ABSTRACT

THE THEME OF BETRAYAL AND DECEIT IN SIX OF THOMAS HARDY'S NOVELS

KATHY BERGGRUN B.A.

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

DEPT. OF ENGLISH
MCGILL UNIVERSITY
MONTREAL

APRIL, 1968

This paper proposes to examine the theme of betrayal and
deceit in six novels by Thomas Hardy, starting with Desperate
Remedies, his first work, and ending with Jude the Obscure, his
last. More particularly, it is divided into chapter headings such
as the betrayal of the individual by Fate and Nature, heredity
and environment, his fellow man, society, and the Church. The
common denominator of these sections presumes it is the hapless
individual who is incessantly betrayed, who is ever the victim
of some deceitful force. The last chapter underlines the thesis
that though Hardy possesses a tragic vision, though he never
closes his eyes to the betrayals and deceits of the world, he,
nevertheless, is not a pessimist.

This paper, then, follows the theme of betrayal, which runs
like a thread through Hardy's novels, and tries to show that it
becomes increasingly relevant to, and even pivotal in, his later
works.
THE THEME OF BETRAYAL AND DECEIT IN SIX OF THOMAS HARDY’S NOVELS

KATHY BERGHUN
The Theme of Betrayal and Deceit in Six of
Thomas Hardy's Novels

by
Kathy Berggrun B.A.

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and
Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts.

Department of English,
McGill University,
Montreal

April, 1968
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Four</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Five</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

The theme of betrayal and deceit is relevant to and, very often, even pivotal in Hardy's novels. Although Guerard recognizes that "fickleness, betrayal, and concealment spin nearly all of Hardy's plots," he then proceeds to limit his statement by defining betrayal simply as the "concealment of inferior social position, former lovers, illegitimate children, still-living husbands and wives." He refers, of course, to the basic and most obvious form of betrayal -- that practised by one individual upon another. This paper attempts to examine the same subject, betrayal, under a broader group of headings. Their common denominator presumes it is the hapless individual who is incessantly betrayed, who is, it seems, forever the victim of some arch-deceit.

The individual's first betrayer is, perhaps, the most terrifying and overwhelming that he will ever face because it is beyond the "reach of human supplication," and because it very often renders useless his intervention on his own behalf. It is known broadly as the power that rules this world, be it named Fate, Nature, or God.

Albert Joseph Guerard, Thomas Hardy: The Novels and Stories (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1949), p. 28.

Guerard, Thomas Hardy: The Novels and Stories, p. 28.

Flora Webb, "Nature in the Novels of Thomas Hardy" (Essay for special honours in English, Smith College, 1927), p. 32.

The First Cause, Nature, Fate, and God are interchangeable terms in Hardy's own vocabulary. This paper proposes, however, to define Nature separately as the biological ambience.
At best, Fate and Nature are both passive forces, indifferent, but not intentionally cruel, which spend their time carrying out a "neither rational nor entirely conscious" plan, and, in the process, carelessly carrying all living things along in their wake. In referring to them, Hardy has been quoted as saying, "The world does not despise us; it only neglects us," and "The said Cause is neither moral nor immoral, but unmoral; 'loveless and hateless' I have called it, 'which neither good nor evil knows.' "

It follows, then, that noble man and the ignoble snake are equal in the eyes of these powers. Often Hardy sees them as most feminine in their capriciousness. "Nature [or Fate]," he notes, "seems to have moods in other than a poetical sense; predilections for certain times, without any apparent law to govern or season to account for them. She is read as a person with a curious temper," one who smiles on a man in one minute and, at best ignores, at worst destroys him the next. Since "Nature is content with chances and deals out irony and malice with a liberal hand," the individual's situation is, then, a precarious

7 Florence Emily Hardy, The Later Years of Thomas Hardy, 1892-1928 (New York, 1930), p. 217.
8 Hardy uses the words interchangeably.
one. Furthermore, fateful meetings, ill-timed events, and general quirks of fate continuously influence and upset the lives and plans of Hardy's characters.

Lastly, and most ominously, these forces, Fate and Nature, all too often seem nothing less than malignant, cruel, and unjust betrayers of the individual. Fate is cruel because it does not hesitate to recall the past actions and mistakes of an individual, with the sole intent of destroying him if necessary to its mysterious purpose. Cruel, Nature finds it "pleasant to arrange" ill-mated and potentially tragic unions by dictating that "physical attraction should be the basis for mating." It is cruel because it determines, with merciless strategy, that an individual's instincts overpower his will and reason precisely when both will and reason are unprepared and unaware. Finally, both Fate and Nature unjustly care not whether they destroy an individual because of his devotion and total selflessness -- Giles, for example -- or because of his egotistic, self-devouring passions, as is the case of Lucetta, Felice Charmond, and Alec. For these two powers, both instances are similar. Chapter 1, then, examines the proposition that Fate and Nature are the first betrayers of the individual in Hardy's novels.

