies, after having spent only the very last hours of her life with Farfrae. Henchard returns home, guilt-ridden and totally alienated from the community.

Henchard's last hope for love and companionship is Elizabeth-Jane. But Newson, her true father, arrives on the scene and smashes Henchard's last hope. In a rash moment, Henchard lies to the man, stating that Elizabeth-Jane is dead. Thinking that Newson will return before evening "and carry his last treasure away" (MC, p. 315), Henchard is driven to the point of suicide. In his longing for death, he is seen as a man totally alienated from himself and others. Starzyk comments, "Absolutely essential to a recognition of the wish not to live is a recognition of one's alienation, of consciousness of self in opposition to the consciousness of the rest of existence."²¹

Henchard overlooks the water in which he wishes to drown and sees himself face to face, as his straw effigy appears in the flowing waters. Karl comments on the way in which the sight of this uncanny object saves Henchard's life: "The sight . . . of his straw effigy floating in the water . . . suggests his own death, acts out, as it were, a substitute death and dissuades him."²² The divided Henchard thus sees a symbolic representation of his destructive self. Shocked, he returns home to spend numbered days of happiness with Elizabeth-Jane.

Henchard remains a self-divided person. When he becomes aware of the fact that Newson is to return for a second time, he does not stay to offer an explanation for his past deception, and in this way perhaps reconcile himself with Elizabeth-Jane; instead, he departs from Casterbridge, estranging himself from the entire community. As he walks away, the self-destructive and perversely proud man cries to himself:

If I had only got her with me--if I only had! . . .
Hard work would be nothing to me then! But that
was not to be. I--Cain--go alone as I deserve--
an outcast and a vagabond. But my punishment is
not greater than I can bear.

(MC, p. 334)

Henchard suffers a period of lonely misery in which he constantly longs for death: "I, an outcast, an encumberer of the ground, wanted by nobody and despised by all, live on against my will" (MC, p. 340). He hears of Elizabeth-Jane's coming marriage to Donald Farfrae and returns to Casterbridge to offer his love and to ask for forgiveness. But like the caged bird that he brings as a wedding gift, Henchard is still caged by his own divided nature. Elizabeth-Jane criticizes him for having deceived her and her father, for having prevented them from seeing each other when Newson first came seeking his daughter. Henchard does not explain that the motives underlying this deed were his love for Elizabeth-Jane and his fear of losing her; instead he turns away, speaking out in angry self-defence and pride:

Don't ye distress yourself on my account . . . I
would not wish it--at such a time, too, as this.
I have done wrong in coming to 'ee--I see my error.
But it is only for once, so forgive it. I'll
never trouble 'ee again Elizabeth-Jane--no, not
to my dying day!

(MC, p. 347)

Henchard dies as divided from himself as he was in the early days

of his married life with Susan. Following his final painful encounter with his step-daughter, he wanders to Egdon Heath to die on that "in-violate place . . . [of] ancient permanence."²³ He is not seen alive again by any of those persons with whom he sought a loving relationship in life. Even in death, Henchard attempts to estrange himself from all of humanity, as can be seen in the requests of his stark will:

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

(MC, p. 353)

All his life Henchard longed for love, and all his life he destroyed his bonds with others. As the novel closes, one can share the feeling of Elizabeth-Jane "that happiness [is] but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain" (MC, p. 354). Living a wretched life of alienation and loneliness, Henchard dwelt in a "dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate."²⁴

Footnotes

¹ Albert J. Guerard, "On The Mayor of Casterbridge," The Victorian Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Ian Watt (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 403.

² Ian Gregor, The Great Web: The Form of Hardy's Major Fiction (London: Faber and Faber, 1974), p. 179.

³ Thomas Hardy, The Mayor of Casterbridge (London: Macmillan London Ltd., 1974), p. 143. All subsequent parenthetical references are from this edition and will be abbreviated within the body of the thesis as MC.

⁴ Gregor, The Great Web, p. 179.

⁵ Thomas Hardy, The Woodlanders (London: Macmillan London Ltd., 1975), p. 39.

⁶ John Paterson, "The Mayor of Casterbridge as Tragedy," Victorian Studies, 3, No. 2 (December, 1959), 163. The following analysis of the depravity of Casterbridge is indebted to the fourth section of Paterson's article.

⁷ Ibid., p. 165.

⁸ Ibid., p. 163.

⁹ Ibid., p. 164.

¹⁰ Mary Jacobus, "Sue the Obscure," Essays in Criticism, 25, No.3 (July, 1975), 320.

¹¹ Frederick R. Karl, "The Mayor of Casterbridge: A New Fiction Defined," Modern Fiction Studies, 6, No. 3 (Autumn, 1960), 197.

¹² Laurence J. Starzyk, "The Coming Universal Wish not to Live in Hardy's 'Modern Novels'," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 26, No. 4 (March, 1972), 432.

¹³ Karl, 205.

¹⁴ Ibid., 200.

¹⁵ Paterson, 156. Paterson's comment also includes the character of Elizabeth-Jane and it will later be seen how she, too, functions as a foil to Henchard in her integrity, stability and stoic acceptance of life.

¹⁶ Joseph Hillis Miller, Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire (Cambridge, Mass.: The Becknap Press, 1970), p. 116.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 184.

¹⁸ Karl, 202.

¹⁹ Perry Meisel, Thomas Hardy: The Return of the Repressed, A Study of the Major Fiction (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 100.

²⁰ Karl, 204.

²¹ Starzyk, 427.

²² Karl, 200.

²³ Thomas Hardy, The Return of the Native (London: Macmillan London Ltd., 1974), p. 36.

²⁴ Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," Shelley's Poetry and Prose, eds. Donald H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1977), p. 94, l. 17.

Chapter Three

The War of Nature and Society: Tess of the d'Urbervilles

In Tess of the d'Urbervilles Hardy broadens his focus to include two central characters whose divided natures lead to destruction and death. Looking back to Under the Greenwood Tree and Far from the Madding Crowd one recalls integrated characters and solid communities. In The Mayor of Casterbridge this rural harmony fades away as Hardy depicts a crumbling community and explores a central character who is alienated from his surroundings and divided within himself. Tess of the d'Urbervilles presents a yet more complex treatment of the divided self.

This complexity arises out of the fact that Hardy now portrays two self-divided characters who become inextricably bound to each other. Further, division does not rest wholly within the characters themselves; rather, the forces of conflict that they both embody permeate the entire work. Hardy sets up these opposing forces by presenting and commenting upon conflicting settings, social backgrounds and ways of life. The divided person does not exist in a solipsistic realm of his or her own making, as does Michael Henchard in The Mayor of Casterbridge. Instead, there is in Tess of the d'Urbervilles a complex interaction of the divided self with an external world that is, itself, torn by opposing forces.

There exists in the novel an opposition between the force of nature and the law of society. Instinct, spontaneity and biological drive stand in fierce contrariety to social convention and rigid morality. The force of nature is seen in the lush settings of both Marlott and

Talbothays and their environs. The Vale of Blackmoor, in which the village of Marlott lies, is described as a "fertile and sheltered tract of country" where "the fields are never brown and the springs never dry."¹ The setting in which Talbothays can be found is a "valley in which milk and butter [grows] to rankness" (Tess, p. 139). Hardy's vivid description of this rich land, as Clare journeys into it, suggests a sense of luscious fertility:

An up-hill and down-dale ride of twenty-odd miles through a garish mid-day atmosphere brought him [Angel Clare] . . . to a detached knoll a mile or two west of Talbothays, whence he again looked into that green trough of sappiness and humidity, the valley of the Var or Froom. Immediately he began to descend from the upland to the flat alluvial soil below, the atmosphere grew heavier; the languid perfume of the summer fruits, the mists, the hay, the flowers, formed therein a vast pool of odour which at this hour seemed to make the animals, the very bees and butterflies, drowsy.

(Tess, p. 209)

These two heavily fecund settings represent the forces of reproduction, growth and fruition that stir all of nature.

In this novel, Hardy shows the way in which the human being is moved by the irresistible force of nature, for man is also a part of the "primitive, primal earth, where instinctive life heaves up."² Biological drive and sexual passion, which cause human beings to mate and procreate, are seen as potent forces that sway all of mankind. Hardy comments on the power and universality of such instinctive drives; the desire for sexual fulfillment is described at one point as "the irresistible, universal, automatic tendency to find sweet pleasure somewhere, which pervades all life, from the meanest to the highest" (Tess, p. 140). On another occasion, Hardy characterizes this impulse as "the 'appetite for joy' which pervades all creation, that tremendous force which sways humanity to its

purpose, as the tide sways the helpless weed" (Tess, p. 232).

Yet there is a division inherent in the force of nature, for it can bring pain and suffering as well as pleasure. This opposition is best delineated in the plight of Tess's family and the passion of the dairymaids at Talbothays. Tess's mother says of her daughter's seduction that "'tis nater, after all, and what do please God" (Tess, p. 117); this woman, as a result of biological drive, has brought several children into the world who must suffer and undergo deprivation. Hardy comments on the way in which the force of nature can be cruel:

All these young souls were passengers in the Durbeyfield ship. . . . six helpless creatures, who had never asked if they wished for life on any terms, much less if they wished for it on such hard conditions as were involved in being of the shiftless house of Durbeyfield. Some people would like to know whence the poet whose philosophy is in these days as profound and trustworthy as his song is breezy and pure, gets his authority for speaking of "Nature's holy plan."

(Tess, p. 51)

The passion which the dairymaids at Talbothays feel also portrays the way in which natural drive causes pain:

The air of the sleeping-chamber seemed to palpitate with the hopeless passion of the girls. They writhed feverishly under the oppressiveness of an emotion thrust on them by cruel Nature's law--an emotion which they had neither expected nor desired.

(Tess, p. 187)

Sexual appetite, although it can bring joy, also causes suffering and misery. It is seen as a potent and compelling force that drives the entire animal world.