11 D'Exideuil, p. 121.
12 Harvey Curtis Webster, On a Darkling Plain: The Art and Thought of Thomas Hardy (Chicago, 1947), p. 70.
A quote from Abercrombie most aptly introduces the subject of the second chapter of this paper. He writes:

The main, ruthless stream of tendency, which the characters must in the end obey, exhibits itself not only around but in the characters themselves .... They have in them some weakness, disability, inherited instinct, or perhaps some error in the assertion of their strength, which inevitably becomes the chance for the power of the world finally to assert itself against them.\(^\text{13}\)

Hence the individual can be said to betray himself.-- most often involuntarily -- because of some flaw or lethal tendency in his own make-up. This weakness can, at times, be traced to either hereditary or environmental causes. The inherent nature of many of Hardy's women, for example, tends towards the passionate, the instinctive, the impulsive, rather than towards the rational, the restrained, the temperate; since, almost invariably, passion, especially uncontrolled passion, leads to grief, they suffer because of what they are. Other characters, like Grace Melbury, for example, suffer principally because of what they have been molded into by their environment. Hardy is, however, most interested in watching how a particular nature reacts in a certain situation, milieu, or age. In such cases, both heredity and environment often work together to defeat the individual. Most of Hardy's characters are not able to adjust to or do something

about the predicaments or world they encounter. Their environment, on the other hand, almost never changes to fit their requirements. In the ensuing dead-lock, the individual almost always breaks himself against his external surroundings and environment.

It must be here observed that although the betrayers heredity and environment are examined in a separate chapter, it is still true that the subject of this section -- "Betrayal of the Individual -- Heredity and Environment" -- is very closely related to that of the first, for who or what determined the natures and weaknesses of each individual in the first place? Who or what determined the particular situation and environment which subsequently confront each of them? Hardy, too, was aware of the connection. It does not seem to make much difference in Hardy's attitude towards his characters to what degree they help inflict suffering on themselves or whether they do so consciously or otherwise. He forgives and pities them all, for he recognizes that each of them is an individual endowed with a certain temperament given him or molded by environmental forces beyond his control. Hardy recognizes that "his creatures are fallible beings, guided by destiny and heredity, victims of their own characters and moulded by all the forces of the environment," \(^\text{14}\) and he aches for their plight.

\(^{14}\) D'Exideuil, p. 52.
Chapter 111 examines betrayal, both conscious and unconscious, of man by his fellow man. In Under the Greenwood Tree, Hardy only hints that the capricious, fickle Fancy may deceive her naive, trusting Dick in the future. Her secrecy about her most recent and most dangerous flirtation can be defended with McMillan’s argument. He suggests that most women hide their past in a "defensive move in ... competition with other women to acquire mates," or, more particularly, the mate they think they want. That is, from this novel on, one can assert that Hardy’s women are "not inherently untruthful in [their] dealings with men; that simply owing to [their] experience and to [their] treatment by society [they have] been forced to the use of subterfuge to defend [themselves]." Besides, it is not necessarily the individual’s fault if he betrays another, for "fate, not [he], is ultimately responsible for [his] quarrels. Unless [he] were destined to do so, [he] would not be in conflict with [others]," nor betray them. Woman feels the powers of sex very intensely; in response to them, she often plays capriciously with the male until the desired and inevitable physical union is achieved. If she betrays


in the process, it is not necessarily her fault. Hardy believes that "women lead men on and entrap them for the good of the race -- themselves unconscious of their true function."\(^{18}\) Since he also recognizes that, all too often, men are puppet-actors placed by an unseen, but powerful, director in opposition to each other, and also frequently cast by it in the roles of deceivers and betrayers, Hardy never points his finger at any of his characters, nor directly blames any of them, whether betrayers or betrayed.

The next chapter, chapter IV, focuses on Hardy as the social critic of the complacent, narrow-minded, Victorian attitude of his times towards sex -- an outlook which "established a certain level of behaviour for all who wished to stand well with their fellows."\(^{19}\) He pleads for tolerance -- for a deep, fundamental examination of the particular situation at hand. He attacks society, for example, for its cruelty and blindness in treating those who transgress its laws involuntarily in the same manner as it treats those who publicly and shamelessly flaunt the established code of ethics. He realizes that marriages are not always what society says they ought to be and that individuals joined together by society's law may be incompatible after all. Consequently, Hardy advocates a greater freedom of divorce, and even the freedom for unmarried people to live together if such

\(^{18}\) McMillan, p. 94.

a course is preferable to the parties involved.  