The view of nature that Hardy presents in this novel is thus divided. Nature causes not only growth, fruition and the pleasure of fulfillment in the animal realm, but also suffering and deprivation. The

human being, as a part of this world, experiences both the joy and the pain of the force of nature. Further, man is seen as the perpetrator of cruelty to creatures weaker and more vulnerable than himself. The dying pheasants, suffering as a result of wounds inflicted on them by ruthless shooters, and the scurrying rats at the bottom of the rick, pursued by the workers at Flintcomb-Ash, are victims of man's "natural" cruelty.

The world of nature in Tess of the d'Urbervilles is far different from the vision of "Nature's holy plan" (Tess, p. 51) presented by William Wordsworth, of whom Hardy speaks in a rather satiric vein. Members of the animal world do not live in natural and blissful harmony with one another. Man does not come into existence "trailing clouds of glory" (Tess, p. 406), as the experienced Tess well knows. Instead, the human being must struggle beneath the irresistible sway of nature which drives all of "humanity to its purpose" (Tess, p. 232). Biological drive and natural tendencies, be they cruel or kind, are powerful and universal forces with which man must continually attempt to come to terms.

The law of society, in this novel, stands in opposition to the biological world of sexual drive. Rigid social morality, which places restraints upon natural appetite, is seen as uncompromising and uncharitable. Following the birth of Tess's child, the young mother is haunted by a moral guilt that has no basis in the world of nature:

But this encompassment of her own characterization, based on shreds of convention, peopled by phantoms and voices antipathetic to her, was a sorry and mistaken creation of Tess's fancy--a cloud of moral hobgoblins by which she was terrified without reason. It was they that were out of harmony with the actual world, not she. . . . She had been made to break an accepted social law, but no law known to the environment in which she fancied herself such an anomaly.

(Tess, pp. 120-121)

If Tess found herself an unmarried mother alone on a desert island, in a surrounding that knew no moral convention, she would not suffer despair and guilt over the creation of life. In Hardy's view, social convention, which condemns natural drives, is seen as a law that is stultifying and cruel. The cruelty of natural laws and forces are intensified--not meliorated--by dogma and "moral law."

The rigidity of social law is clearly exemplified in the biblical passages painted on stiles and walls by the morally righteous stranger encountered by Tess on her journey away from Trantridge. The bold words, "THY, DAMNATION, SLUMBERETH, NOT," and "THOU, SHALT, NOT COMMIT--" (Tess, pp. 114, 115), represent the harsh condemnation of conventional morality at its most extreme.

Such unyielding and severe social law is closely associated with the Clare household for a major portion of the novel. The dogmatic and austere religious values upheld by Mr. Clare and his two sons, Felix and Cuthbert, are wholly antagonistic to the force of nature that governs Tess's family and the dairymaids at Talbothays. Felix and Cuthbert reveal their fierce opposition to the "appetite for joy" when they express shock and dismay over Angel's desire to dance with the young girls of Marlott. To the devout and highly moral Mr. Clare, the delights of nature at Talbothays would be considered corrupt and sinful. Hardy remarks, "To the aesthetic, sensuous, pagan pleasure in natural life and lush womanhood which his son Angel had lately been experiencing in Var Vale, his temper would have been antipathetic in a high degree, had he either by inquiry or imagination been able to comprehend it" (Tess, p. 199).

These two forces--the drive of nature, bringing both pleasure and pain, and the law of society, cruel and uncompromising--are in opposition throughout the entire novel. Hardy, by means of authorial comment

and portrayal of differing settings and modes of life, sets up a framework of dynamic conflict in which his two central characters can be placed.

Both Angel and Tess suffer the turmoil of being divided between natural, primal instinct and deeply rooted social convention. Angel Clare, whose rigid family background has already been discussed, is, himself, caught in a world of change. He attempts to break away from convention by choosing not to be ordained as a minister. Instead, unlike his father and his brothers, he follows intellectual pursuits that are incompatible with the Christian orthodoxy of his father. Angel questions the rigid values of his family and endeavours to work out a system of belief based on more liberal concepts. Angel is a man struggling to come to terms with the shifting views of a modern world. Yet through the course of the novel, one sees the way in which Angel is firmly bound by the social conventions of his upbringing. For the greater part of the work, Angel clings tenaciously to a stifling morality that works against Tess's desire for happiness as well as his own.

The sharp division that Angel embodies, tearing him between moral law and an appetite for pleasure, can be seen from the early stages of his relationship with Tess. At Talbothays, Angel is overcome by the force of nature that governs the entire setting. The "appetite for joy" arises in him when he meets and begins courting young Tess. This incipient love is indeed sexual in nature, arising out of instinct and biological drive. Hardy describes the way in which Angel is attracted to the luscious beauty of Tess:

How very lovable her face was to him. Yet there was nothing ethereal about it; all was real vitality, real warmth, real incarnation. . . . her mouth he had seen nothing to equal on the face of the earth.



To a young man with the least fire in him that little upward lift in the middle of her red top lip was distracting, infatuating, maddening.

(Tess, p.190)

While contemplating the beauty of Tess in this way, Angel is overcome with desire and he springs forward and spontaneously folds Tess in his arms. At this moment, the force of nature within Clare is powerful and compelling.

Angel's self-division becomes apparent even before he learns of Tess's past. On the one hand, as has been shown, he loves Tess with a passion that finds its source in natural instinct. Yet, on the other hand, there exists a strain of idealism and sentimentality in his love that is inseparably connected to morality and social convention. When Angel first notices Tess, he remarks to himself, "What a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature that milkmaid is!" (Tess, p. 158). Later, he says to his beloved, "I know you to be the most honest, spotless creature that ever lived" (Tess, p. 218). Angel imposes a conventional ideal, solidly rooted in moral law, upon his instinctive attraction. Although he is unaware of it, natural drive and conventional morality form a conflict in Angel's idealized sexual love for Tess.

The destructive elements of this self-division appear when Angel learns of Tess's tarnished past. On the night of their wedding, Clare tells Tess of his own past sexual encounter, concluding the confession with an ironic speech on purity and staunch morals. Tess reveals to Clare the fatal undoing of her youth. Angel's reaction is one of shock and rejection; he states emphatically, "The woman I have been loving is not you . . . [but] another woman in your shape" (Tess, pp. 271-272). Angel rejects Tess on the basis of conventional morality. Wanting an

ideal "daughter of Nature" (Tess, p. 158), an embodiment of "rustic innocence" (Tess, p. 281), Clare fails to recognize that Tess's acts of the past were, in themselves, natural. Further, because of his moral idealism, Clare refuses to see Tess's past and his own previous sexual experiences in a similar light, so that when Tess begs for forgiveness, Angel, confined by the conventions of his upbringing, uncharitably refuses her and turns away.

Although Angel rejects Tess, he still loves her; in this way, social law and natural drive are in bitter conflict within him. At one point, Hardy says that Angel "was smothering his affection for her" (Tess, p. 273). But Angel does indeed desert his wife because of social convention which stifles love and the desire for joy. In suppressing his passion and allowing social law to rule him, Angel brings misery upon himself and the long-suffering Tess. Hardy comments on the cruelly uncompromising and blinding nature of Clare's conventionality:

With all his attempted independence of judgment this advanced and well-meaning young man, a sample product of the last five-and-twenty years, was yet the slave to custom and conventionality when surprised back into his early teachings. No prophet had told him, and he was not prophet enough to tell himself, that essentially this young wife of his was as deserving of the praise of King Lemuel as any other woman endowed with the same dislike of evil, her moral values having to be reckoned not by achievement but by tendency. . . . In considering what Tess was not, he overlooked what she was. . . .

(Tess, pp. 309-310)

In South America, where Angel goes to farm, he encounters experiences far different from those to be found in his native land. Not only does he see death and misery all about him but he becomes severely ill himself. Further, Angel meets a traveller who, having journeyed through many lands, upholds liberal values and thus criticizes him for his

narrow-minded conventionality. This stranger "thought that what Tess had been was of no importance beside what she would be, and plainly told Clare that he was wrong in coming away from her" (Tess, p. 389). This disapproval, when coupled with Angel's new-found awareness of human suffering, causes him to question his rigid morality. Suddenly, he recognizes the inconsistencies embodied in his own system of values:

His inconsistencies rushed upon him in a flood. He had persistently elevated Hellenic Paganism at the expense of Christianity; yet in that civilization an illegal surrender was not certain disesteem. Surely then he might have regarded that abhorrence of the un-intact state, which he had inherited with the creed of mysticism, as at least open to correction when the result was due to treachery. A remorse struck into him.

(Tess, p. 389)

As Angel becomes aware of his past faults and inconsistencies, he learns to forgive Tess and to love her, not as an ideal, but for what she really is, a frail human being. He realizes that he must no longer judge Tess by her past deeds and mistakes; instead, he begins to regard her in the light of her present tendencies and intentions. In going home to Tess to beg forgiveness for his cruelty, Angel allows love and the long-smothered "appetite for joy" to come to the fore once again. Angel thus overcomes the "selfish behavior toward his wife, an expression of his own divided self,"⁴ by casting aside the stultifying conventions of his upbringing. Angel arrives home only to find that Tess has been claimed by her destructive seducer, Alec d'Urberville. Yet, even when Tess, in the hope of regaining Angel's love, murders Alec, Angel finds it in his heart to forgive her. Angel's love for Tess now totally overpowers his sense of conventional moral law.

Hardy shows the way in which Angel grows during the course of

his experience. Throughout a major portion of the novel, Angel is torn between the force of nature and the law of society. In deserting Tess, he clings to a social code which causes him to suppress both love and desire. As the novel draws to a close, however, he turns away from social morality and accepts Tess's past and her instinctive murder of Alec. But it is too late; Angel's earlier self-division has already produced devastating and irrevocable effects on himself and others.

Tess Durbeyfield, too, is divided, and in a way that proves to be fatal. Like Angel, Tess is torn between natural, instinctive drives and a conventional moral sense. Yet, while Angel eventually overcomes his self-division, Tess does not. Instead, her inner division becomes increasingly complex; the force of nature and the law of social morality interfere within her, causing her ultimately to commit desperate and destructive acts.

In the early pages of the novel, the young Tess is seen as part of the primal and fecund surroundings of Marlott. Hardy says that the Vale of Blackmoor was the whole world to her:

The Vale of Blackmoor was to her the world, and its inhabitants the races thereof. From the gates and stiles of Marlott she had looked down its length in the wondering days of infancy, and what had been mystery to her then was not much less than mystery to her now. . . . Every contour of the surrounding hills was as personal to her as that of her relatives' faces. . . .

(Tess, p. 65)

In her youth, Tess is a simple child of nature, embodying instinct and emotion in an untarnished state: "At this time of her life [she] was a mere vessel of emotion untinged by experience" (Tess, p. 42). At the village dance, these natural instincts and emotions are made manifest in her desire to dance with Angel Clare. Here one sees the appetite

for pleasure and sexual fulfillment in its incipient and innocent stage.

Although the inexperienced Tess longs for spontaneous pleasure, she has an instinctive awareness that life can also be cruel. As she rides in the night with her brother, Abraham, to deliver beehives in Casterbridge, she comments on the miseries of living in a "blighted" world (Tess, p. 59). If the world had been sound, she says her father would not have been ill and her mother would not have been always hard at work. Further, following the accidental death of Prince, which she feels to be her fault, Tess places a severe moral condemnation on herself. Hardy remarks, "Nobody blamed Tess as she blamed herself" (Tess, p. 62). The way in which she reproaches herself concerning this episode reveals a sense of moral responsibility that is later to haunt her relentlessly. Thus, one can see the complex strands of Tess's self-division in the early stages of their development. Inherent in the nature of the innocent Tess is an instinctive desire for joy and spontaneity; at the same time, she embodies a distinct moral sense and an awareness of the painful and oppressive aspects of human existence.

Tess's self-division becomes more fully developed when she moves to Trantridge and encounters the sinister Alec d'Urberville. The seduction that takes place in the primeval green wood, a realm "wrapped in thick darkness" (Tess, p. 107), is associated with the force of nature. Tess is overcome by the "violent potency . . . of sexual instinct"⁵ as she is "stirred to confused surrender" (Tess, p. 117) by the insidious advances of Alec. The conflict between Tess's biological and instinctive appetites and her strong moral sense will be the cause of her fatal undoing.

The seduction causes Tess's expulsion from the Edenic world of

innocence. Confronted with her loss of chastity, Tess acts in accordance with social convention by severely condemning herself. Tess's suffering and anguish are worsened by the birth and death of her baby, "that bastard gift of shameless Nature who respects not the social law" (Tess, p. 131). The child is, in this case, not accepted by society, and thus Tess condemns herself for creating life outside the institution of marriage.

When the infant suddenly falls ill, Tess rejects the social conventions that have been oppressing her, and responds to her natural instincts:

. . . a fresh [sorrow] arose on the natural side of her which knew no social law. When she reached home it was to learn that the baby had been suddenly taken ill since the afternoon. . . . The baby's offence against society in coming into the world was forgotten by the girl-mother; her soul's desire was to continue that offence by preserving the life of the child.

(Tess, p. 128)

One can see how this young woman, still hardly more than a child, is burdened with conflicts. She bitterly reproaches herself for having acted in accordance with the promptings of nature, yet natural instinct nevertheless remains a powerful drive within her. These experiences deprive Tess of the simple innocence of her girlhood days in Marlott. Brooks comments, "The birth and death of Tess's baby develops a moral awareness in her that pushes her beyond the fertility myth to the world of knowledge gained and paradise lost."⁶

Tess's sense of her own merited suffering, arising out of an awareness of conventional morality, begins to recede when she decides to go to Talbothays. Her instinctive appetites are kindled as she thinks of her future at the dairy. In the lush setting of the Valley of the Great Dairies, Tess is overwhelmed by the natural urge for joy and pleasure:

The irresistible, universal, automatic tendency to find sweet pleasure somewhere, which pervades all life, from the meanest to the highest, had at length mastered Tess. Being even now only a young woman of twenty, one who mentally and sentimentally had not finished growing, it was impossible that any event should have left upon her an impression that was not in time capable of transmutation.

(Tess, p. 140)

The primal surroundings of the Great Dairies have a powerful effect on the divided Tess; they exist in sympathy with her natural, instinctive impulses, and thus work against the part of her that is bound by social morality.

Tess's instinctive drives manifest themselves in an irresistible desire for Angel Clare. Wandering through a sensuous garden of fecundity, she is swayed by Clare's presence to a reawakened urge for delight and fulfillment. Tess learns that her desire for Angel is reciprocated. Hardy describes the would-be lovers: "Tess and Clare unconsciously studied each other, ever balanced on the edge of passion, yet apparently keeping out of it. All the while they were converging, under an irresistible law, as surely as two streams in one vale" (Tess, p. 168).

The ghosts of social convention once again return to haunt Tess. Hearing the tale of the young woman who lost her chastity to Jack Dollop, Tess wretchedly recollects her own blemished past. This cruel memory--coupled with the fact that three of the other dairymaids are languishing over Angel--causes Tess to stifle her instincts temporarily and to revert to self-denial:

But whether Mr. Clare had spoken seriously or not, why should she, who could never conscientiously allow any man to marry her now, and who had religiously determined that she would never be tempted to do so, draw off Mr. Clare's attention from other women, for the brief happiness of sunning herself in his eyes while he remained at Talbothays? . . . she forced herself to take pains to avoid him--never

allowing herself as formerly, to remain long in his company. . . .

(Tess, pp. 177, 180)

Tess is fiercely divided between natural instinct and social convention, between a desire to marry Angel and a strong need to tell him the secret of her past. At one point, Tess yields passionately to Angel's embrace although, later, she tearfully refuses his offer of marriage. Hardy captures the severity of this self-division in which Tess's tender emotions and moral conscience stand in painful opposition:

The struggle was so fearful; her own heart was so strongly on the side of his--two ardent hearts against one poor little conscience--that she tried to fortify her resolution by every means in her power. On no account could she agree to a step which might afterwards cause bitter rueing to her husband for his blindness in wedding her. And she held that what her conscience had decided for her when her mind was unbiassed ought not to be overruled now . . . Tess had never before known a time in which the thread of her life was so distinctly twisted of two strands, positive pleasure and positive pain.

(Tess, pp. 216, 217)

Tess gives way to the appetite for "sweet pleasure" by agreeing to marry Angel although she still remains torn within herself after the consent. Tess's moral conscience prompts her to send a note to Clare, in which she narrates all of the details of her past. Discovering that he has not received her note, the guilt-ridden Tess even attempts to tell Angel of her past faults on her wedding day. Once married, Tess's consuming conflicts do not cease. Away from Angel for a brief period, Tess feverishly murmurs to herself: "O my love, my love, why do I love you so! . . . for she you love is not my real self, but one in my image; the one I might have been" (Tess, p. 256).

The relentless torture of Tess's self-division is clearly revealed on the night of her wedding. Tess hears of the miseries of Marian and Retty, and feels bound by moral law to pay for her past. Yet, when she hears that Angel, too, has had a past sexual experience, Tess thinks that though she has done wrong, she can now be forgiven. As soon as she reveals her undoing, Angel rejects her. One sees the way in which Tess is excruciatingly torn between her instincts and her awareness of moral convention. Her love for Angel prompts her to beg for forgiveness, yet when he condemns her, she willingly condemns herself and utterly refuses to protest. She passively offers to obey Clare "even if it is to lie down and die" (Tess, p. 272). In this way, the law of society acts against Tess. Hardy comments on the way in which her lack of protest, arising out of a sense of her own unworthiness, contributes to Angel's departure: "But her mood of long-suffering made his way easy for him, and she herself was his best advocate" (Tess, p.297).

The bleak and desolate world of Flintcomb-Ash, where Tess must journey to find sustenance, can be associated with her own mood of penance and sense of deserved punishment. Here, in this infertile wasteland, so far removed from the Edenic harmony of Talbothays, Tess undergoes both physical and emotional hardship.⁷ All the while that she works at Flintcomb-Ash Tess maintains a faithful love for Angel. Yet there is a conflict in this long-suffering love. Because of her natural appetites, Tess fervently wishes to be reunited with Angel even though she feels herself to be unworthy of the man she so longs for.

Eventually, Tess lashes out against the conventions that have caused her so much misery. The influences of Alec, coupled with the plight of her family, spur Tess to direct a letter to Angel in which

she expresses her wrath at what she now sees as his unjust treatment of her:

O why have you treated me so monstrously, Angel!
I do not deserve it. I have thought it all over
carefully, and I can never, never forgive you! You
know that I did not intend to wrong you--why have
you so wronged me? You are cruel, cruel indeed!
I will try to forget you. It is all injustice I
have received at your hands!

(Tess, p. 405)

Although Tess still loves Angel, she feels that because he has treated her so uncharitably she can never forgive him. At this point Tess reveals an instinctive awareness that social law has crushed love and the pleasure of fulfillment.

The force of self-preservation gains strength within Tess as she and her family suffer great deprivation. Convinced that Angel will never return, Tess makes an instinctive retreat to her physical partner, Alec d'Urberville. Hardy comments on the way in which Tess now begins to see her former sexual mate: "A consciousness that in a physical sense this man alone was her husband seemed to weigh on her more and more" (Tess, p. 407). Yet, for the divided Tess this retreat is also bound to social convention. It is not instinct alone that prompts Tess to return to Alec, but also a sense of morality, a feeling that social law dictates that she return to her first mate even though she does not love him.