The fourth chapter also attempts to illuminate Hardy's sympathies with the individual who is caught halfway between Nature's and society's laws. Hardy saw that "the great 'Nescience,' which has made us what we are, has implanted deep in our being certain needs which are the strongest powers within us, and at the same time ironically ordained that a stable society is only possible when they are continually repressed."\textsuperscript{21} Nature knows her own irrepressible laws alone. Society has opposed a barrier to Nature's law -- to man's instinctive urges -- by creating the marriage institution to provide a home and name for children, and some basis for the ownership and inheritance of property. Man is the stage on which the powers of these two conflicting forces confront each other.

Economic pressure may be considered another offender. It is related to another betrayer, Fate, insofar as it always seems to exert crushing pressure on the individual at a crucial and already confusing time. The choice is usually quite clearcut. Either the individual must compromise his own happiness, beliefs, and hopes, or allow them to perish altogether. If he follows the first alternative, he does so very often altruistically to save

\textsuperscript{20} "I consider a social system based on individual spontaneity to promise better for happiness than a curbed and uniform one under which all temperaments are bound to shape themselves to a single pattern of living." F. Hardy, \textit{The Later Years}, p. 23.

\textsuperscript{21} Herbert B. Grimsditch, \textit{Character and Environment in the Novels of Thomas Hardy} (New York, 1925), p. 151.
others, as Tess, Ethelberta, and Cytherea do. This betrayer, economic pressure, initially appears in *Desperate Remedies*, Hardy's first published novel. Fortunately for the main characters in that work, it does not combine with other forces to damage their lives permanently. In Hardy's last prose work, however, in *Jude the Obscure*, it becomes a key accomplice to the destruction of the protagonist.

In Hardy's eyes, Christianity, rather than sustaining the individual and giving him strength against such forces as economic pressure, which oppress him incessantly from all sides, seems to join the game of betraying the individual. Hardy attacks the almost inflexible nineteenth-century stand of the Church on indissoluble marriages and on divorce. True religion, in his opinion, was being stifled by dogma; the worth of an individual was being judged by his active observance of various rites and forms. To Hardy, who knew that morality and ethics had no necessary connection with the ritual and creed of some organized religion, the unrealistic, stubborn, and generally medieval stand of the Church on too many important and imminent issues was intolerable. Furthermore, Hardy seems to have been repelled by the insincere, self-righteous, coldly intellectual young men whom he saw entering the Church. As far as he could determine, these men
did not understand, nor did they care to understand, the everyday problems and dilemmas confronting the Judges, the Tessas, the Everyman.

The recurrent stress on the theme of betrayal and deceit, on the incessant pounding of the individual by some force, seems to point most convincingly to the conclusion that Hardy is a pessimist. With so much obviously opposing the individual, the question arises whether it might not be more beneficial, and less painful, if he were simply to give up the struggle. If he is to judge by all apparent implications and the examples of others, he can assume that he will be destroyed finally.

Does Hardy actually think this way? Does he advocate giving up? The last chapter attempts to ascertain the validity of the charge that Hardy is a pessimist.

Finally, although many of Hardy's other prose works, notebooks, and letters are relevant to this thesis, this paper is principally concerned with the following six of Hardy's novels: Desperate Remedies, Under the Greenwood Tree, The Mayor of Casterbridge, The Woodlanders, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, and Jude the Obscure.
CHAPTER ONE

BETRAYAL of the INDIVIDUAL -- FATE and NATURE

That there is some force whose influence is continually asserted and felt in this world, Hardy does not deny. When referring to this power, however, he speaks in terms of First Cause, Fate, Chance, and Nature. At such times his thinking appears to be confused. In an attempt to clarify matters, this chapter will be restricted to two terms, Fate and Nature, for this external force. Both connote that human actions and lives are controlled by some force whose motives remain hidden to mankind. The chief difference between the two is that Fate operates the universe principally from somewhere outside the human sphere. By remote control, it moves men about and shuffles their lives according to its own incomprehensible plan. Nature, on the other hand, controls mankind from both within and without. That is, Nature equips each individual with biological instincts which, in turn, respond to external prompting. By means of this magnet-like set-up, then, Nature directs an individual's actions and feelings from both within and without. Hardy himself, however, almost always fails to distinguish between the two terms.

Hardy's characters relentlessly feel "the general, measureless process" stirring outside them.¹ Often they voice the feeling

that they are "doomed," that "it was to be," that it was "inevitable." This fatalistic attitude, inherent in all of Hardy's works, probably stems from his Wessex upbringing and his exposure to country superstitions. Among the fundamental beliefs held by the country dwellers was that "no supreme Will manifests itself as in control of the general scheme of things; there are only tremendous, inexplicable forces." Hardy's women particularly recognize that at any instant Nature can change man's predicament from that of "the prodigal's favourite" to that of "the miser's pensioner." This realization, together with instinctive, passionate natures, causes many of Hardy's women to adopt a carpe diem attitude. The words of Elfride epitomize it: "I am (as all women are) content to build happiness on any accidental basis that may lie near at hand."