Tess is placed in a severe dilemma when Angel arrives to ask for forgiveness and finds her living with Alec. The two aspects of her divided self--the force of nature and the law of social convention--interfere within her in a torturingly complex manner. As soon as she sees Angel, Tess's long-suppressed passion for him overtakes her with

great intensity. Yet this passionate love is now connected to a sense of moral obligation; Tess, by living with Alec, now feels that she has once again sinned against Angel. Tess expresses to Alec the bitter agony of her conflict:

Now he [Angel] is gone. Gone a second time, and I have lost him now forever . . . and he will not love me the littlest bit ever any more--only hate me! . . . O yes, I have lost him now--again because of--you! . . . And he is dying--he looks as if he is dying! . . . And my sin will kill him and not kill me! . . . O, you have torn my life to pieces . . . made me what I prayed you in pity not to make me again! . . . My own true husband will never, never--O God--I can't bear this!--I cannot!

(Tess, p. 432)

Tess no longer regards Alec as her mate in any way. Angel, the man she has married, she now sees as "her own true husband" since she loves him instinctively and passionately and at the same time feels morally bound to him. Love and a sense of morality thus intermingle as Tess lashes out against Alec, the cruel persuader, for she feels that he has caused her to commit a "sin" which will prevent the fulfillment of love.

As far as Tess is concerned, the only way out of her dilemma is to murder Alec. Again, the divided aspects of Tess's nature interfere. By committing a murder, an instinctive act, she thinks that she will obliterate all of the moral wrongs of the past. Further, in attempting to annihilate these wrongs in such a fashion, Tess instinctively feels that she will fulfill her own appetite for happiness by perhaps regaining the cherished love of Angel:

Angel, will you forgive me my sin against you, now I have killed him? I thought as I ran along that you would be sure to forgive me now that I have done that. It came to me as a shining light that I should get you back that way.

(Tess, p. 436)

Ironically, then, the divided Tess commits a socially criminal act out of an instinctive desire for happiness and her own sense of moral duty.

During the time that Tess and Angel enjoy numbered days of happiness together, both of them ignore moral convention and the crime that Tess has committed against society. They finally experience the instinctive joys that satisfy the long-suppressed appetite for "sweet pleasure." Tess comments on the contentment to be found in this secluded world where love and passion reign supreme: "Why should we put an end to all that's sweet and lovely! . . . All is trouble outside there; inside here content" (Tess, pp. 441, 442).

Social law intrudes upon the harmony of Tess and Angel. Tess, sleeping upon a slab of rock at ancient Stonehenge, awakes to find that she and Angel are surrounded by officers of the law. Her comment at this discovery reveals that she passively accepts a social law which condemns an instinctive act:

It is as it should be . . . Angel, I am almost glad--yes, glad! This happiness could not have lasted. It was too much. I have had enough; and now I shall not live for you to despise me!

(Tess, p. 447)

The self-divided Tess, who recently enjoyed the splendour of instinctive fulfillment, is again governed by the moral codes of society. She goes to her death feeling that her punishment is justified.

In this novel, one can see that Hardy's treatment of the self-divided character has become increasingly complex. Both Angel and Tess are cruelly divided within themselves between the force of nature and the law of society. While Clare eventually overcomes this division, conflicting forces bitterly interfere within Tess to the end of her

life. Yet, it is not the singular self-division of either of these characters that is the sole cause of destruction in the novel. Rather, it is the intricate interaction of two human beings, both torn within themselves, that leads to suffering, murder and death. Upon reading the passage in which Angel mutely watches the raising of the black flag which starkly signifies the death of his young wife, one is made especially aware of the profundity of the past harsh struggle of these two frail persons, caught in a world of conflict and turmoil.

Footnotes

¹ Thomas Hardy, Tess of the d'Urbervilles (London: Macmillan London Ltd., 1974), p. 39. All subsequent parenthetical references are from this edition, and will be abbreviated within the body of the thesis as Tess.

² D. H. Lawrence, Lawrence on Hardy and Painting: Study of Thomas Hardy and Introduction to These Paintings. (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1973), p. 27.

³ Matthew Arnold, "Empedocles on Etna," Selected Poetry and Prose (New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1958), p. 43.

⁴ Perry Meisel, Thomas Hardy: The Return of the Repressed, A Study of the Major Fiction (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 131.

⁵ Dorothy Van Ghent, The English Novel: Form and Function (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1959), p. 199.

⁶ Jean R. Brooks, "Tess of the d'Urbervilles: The move Towards Existentialism," Thomas Hardy and the Modern World, ed. F. B. Pinion (Dorchester, Dorset: The Thomas Hardy Society Ltd., 1974), p. 50.

⁷ When one thinks of Tess's misery in this "starve-acre place" (Tess, p. 331) one recalls the following passage from Genesis: ". . . cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. . . ." The Holy Bible, Genesis 3:17-18.

Chapter Four

The Fall into Self-Consciousness: Jude the Obscure

Jude the Obscure, Hardy's last major novel, presents a culmination in his treatment of the divided self, both in terms of complexity and intensity. In this novel, one meets two characters who are divided within themselves and are painfully aware of their own divisions and conflicts. In examining the theme of self-division in this work, one sees how Hardy's artistic techniques are modified to delineate his characters' consciousness of inner division.

In The Mayor of Casterbridge the reader encounters a wanderer who settles into an urban centre that lacks supportive values. Hardy shows the way in which Michael Henchard, alienated and separated from his community, suffers from a destructive inner division. Henchard's actions can be analyzed in terms of a conflict between the part of him that longs for reciprocal love and the part of him that willfully annihilates love. Tess of the d'Urbervilles depicts two characters, Tess and Angel, who become uprooted from the relatively stable environments of their childhood years. As events progress, one sees how both Tess and Angel are torn by a division that permeates the entire world of the novel. Tess desires to respond to the promptings of nature, but these promptings are cancelled by the conventional laws of society; Angel's natural desires are stifled by the conventional morality associated with his rigid upbringing.

In Jude the Obscure Jude Fawley and Sue Bridehead are wanderers from the outset of the novel. Unlike Tess and Angel, neither of them has any memories of a stable childhood. And unlike Henchard, who settles into a community, Jude and Sue never become located for any length of time in one place. Rootless and alienated, they travel from one hostile urban centre to another.

While the divided natures of Henchard, Tess and Angel can be quite clearly defined, there are no simple terms to describe the self-divisions of Sue and Jude. Their many divisions overlap, intermingle and conflict in a variety of complex ways. Further, both characters are acutely conscious of their own and each other's divisions. Finally, Sue and Jude suffer from a poignant awareness of the conflicts in human existence itself. The primal simplicity that enveloped the worlds of Under the Greenwood Tree and Far From the Madding Crowd does not even exist as a distant memory for Sue and Jude. Theirs is the fallen world of self-consciousness and knowledge¹ where man, expelled from the garden of harmony and integration, must wander the face of the earth, alienated and always aware of his own inner division and separation from others. In this world, man's heightened awareness does not aid him in coming to terms with the complex nature of human existence; rather, it augments his sense of estrangement and incertitude. For Sue and Jude, there are no resolutions; there are only questions and meditations that lead them further into a labyrinth of doubt and obscurity.

In Jude the Obscure Hardy's treatment of character is modified to depict Jude's and Sue's consciousness of their own divisions and conflicts. Under the Greenwood Tree and Far From the Madding Crowd present characters who are externally defined in terms of their actions in particular communities. In Jude the Obscure the inner worlds of Hardy's

two central characters dominate the novel. In his exploration of internal action, Hardy reveals "the gradual and painful discoveries . . . of the wandering ego"² conscious of its own divided nature; this self-consciousness Hardy renders frequently through the use of interior monologues and of dialogues in which Jude and Sue discuss their internal conflicts and turmoils.

At one point in Jude the Obscure Sue Bridehead says that she is "a woman tossed about, all alone, with aberrant passions and unaccountable antipathies."³ Throughout the novel, she is consciously at war with herself, afflicted by discord, doubt and irresolution. Heilman comments that she displays

unceasing reversals, apparent changes of mind and heart, acceptances and rejections, alternations of warmth and offishness, of evasiveness and candor, of impulsive acts and later regrets, of commitment and withdrawal, of freedom and constraint, unconventionality and propriety.⁴

Sue's divided nature cannot be described in any definitive terms. Hers is a complex or nexus of several divisions.

The reader first hears of Sue's background from Jude's Aunt Drusilla in the opening chapters of the novel:

. . . I have not seen the child [Sue] for years, though she was born in this place. . . . My niece and her husband, after they were married, didn't get a house of their own for some year or more; and then they only had one till--Well, I won't go into that. Jude, my child, don't you ever marry. 'Tisn't for the Fawleys to take that step any more. She, their only one, was like a child o' my own, Belinda, till the split come! Ah, that a little maid should know such changes!

(Jude, p. 33)

Sue, the product of a fragmented home, has been uprooted early in life. Rather than dwelling in surroundings of stability and harmony, Sue, from

childhood, has moved in urban centres, torn from her family connections. The young Sue Bridehead is thus shown to be "caught up and lost in the atmosphere of change that prophetically begins the novel."⁵

Sue is first seen as a young woman working at an ecclesiastical establishment in Christminster. Amid "Anglican books, stationery, texts . . . Gothic-framed pictures of saints [and] ebony crosses" (Jude, p. 107), she is associated with a conventional Christian setting. However, Sue buys pagan statues of Venus and Apollo which she places on either side of a Calvary painting in her chamber. She spends some time glancing at "a volume of Gibbon . . . dealing with the reign of Julian the Apostate" (Jude, p. 115), after which she turns to Swinburne's "Hymn to Proserpine" and reads a major portion of the poem.

Sue's desire to purchase statues of pagan gods and her interest in the sensuous, pagan world of Swinburne's poetry stand in sharp opposition to the rigid Christian values associated with her place of employment. Her private interests and aspirations reflect an "intellectual daring"⁶ that conflicts with the conventionality and propriety suggested by her position at the ecclesiastical establishment.

Sue is a self-divided person who is consciously grappling with her own values and conflicts. During an evening together with Jude, she comments:

The Cathedral has had its day! . . . [it] was
a very good place four or five centuries ago;
but it is played out now. . . . I am not modern
either, I am more ancient than mediaevalism,
if you only knew.

(Jude, pp. 153-154)

Thinking of herself in terms of a wandering Ishmaelite, Sue tells Jude that she "crave[s] to get back to the life of [her] infancy and its

freedom" (Jude, p. 158). When Jude says that she is a creature of civilization, she philosophically remarks that she is "a sort of negation of it" (Jude, p. 167). Sue expresses modern, unconventional ideas, yet says she is not modern. She rejects medievalism, which she associates with old-fashioned and outworn ways and values, yet calls herself ancient. She says that the primitive, uncivilized life is what she longs for, yet she is quite sophisticated and intellectual. Sue's expression of her diverse and often discordant ideas shows her conscious attempt to come to terms with the many conflicts that she embodies.

Sue's relationships with Richard Phillotson and Jude Fawley show the way in which her divided nature and hypersensitive awareness affect her involvements with others. Sue decides that she will marry Phillotson after a very brief courtship. This sudden arrangement reflects a conventional attitude on the part of Sue. While she earlier defied convention by daringly placing her pagan statues in a forbidden setting, she now plans to accept the conventional institution of marriage. Since Sue knows little of the character and values of Phillotson, her decision to marry him is much influenced by her desire to establish a conventional union.

Sue's escape from the Training School displays her impulsive rebellion against the constraints she feels are inherent in her commitments to Phillotson. Yet, the day after the incident Sue feels regret for what she has done:

I fear I ought not to have run away from that school! Things seem so different in the cold light of morning, don't they? What Mr. Phillotson will say I don't know! It was quite by his wish that I went there. He is the only man in the world for whom I have any respect or fear. I hope he'll forgive me; but he'll scold me dreadfully, I expect!

(Jude, p. 175)

Jude, in an attempt to assist and comfort Sue, suggests that he will speak to Phillotson on her behalf. To this offer, Sue replies, "O no; you shan't. I don't care for him [Phillotson]! He may think what he likes--I shall do just as I choose!" (Jude, p. 175). The divided Sue is torn between accepting and rejecting authority and convention. There is a part of her that longs to be free and independent; yet there is another part of her that wants to be bound by commitment and restriction.

In marrying Phillotson, Sue acts against the part of her nature that yearns for freedom, unconventionality and spontaneity. Influenced by a sense of duty and a conventional social consciousness, she stifles her feelings for Jude and binds herself by a contract when she does not even "know what marriage means" (Jude, p. 189). The newly-wedded Sue soon feels that she "ought not to have married" (Jude, p. 210). In an intimate discussion with Jude, she questions the nature of the marriage ceremony:

Is it wrong, Jude . . . for a husband or wife to tell a third person that they are unhappy in their marriage? If a marriage ceremony is a religious thing, it is possibly wrong; but if it is only a sordid contract, based on material convenience in householding, rating and taxing, and the inheritance of land and money by children, making it necessary that the male parent should be known--which it seems to be--why surely a person may say . . . that it hurts and grieves him or her?

(Jude, p. 230)

Speaking more candidly, Sue confesses to a "repugnance on [her] part": "What tortures me so much is the necessity of being responsive to this man whenever he wishes, good as he is morally!--the dreadful contract to feel in a particular way in a matter whose essence is its voluntariness!" (Jude, p. 233).

Sue is not long married before certain unconventional aspects of her nature reassert themselves. Her reference to the marriage union as a "sordid" and "dreadful" contract (Jude, pp. 230, 233) reflects an attitude that is unorthodox and nonconformist. Yet Sue's admitted aversion towards sex appears to arise out of a form of prudishness that is apparently connected to propriety and "sexual orthodoxy."⁷ She claims that because she is bound by a marriage contract, which itself represents a conventional and "proper" union, she feels this repugnance towards Phillotson. If one is so much governed by propriety and what is customarily thought to be decent, a sexual relationship in a conventional marriage should be acceptable. But for Sue this is not the case. She says that her sexual feelings should be voluntary and not restricted to conventional ties, yet she displays prudishness and uses propriety as an explanation for her physical aversion. Sue's unwillingness to engage in a sexual relationship with Phillotson does not actually seem to find its roots in propriety. Sue's sexual coldness is in some way connected with her inability to make a commitment. She cannot give of herself freely although she speaks openly about voluntariness. This complex of divisions and conflicts torments Sue and leads to destructiveness in her relationships with men.

Sue expresses to her husband that she does not want to be bound by "laws and ordinances" (Jude, p. 243), through their inherent constraints that make one miserable. Her decision to part from Phillotson to go to live with Jude reveals her longing for freedom and independence. Sue's yearning for this freedom and an unconventional way of life actually finds its source in her deeply-rooted aversion towards sex--an aversion that is inextricably bound up with her inability to make a serious commit-

ment to another person. Hardy says that Sue is an "ethereal, fine-nerved, sensitive girl, quite unfitted by temperament and instinct to fulfill the conditions of the matrimonial relation with Phillotson, possibly with scarce any man . . ." (Jude, p. 239). As Sue departs from Phillotson, she leaves behind her a person who must suffer as a result of her destructive divisions, inconsistencies and conflicts.

Sue's relationship with Jude, much more intense than her married life with Phillotson, is fraught with turmoil and strife. From the earliest stages of their involvement, Sue displays to Jude her many divisions, discords, reversals and changes in feeling and attitude. She informs Jude that she plans to marry Phillotson, and concludes by saying, "We [she and Jude] had better not meet again; and we'll only correspond at long intervals, on purely business matters!" (Jude, p. 153). At the end of their next meeting, Sue offers Jude a gift: "O, I bought something for you. . . . It is a new little photograph of me. Would you like it?" (Jude, p. 159). Sue appears to be governed by a rigid propriety that prompts her to make a chilling statement of rejection to Jude now that she is engaged to another man. Yet, by offering Jude her photograph, she behaves in an enticing and rather provocative manner. Sue, using propriety as an official and respectable excuse for avoiding any further commitment to Jude, is torn between this need to remain distant from him and an irresistible yearning to capture his affections.

When Sue learns that Jude is married, she feels that she has been maltreated; she reacts with surprise, pain and vexation. In response to Jude's attempts at explanation, she says, "Here I have been saying, or writing, that--that you might love me or something of the sort!--just out of charity--and all the time--O it is perfectly damnable how things

are!" (Jude, p. 186). Piqued by jealousy, Sue asks Jude, "I suppose she --your wife--is--a very pretty woman, even if she's wicked?" (Jude, p. 186). Sue's reactions to the discovery that Jude is a married man reveal some of the many inconsistencies and antipathies inherent in her nature. Although she plans to marry Phillotson, she has written to Jude that he may love her if he wishes. In saying that Jude's being permitted to love her is an act of charity on her part, Sue distances herself from any form of reciprocal affection. Sue's jealousy of Arabella and her resentment of the fact that Jude is bound to another woman betray a possessiveness that conflicts with her view of herself as a pitying bestower of selfless charity.

The behavior of Sue towards Jude on the day of her marriage to Phillotson reveals the seemingly inexplicable destructiveness embodied in her divided nature. Prior to the marriage, Sue persuades Jude to partake with her in a mock ceremony. Upon completion of this ritualistic act, which "nearly [breaks] down Jude" (Jude, p. 192), Sue, "in the delicate voice of an epicure in emotions," remarks, "I like to do things like this" (Jude, p. 192). She displays something akin to detached, aesthetic pleasure in having Jude act out this ceremony. Remorseful over having pained him, Sue begs forgiveness: "My curiosity to hunt up a new sensation leads me into these scrapes. Forgive me! . . . You will, won't you Jude?" (Jude, p. 193). During the wedding, Jude is made to suffer by Sue's seemingly merciless request that he stand to give her away. As the actual marriage takes place Sue, hardly able to "command herself" (Jude, p. 194), is fully aware of the fact that she has placed Jude in a position that will torture him and she deeply regrets inflicting this misery upon him.

Sue appears to be cruel and unfeeling towards Jude. She takes a peculiar pleasure in grieving him, later only to pity him and blame herself. As Hardy comments, "Possibly she [Sue] would go on inflicting such pains again and again, and grieving for the sufferer again and again, in all her colossal inconsistency" (Jude, p. 194). Sue's pleasure in paining Jude is in some way connected with the part of her that wants to suppress her own feelings of love and affection and to distance herself from similar emotions in another person. By making Jude suffer, Sue herself suffers pangs of guilt and remorse. She attempts to make amends by expressing warmth and kindness, but this behavior is usually not longlasting. There is cruelty and destructiveness in Sue's desire for love; aware of this, yet often unable to control it, Sue tortures both herself and Jude.

After her marriage to Phillotson, Sue continues to behave in an inconsistent manner with Jude. At times she is kind to him, showing warmth and camaraderie; at other times she is distant and aloof. Sometimes Sue is spirited and flirtatious with Jude only to become suddenly serious and profoundly contemplative. All the while, Sue is painfully conscious of her many divisions and complexities, of the fact that she is "a woman tossed about, all alone, with aberrant passions, and unaccountable antipathies" (Jude, p. 226).

Sue's decision to live with Jude reflects her apparent grand rejection of conventionality and established social codes. In departing from her husband to live with Jude, Sue seems to be acting according to the part of her nature that longs to be freed from all conventional restrictions and obligations. She says she wants a relationship based on freedom and spontaneity, qualities which she felt were stifled by the

contractual nature of her bond to Phillotson. Sue's refusal to become sexually involved with Jude in the early stages of their cohabitation sharply conflicts with these supposedly liberal views. When Sue lived with Phillotson as his wife, she complained that her aversion towards sex arose out of the fact that her own desires could not be voluntary. Now that Sue is living with Jude, there is no contract, as she sees it, to demand sexual responsiveness from her. Yet Sue again displays prudishness and uses propriety as an excuse to distance herself from Jude. Aware of the misery that she is causing Jude, Sue finally makes an admission: ". . . don't press me and criticize me, Jude! Assume that I haven't the courage of my opinions. I know I am a poor miserable creature. My nature is not so passionate as yours!" (Jude, p. 260). When Sue speaks of passion, she is referring to the intensity of sexual desire. That her nature is not as passionate as Jude's is certainly true. To be intensely passionate, one must be able to give of one's self freely, to become vulnerable to another person and thereby to form a bond or a commitment with that person. Sue cannot do this. She vehemently rejects stifling social bonds and conventions, yet she is rigidly locked in by her own inner constraints.

Although Sue's nature is not as passionate as Jude's, she falls prey to a piercing sexual jealousy when she learns that Arabella has come to seek out Jude. She fears that Arabella may take Jude from her and so she says to him, "I am not a cold-natured, sexless creature, am I, for keeping you at such a distance? I am sure you don't think so! Wait and see! I do belong to you, don't I! I give in!" (Jude, p. 286). Sue, torn between her love for Jude and her own self-imposed constraints, finally decides that she will become sexually involved with Jude. When

she says "I give in," she is giving in to much more than Jude's pleas. She is giving in to the part of her nature that longs for fulfillment in love. Sue gives freely of herself and forms a commitment and a natural bond with Jude by becoming his sexual partner. In living as a sexual partner with a man to whom she is not married, Sue temporarily breaks out of the shackles of her inner constraints and also openly rejects the propriety and morality of conventional society. She displays "the courage of [her] opinions" (Jude, p. 260) by acting "according to [her] own standards of truth."⁸

Because Sue and Jude decide to live according to their own convictions, they are shunned by society. For awhile, Sue bears the "increasing rootlessness and isolation"⁹ that she and Jude must suffer as a result of this ostracism. In time Sue becomes disheartened and pessimistic as she, Jude and Father Time continually suffer from deprivation, loneliness and instability.

After Father Time murders the infant offspring of Sue and Jude and commits suicide himself, Sue feels that she is much to blame for this tragic turn of events; she reproaches herself bitterly for having imparted to the boy her pessimistic attitudes towards human existence, in general, and the burden of children, in particular. Overcome by guilt and despair, Sue uncompromisingly rejects all of the values and convictions that she and Jude struggled to realize by living together. Her unconventionality and her longing for freedom, independence and spontaneity are replaced by a strict adherence to social and moral conventions. The natural and instinctive joys which Sue shared with Jude are stifled and replaced by self-renunciation and even self-mortification. Sue's sexual involvement with Jude, which played such a central role

in her giving of herself and enjoying a natural commitment, now causes Sue great distress. Sue believes that the deaths of her children are the result of divine retribution. In Sue's view, because she and Jude delighted in the flesh and bore children outside of matrimony, they must suffer for it. She says to Jude:

All the ancient wrath of the Power above us has been vented upon us, His poor creatures, and we must submit. There is no choice. We must. It is no use fighting against God! . . . self-abnegation is the higher road. We should mortify the flesh--the terrible flesh--the curse of Adam!

(Jude, pp. 362, 364)

In her perverse way, Sue feels tht she must punish herself and Jude for her own sexuality, for the part of her that gave to another and enjoyed natural fulfillment.

Sue's decision to remarry Phillotson arises out of a sense of moral duty and obligation; she feels that because she once took a religious vow to be his wife she belongs to no other man. In Sue's eyes the marriage ceremony is no longer to be seen as a "sordid contract" (Jude, p. 230). Because Sue does not love Phillotson, she believes that by remarrying him she is acting in a self-abnegating and therefore a virtuous way. In marrying a man she does not love, Sue thinks that she will appease the wrath of God by sacrificing herself "on the altar of duty" (Jude, p. 364). Sue further punishes and inflicts pain upon herself in the name of duty by offering to become a sexual partner to Phillotson after their marriage. She says, "It is my duty. I will drink my cup to the dregs!" (Jude, p. 414). Because of the guilt she feels concerning her sexual involvement with Jude, Sue uses sexual relations with Phillotson as a way of torturing herself for once having experienced sexual pleasure.

One can see the many ways in which Sue consciously attempts to renounce the values that she maintained while living with Jude. Heilman comments on Sue's changes:

Under great stress the precarious structure of her divided personality has broken down, and it has been replaced by a narrow, rigid unity under the tyrannical control of a single element in the personality--the self-blaming, self-flagellating impulse which Sue now formulates in Christian terms but which has been part of her all along.¹⁰

Although Sue is now indeed governed by a "self-blaming, self-flagellating impulse" that greatly affects her attitudes and behavior, it can be argued that her divided personality is not replaced by a "rigid unity under the tyrannical control of a single element." Sue is still divided against herself. She punishes herself and renounces all happiness by leaving Jude to remarry Phillotson; yet she still deeply loves Jude. Prior to departing from him she says, "I love you as much as ever! Only --I ought not to love you--any more. O I must not any more!" (Jude, p. 370). When Jude tells her that she is "not worth a man's love" (Jude, p. 408) Sue cries out:

I can't endure you to say that! . . . Don't, don't scorn me! Kiss me, O kiss me lots of times, and say I am not a coward and a contemptible humbug-- I can't bear it!

(Jude, p. 409)

The part of Sue that fervently longs for Jude's love and affection still exists. Self-imposed, inflexible and austere morality and a natural desire for love and joy remain at war within the divided personality of Sue. Sue embodies many divisions as well as a hypersensitive awareness of ceaseless conflicts in herself and in human existence as a whole. Gregor aptly remarks, "With her [Sue] we find displayed the consciousness of self, the innate uncertainties, the psychic disturbance with

which the fiction of our day is to make us so familiar."¹¹

Jude, like Sue, is divided against himself and is painfully aware of his own inner turmoils. Within Jude there is "a deadly war waged between flesh and spirit" (Jude, p. 23), between passion and intellect and between romantic idealism and an awareness of a sometimes sordid reality. Although many of Jude's conflicts differ from those of Sue, he shares with her "the same restlessness, the same recognition of the debilitating effects of consciousness, the same sense of alienation."¹²

When one first meets Jude as a young child, one learns that he is rootless and alienated from a stable environment. Drusilla Fawley, Jude's aunt and guardian, tells a friend how the homeless boy has come to live with her:

He [Jude] came from Mellstock, down in South Wessex, about a year ago . . . where his father was living, and was took wi' the shakings for death, and died in two days.

(Jude, p. 32)

Turning to Jude, she continues, "It would ha' been a blessing if Goddy-Mighty had took thee too, wi' thy mother and father, poor useless boy!" (Jude, p. 32). Jude, left without parents and thought of as a burden by his aunt, experiences insecurity and estrangement at a very young age.

The ill effects of this instability on the sensitive young Jude are reflected in his pessimistic and negative outlook on life. At one point, early in the novel, Jude's face is said to be "wearing the fixity of a thoughtful child's who has felt the pricks of life somewhat before his time" (Jude, p. 30). Hardy comments that Jude does not want to grow up and accept the responsibilities and sufferings of the adult world:

Jude went out . . . feeling more than ever his existence to be an undemanded one. . . . Growing up brought responsibilities, he found. Events

did not rhyme quite as he had thought. . . . As you got older . . . you were seized with a sort of shuddering, he perceived. . . . If he could only prevent himself growing up! He did not want to be a man.

(Jude, pp. 37-38)

Jude does not enjoy any of the bliss of childhood. Rather, at a tender age he lives in a world of alienation and probing self-consciousness. The "ache of modernism" afflicts Jude long before he reaches adulthood.

Jude, as a child, is "a visionary"¹³ and a romantic dreamer. He attempts to escape from the realities around him by weaving a web of dreams about the academic centre of Christminster. In a romantic setting of mist and darkness, Jude climbs a ladder to catch a glimpse of Christminster's distant domes and spires. He does not listen to the comment made by a passing carter: "O, they [the academics at Christminster] never look at anything that folks like we can understand" (Jude, p. 43). To Jude, Christminster is a "heavenly Jerusalem" and "a city of light" (Jude, pp. 40, 45), a centre of learning where he will someday go to study. The "enchantment of Jude's halo-ringed vision of Christminster"¹⁴ stands in contrast to his awareness that his own existence, with its poverty and alienation, can be harsh and cruel. Mature beyond his years, Jude is self-divided at an early age. The incipient conflict that he embodies develops into an oppressive inner division that torments him throughout his life. Jude's idealistic aspirations and goals and his romantic yearnings perpetually conflict with his awareness that the harshness of everyday reality often thwarts human dreams.

During his youth, Jude's idealism is centred upon his dreams of Christminster. He attempts to teach himself Latin and Greek by private study in the hope that he may one day be able to enter college at Christ-

minster. When he discovers that there is no "secret cipher" (Jude, p. 49) enabling him to change one language into another, Jude's academic aspirations are temporarily checked. As Jude recognizes that study involves many laborious difficulties, he reveals his awareness of the fact that harsh reality conflicts with his dreams: ". . . under the crushing recognition of his gigantic error Jude continued to wish himself out of the world" (Jude, p. 50).

In spite of his disillusionment, Jude pursues his studies, and at the time of his nineteenth year he has grand dreams of some day becoming a Doctor of Divinity or perhaps even a Bishop. He says to himself, ". . . Christminster shall be my Alma Mater; and I'll be her beloved son, in whom she shall be well pleased" (Jude, p. 58). At the very moment when Jude is entangled in this mesh of dreams concerning his future, he is confronted with a situation that changes the course of his life. While he is meandering home from Alfredston to Marygreen, he is struck by a piece of pig's pizzle, symbolic of fleshly desires and sexual appetite; it is thrown by the sensual and rather coarse daughter of a pig-breeder. This incident marks the beginning of Jude's destructive relationship with a young woman who quickly ensnares him, thereby, for a time, crushing his hopes of studying at Christminster.

As Jude begins to court Arabella he is seized by a hitherto unexperienced physical desire that causes him to neglect his studies; Hardy comments on this sudden change in Jude:

He [Jude] walked as if he felt himself to be another man from the Jude of yesterday. What were his books to him? What were his intentions, hitherto adhered to so strictly, as to not wasting a single minute of time day by day? 'Wasting!' It depended on your point of view to define that: he was just living for the first time: not wasting life. It was

better to love a woman than to be a graduate or a parson; ay, or a pope!

(Jude, p. 68)

Jude is divided not only between romantic idealism and an awareness that reality can be harsh and sordid; he is also torn between "flesh and spirit" (Jude, p. 23), between earthly, physical passion and lofty intellectual and spiritual yearnings. Further, Jude's conflicts are intensified by his own recognition of the fact that his aims for learning and his passion for Arabella are antipathetic and irreconcilable. When Jude returns home after having spent an afternoon of pleasurable abandonment with Arabella, he is confronted by his neglected books:

. . . a general consciousness of neglect seemed written on the face of all things confronting him. He went upstairs without a light, and the dim interior of his room accosted him with sad inquiry. There lay his book open, just as he had left it. . . .

(Jude, p. 68)

Jude's passion for Arabella, although temporarily overwhelming, is very shortlived. Gradually, he is awakened to her lack of refinement and her rather coarse ways and to the fact that her unsophisticated values cannot be reconciled with his intellectual and spiritual aims. Once Jude learns that Arabella has deceived him into marrying her, he becomes wretched and disillusioned. They do not live together as husband and wife for long before Arabella departs from Jude; the soiling of Jude's precious books by his wife's grease-laden hands causes a skirmish which results in the leave-taking.

In his relationship with Arabella, Jude's many inner divisions and conflicts interact in a complex way. His aforementioned confrontation with Arabella signifies the ultimate shattering of any illusions he had concerning her. When he attempts to commit suicide after her de-

parture, Jude is prompted by the part of his nature that is painfully aware of life's cruelties; the aspect of himself that sees the sordidness and ugliness of all things, including his former passion, leads him to the brink of despair. Thus Jude's physical desire for Arabella, having placed him in a situation that crushes his hopes of an academic future, is closely associated with the harsh reality of day-to-day existence of which Jude is only too conscious. In this case, passion is in no way lofty or elevating; it is simply a part of the dismal real world which is hostile to Jude's dreams and aspiration.

Jude's idealism concerning Christminster once again asserts itself and he decides to make this academic centre his new home. Hardy remarks: "There actually rose the faint halo, a small dim nebulosity [around Christminster], hardly recognizable save by the eye of faith. It was enough for him. He would go to Christminster as soon as the term of his apprenticeship expired" (Jude, p. 94). On "a windy, whispering, moonless night" (Jude, p. 97), Jude visits Christminster colleges and becomes lost in a realm of fancy; he conjures up images of various thinkers, from poets and playwrights to scientists, philologists and statesmen. In the light of day, Jude sees things from a different perspective: "The spirits of the great men had disappeared. . . . What at night had been perfect and ideal was by day the more or less defective real" (Jude, p. 103). Confronted by the realization that he must "live by work" (Jude, p. 103), Jude casts aside his dreams about college and sets out to find employment.

Jude continues to dream about becoming an academic until he receives a letter of rejection from the Master at Christminster. After ten years of laborious effort, all of his hopes crumble to dust. The

requirements of the academic institution to which Jude applies appear to be closely linked with a rigid class system. Because Jude is a poor commoner, he is refused the right to study at college. Feeling the bitter sting of rejection and exclusion, Jude deadens his pain with alcohol. In the corner of a sordid bar, Jude, hostile and intoxicated, recites the Latin Creed to a group of undergraduate students and other "frequenters of the house" (Jude, p. 139). This act, in a setting of such contrast, reveals the division that Jude embodies: the lofty and sacred words that he recites arise out of the high-minded and idealistic aspects of his nature; his attraction to a wretched environment shows his awareness of "'the hell of . . . failure,' both in ambition and in love" (Jude, p. 144) and the ugliness of reality which has thwarted his dreams.

Jude's divisions and conflicts further torment him as he becomes involved with Sue Bridehead. His intense relationship with her heightens his awareness of his own divided nature. Jude first sees Sue when she is working as an engraver at an ecclesiastical establishment. Immediately, without having met her and knowing very little of her, Jude begins to idealize Sue:

Thus he kept watch over her, and liked to feel she was there. The consciousness of her living presence stimulated him. But she remained more or less an ideal character, about whose form he began to weave curious and fantastic day-dreams. . . . [T]he emotion which had been accumulating in his breast as the bottled-up effect of solitude and the poetized locality he dwelt in, insensibly began to precipitate itself on this half-visionary form. . . .

(Jude, p. 109)

In his day-dreams Jude regards Sue as a new-found companion and soul mate who will elevate him spiritually: "So would she be to him a kindly star, an elevating power, a companion in Anglican worship, a tender friend" (Jude, p. 110). Jude's early yearning for Sue is spiritual and ethereal

in nature, arising out of a haze of lofty visions.

Jude soon learns that his feelings for Sue are not wholly free from physical desire. Although Sue is to him still "an ideality" (Jude, p. 118) and a figure of virtue steeped in "sweet, saintly, Christian" (Jude, p. 108) surroundings, she is also a woman to whom he is sexually attracted. Thus Jude's longing for Sue is, in itself, divided. Aware that he is torn between "flesh and spirit" (Jude, p. 23), he struggles to come to terms with his internal conflicts:

. . . he dared not, in this holy spot, confront the woman who was beginning to influence him in such an indescribable manner. Those three enormous reasons why he must not attempt intimate acquaintance with Sue Bridehead now that his interest in her had shown itself to be unmistakably of a sexual kind, loomed as stubbornly as ever. . . . He felt it to be his duty to pray against his weakness. But much as he wished to be an exemplar in these things he could not get on. It was quite impossible, he found, to ask to be delivered from temptation when your heart's desire was to be tempted unto seventy times seven.

(Jude, p. 118)

Jude's decision to take orders and lead an "ecclesiastical and altruistic life" (Jude, p. 148) conflicts with his love for Sue. Conscious of this conflict, Jude attempts to stifle the physical aspect of his love and regard Sue "only as a friend and kinswoman" (Jude, p. 149). Yet, as has been seen, this love also embodies ethereal and spiritual qualities. At one point, Hardy comments that Jude "stood with his back to the fire regarding her [Sue], and saw in her almost a divinity" (Jude, p. 165). The spiritual and idealistic aspects of Jude's nature painfully conflict with those that are earthly and physical. These forces are at war within his love for Sue which is, itself, at odds with his ecclesiastical goals.

Sue's marriage to Phillotson leaves Jude crushed and chagrined. Acutely conscious of the cruelties of existence, he sees how all of his hopes have come to naught. Jude now views Christminster, the centre of his former dreams, in a different light: "The City of learning wore an estranged look, and he had lost all feeling for its association. . . . He felt it impossible to engage himself and return and stay in this place of vanished dreams" (Jude, pp. 197, 198).

In this state of wretchedness and dependency, Jude encounters Arabella and spends the night with her, only to experience later a sense of degradation. Tormented yet further by his self-divisions, Jude knows that this lust for Arabella, associated with sordid reality, conflicts with the loftier passion that he feels for Sue:

Looking at his loved one as she appeared to him now, in his tender thought the sweetest and most disinterested comrade that he had ever had, living largely in vivid imaginings, so ethereal a creature that her spirit could be seen trembling through her limbs, he felt heartily ashamed of his earthliness in spending the hours he had spent in Arabella's company.

(Jude, p. 207)

There is a part of Jude that still yearns for a life of holiness and abstinence; he attempts not only to obliterate the memory of his abandonment with Arabella, but also to mortify himself for his desire to see Sue. For the divided Jude, "the utmost he could hope for was that in a life of constant internal warfare between flesh and spirit the former might not always be victorious" (Jude, p. 213).

Jude realizes the contradiction inherent in passionately loving Sue and struggling to become a "servant of religion" at the same time, and so he decides that his "point of bliss is not upward, but here" (Jude, pp. 237, 258). By burning his religious texts, he feels that he

he is purging himself of his own hypocrisy: "In his passion for Sue he could now stand as an ordinary sinner, and not as a whited sepulchre" (Jude, p. 239). As Jude goes to live with Sue, he casts aside the lofty morality by which he had planned to live. The woman who had once represented all that was pure, noble and spiritual to him has now also become the object of his intense physical passion.

Sue's wish to remain merely a companion to Jude, once they are living together, intensifies his frustrations and conflicts. He still sees her as an ethereal and unearthly creature; at one point he exclaims, "--you spirit, you disembodied creature, you dear, sweet tantalizing phantom--hardly flesh at all . . . (Jude, p. 265). To Jude, she is ennobling and elevating; yet, at the same time, he sees her as sexually enticing. Because of the sexual aspect of his love, he regards himself as an "earthly wretch" (Jude, p. 265) who cannot come to terms with his inner division.

This division continues to trouble Jude after he becomes sexually involved with Sue. He says to her, "I seduced you. . . . You were a distinct type--a refined creature, intended by Nature to be left intact. But I couldn't leave you alone!" (Jude, p. 363). When Sue decided that she must return to Phillotson, Jude blames himself for the eventual failure of the relationship: "My God, how selfish I was! Perhaps--perhaps I spoilt one of the highest and purest loves that ever existed between man and woman!" (Jude, p. 374).

Jude's awareness that reality is hostile to dreams and ideals becomes more painful and intense as he, Sue, and their children are shunned by society and forced to live in poverty. Although he is no longer a romantic dreamer, living in a world of day-dreams and imaginings about

the future, his nature is still divided. Howe defines the romantic principle as "an insistence upon the right of the individual person to create the terms of his being, despite the pressures and constraints of the external world."¹⁵ All of his life, Jude has attempted "to create the terms of his being," to make his romantic dreams and imaginings a reality. This romantic aspect of his nature has always conflicted with his many realizations that everyday existence, along with the drives of his own biological nature, can be crushing and harsh.

In this dire situation, Jude's division affects him in a negative and destructive way. He knows that his dreams are a part of the past, yet he still clings tenaciously to them. His desire to return to Christminster, a place that has scorned him, indicates that he is grasping after what he knows to be a shattered dream. Jude remarks:

I love the place--although I know how it hates all men like me--the so-called Self-taught,--how it scorns our laboured acquisitions, when it should be the first to respect them; how it sneers at our false quantities and mispronunciations, when it should say, I see you want help, my poor friend! . . . Nevertheless, it is the centre of the universe to me, because of my early dream: and nothing can alter it. . . . I should like to go back to live there--perhaps to die there!

(Jude, p. 340)

By standing in the rain on Remembrance Day, watching the college procession, and at the same time, exposing himself to a group of ignorant mockers, Jude inflicts both emotional and physical suffering upon himself.

After Sue leaves Jude to remarry Phillotson, Jude's inner divisions greatly contribute to his downfall and ultimately to his death. Bereft of Sue, whose companionship at least temporarily elevated and ennobled him, he succumbs to the desires of the flesh, merely for their own sake. Under the influence of alcohol, he spends a night with Arabella, thereby

giving her grounds to demand that he preserve her "honour" by remarrying her. By acting against his nobler tendencies, Jude places himself in yet more miserable circumstances; physically ill and poverty-stricken, he now finds himself bound to a woman for whom he feels no affection. Because those noble and idealistic aspects of Jude's nature--those qualities which once caused him to see Sue as "a kindly star" and "a companion in Anglican worship" (Jude, p. 110)--are still a part of him, he suffers deeply in his present sordid situation.

As Jude continues to live in this wretched situation, his vision darkens and he begins to wish himself out of life. In a state of misery, he makes a visit to Sue, his last hope in life, knowing that by walking to see her in the cold and rain he will put an end to himself; as he says to Arabella when he returns:

I made up my mind that a man confined to his room by inflammation of the lungs, a fellow who had only two wishes left in the world, to see a particular woman, and then to die, could neatly accomplish those two wishes at one stroke by taking this journey in the rain. That I've done. I have seen her for the last time, and I've finished myself--put an end to a feverish life which ought not to have been begun!

(Jude, p. 411)

Jude's own nature works to destroy him. When Jude sees that there is nothing left to hope for and no more noble goals to aspire towards, he cannot accept his circumstances and cannot go on living. The idealist, the romantic dreamer, the person who fought and struggled to "create the terms of his being despite the pressures and constraints of the external world,"¹⁶ is finally crushed by "the grind of stern reality" (Jude, p. 412).

In Jude the Obscure, Hardy presents two characters who undergo

great suffering as a result of their internal conflicts and divisions. Jude is torn between romantic idealism and an awareness that reality can be bitter and cruel; he is also a victim of the "spirit-flesh" dualism. These conflicts, coupled with some harsh circumstances, work to destroy him. Sue, supposedly dominated by "spirit," suffers from a nexus of divisions and is left miserably unfulfilled. Because Jude and Sue are "thin-skinned" (Jude, p. 305) and acutely aware of these conflicts, their afflictions are much intensified. This hypersensitive awareness of the self, in all its complexity, does not aid Jude and Sue in better understanding the nature of human existence; rather, it leads them further into obscurity, turmoil and alienation. Jude the Obscure, in its treatment of the self-divided, self-conscious character, "foreshadows the modern themes of failure, frustration and futility, disharmony, isolation [and] rootlessness . . . as inescapable conditions of life."¹⁷

Footnotes

¹ Northrop Frye, A Study of English Romanticism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), pp. 17-18.

² Perry Meisel, Thomas Hardy: The Return of the Repressed, A Study of the Major Fiction (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 139.

³ Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure (London: Macmillan London Ltd., 1974), p. 226. All subsequent parenthetical references are from this edition and will be documented within the body of the thesis as Jude.

⁴ Robert B. Heilman, "Hardy's Sue Bridehead," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 20, No. 4 (March, 1966), 310.

⁵ Jean R. Brooks, Thomas Hardy: The Poetic Structure (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1971), p. 265.

⁶ Barbara Foss, "Hardy and St. Paul: Patterns of Conflict in Jude the Obscure," Colby Library Quarterly, 10, No. 5 (March, 1974), 280.

⁷ Mary Jacobus, "Sue the Obscure," Essays in Criticism, 25, No. 3 (July, 1975), 310.

⁸ Brooks, Thomas Hardy: The Poetic Structure, p. 261.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Heilman, "Hardy's Sue Bridehead," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 316.

¹¹ Ian Gregor, The Great Web: The Form of Hardy's Major Fiction (London: Faber and Faber, 1974), p. 219.

¹² Ward Hellstrom, "Hardy's Scholar-Gipsy," The English Novel in the Nineteenth-Century: Essays on the Literary Mediation of Human Values. ed. George Goodin (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1972), p. 209.

¹³ Ibid., p. 200.

¹⁴ Ross C. Murfin, Swinburne, Hardy, Lawrence and the Burden of Belief (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 145.

¹⁵ Irving Howe, Thomas Hardy (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), p. 111.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Brooks, Thomas Hardy: The Poetic Structure, p. 254.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

The five novels discussed in this thesis move from the Edenic realms of Under the Greenwood Tree and Far From the Madding Crowd, where integrated and simple characters live in harmony with themselves and their stable rustic environments, to the fallen modern world of Jude the Obscure where two self-divided, self-conscious characters wander restlessly from one hostile urban centre to another. Hardy shows the way in which self-divided characters, living in environments that lack supportive values, bring misery and destruction upon themselves and others. When the characters are not only self-divided but are also conscious of their own divisions and conflicts, their consciousness serves to intensify the suffering of their internal struggles. The Edenic myth underlies Hardy's treatment of the integrated self in the two early novels; to a degree, the myth of the fall of man supports his treatment of the divided self in the three later novels.

Under the Greenwood Tree, published in 1872, early in Hardy's writing career, presents conflicts that are slight and rather trivial. Parson Maybold, an outsider with somewhat modern ideas, decides to replace the ancestral Mellstock choir with a church organist. Fancy Day, who was sent away from Mellstock to become educated and cultivated, has unconventional ideas that conflict with the traditional values of Dick Dewey. Rustic harmony is restored when Fancy marries Dick and accepts traditional rural life. Hardy depicts simple and stable characters in

this novel. They are defined by their social roles and seen almost wholly in terms of their environment. There is very little exploration of the inner workings of the minds of these characters. There is an Edenic world; they are integrated and they dwell in simple and natural harmony with their rustic surroundings.

Far From the Madding Crowd, published in 1874, depicts a rural environment similar to that of Under the Greenwood Tree. The setting is pastoral and Edenic. The disruption that occurs in the novel begins when Sargeant Troy, an urban invader, enters Weatherbury and captures the heart of Bathsheba Everdene, only to marry her and desert her. He returns to Weatherbury to reclaim her, and Mr. Boldwood, Bathsheba's long-suffering admirer, murders him. It is important that the novel does not end at this point of disaster. Bathsheba marries Gabriel Oak, the traditional good shepherd who is an embodiment of rural virtue. As in Under the Greenwood Tree, rural harmony strongly re-establishes itself. The community of Weatherbury is one of the central aspects of the novel. The characters are seen, for the most part, in action that is community-oriented. They are relatively simple and externally defined. Hardy is not exploring the complexity of human consciousness in this novel; he is presenting a pastoral, rural community to which its stable inhabitants are closely bound.

The Mayor of Casterbridge, published in 1886, twelve years after Far From the Madding Crowd, reflects Hardy's darkening vision and growing pessimism. In this novel, Hardy presents a competitive and exploitative urban centre with a sinister and corrupt past; Casterbridge is far removed from the pastoral settings of Under the Greenwood Tree and Far From the Madding Crowd. Michael Henchard, an alienated and self-divided man,

settles into this centre that lacks stable supportive values. Unlike Under the Greenwood Tree and Far From the Madding Crowd, where the harmonious rustic settings were the central aspects of the novels, The Mayor of Casterbridge is dominated by the powerful character of Michael Henchard. Hardy explores Henchard's division between a desire for reciprocal love and a cruel will that relentlessly annihilates love. The novel shows the way in which a divided man, living in a community that is, itself, torn by competition and corruption, brings suffering and eventual death upon himself. Michael Henchard's world is an alienated one in the sense that neither he nor his surroundings are integrated. He must struggle with his own internal conflicts as well as the turmoil of the world around him.

In Tess of the d'Urbervilles, published in 1891, Hardy creates two self-divided characters who become involved with each other. Treatment of self-division becomes much more complex in this novel than in The Mayor of Casterbridge. The law of society and the force of nature, at war within both Tess and Angel, form a conflict that permeates the entire world of the novel. Tess and Angel grapple with a world that is, itself, torn by division and conflict. Edenic realms exist in this novel; Tess's childhood world in Marlott and her life at Talbothays are Edenic in their natural harmony. But these are Edens in a fallen world that is tainted by a knowledge of pain and suffering. Hardy moves deeper into the minds of his characters in this novel. Clare is a brooding intellectual and Tess experiences "the ache of modernism";¹ she suffers from doubts and negative intuitions about the nature of existence. Tess and Angel are on the brink of falling into the state of self-consciousness that torments Sue and Jude. Clare intellectually questions and Tess intuitively senses some of the many problems and conflicts that plague Sue and

Jude.

Hardy's treatment of the divided self, in terms of both complexity and intensity, culminates in his last major novel, Jude the Obscure, published in 1895. Not only do Jude and Sue each embody a nexus of divisions, but they are acutely conscious of all of their internal conflicts. There is not even a memory of an Eden in this novel. The fall is complete. Jude and Sue, self-divided and self-conscious, wander from one urban setting to another, restless and completely alienated from their hostile surroundings. In examining these five novels, one sees how Hardy's vision changes from the Edenic world of Under the Greenwood Tree, where characters are simple and integrated, to the fallen world of Jude the Obscure, where the central characters become "devouring flame[s] of thought" and "naked, eternally restless" minds.²

Footnotes

¹ Thomas Hardy, Tess of the d'Urbervilles (London: Macmillan London Ltd., 1974), p. 163.

² Matthew Arnold, "Empedocles on Etna," Matthew Arnold: Selected Poetry and Prose (New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1958), p. 43, ll. 329, 330.

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