4 Hardy is here clearly using the terms Nature and Fate interchangeably.

5 A Pair of Blue Eyes, p. 243. On the same page Hardy notes: "To those musing weather-beaten West-country folk who pass the greater part of their days and nights out of doors, Nature ... is read as a person with a curious temper; as one who does not scatter kindesses and cruelties alternately, impartially, and in order, but heartless severities or overwhelming generosities in lawless caprice."

6 A Pair of Blue Eyes, p. 64.
What, then, is happiness? It is human to strive for it, to attempt to fulfill oneself emotionally, physically, and intellectually. Yet whenever Hardy's characters endeavour to do just that, they are all too often forced to pay with mental anguish and, more frequently than not, with their lives. One ought not to interpret Elizabeth Jane's sober realization that "happiness was but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain" as Hardy's own opinion. Nevertheless, Hardy's notebooks are filled with just such comments. In 1870, for example, he is quoted saying, "I know one who is placid at a wrong, and would be grateful for simple justice; while a favour, if he ever gained one, would turn his brain."

Lasting happiness seems almost an impossibility in Hardy's world. Only Elizabeth Jane and Farfrae, Gabriel Oak and Bathsheba attain some form of it, but even they do so only after experiencing much heartache and pain. As McMillan points out, "The chances for ... happiness are very improbable because of highly specialized and nicely adjusted conditions which are necessary for human happiness. Too many things must happen in particular ways and with definite relations for man to expect much happiness in a purposeless universe."7


8 F. Hardy, The Early Life, p. 111. This statement is remarkably similar to one in The Mayor of Casterbridge about Susan Henchard: "She had the hard, half-apathetic expression of one who deems anything possible at the hands of Time and Chance except, perhaps, fair play." The Mayor of Casterbridge, p. 8.

9 McMillan, p. 33.
At its best, Fate is an indifferent, perpetual process that cares for the species alone and lets the individual grope for himself. That is, "there is no kindly omnipotence to come to the rescue when (the individual's) own courage, or wisdom, or strength fall short."\(^{10}\) Passively, Fate looks on as man struggles to pass the almost impossible obstacle test it has set up for him. At its worst, Fate appears to Hardy as a "figure (which) stands in our van with arms uplifted, to knock us back from any pleasant prospect we indulge in,"\(^{11}\) a figure so jealous of man's slightest triumphs that it works overtime to eradicate them.

What then are the principal techniques employed by Fate to betray the individual? First, Hardy was always chagrined by the fact that he lived in a world where nothing bore out in practice what it seemed to promise. Everywhere he saw that "incompleteness is a characteristic of all phenomena, of the universe at large. It often seems ... like a half-expressed, an ill-expressed, idea."\(^{12}\) Everywhere he saw the two conflicting forces of the universe -- "the inherent will to enjoy, and the circumstantial will against enjoyment."\(^{13}\) What Hardy is saying

---


\(^{13}\) *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, p. 327. Hardy had already noted, in *The Woodlanders*, that in the woods surrounding Little Hintock, "as everywhere, the Unfulfilled Intention, which makes life what it is, was as obvious as it could be among the depraved crowds of a city slum. The leaf was deformed, the curve was crippled, the taper was interrupted; the lichen ate the vigour of the stalk, and the ivy slowly strangled to death the promising sapling." Thomas Hardy, *The Woodlanders*. MacMillan Library Edition (London, 1949), p. 59. Subsequent references will be to this edition.
is that human beings are born with great expectations of fulfilling their dreams and obtaining all that life seems to offer. For him, however, very few ever do; every time they reach out, their hands are slapped.

Similarly, Nature has given man instincts and urges which soon govern the intended victim whether he wishes to submit or not. Nature does not stop to question whether the two people involved are compatible, whether one of the partners will maim or destroy the other emotionally and psychologically. She cares nothing for the higher aspirations, needs, or desires of the individual; she simply decrees that he must obey the laws of physical attraction. Thus the instincts guide and overpower the individual already too paralyzed to exercise the restraining faculty of reason. Heartache ensues for Tess and Alec and Jude and Arabella. When reason does manage to triumph over passion — as Gill's does — sorrow still follows. As Hardy himself has lamented, Nature has "created so far beyond all apparent first intention (on the emotional side), without mending matters by a second intent and execution, to eliminate the evils of the blunder of overdoing."\(^{14}\)

\(^{14}\) F. Hardy, *The Early Life*, p. 192.
Finally, unhappy timing and the coming to light of past and seemingly buried events also aid in defeating the hapless individual. They are hidden cards which Fate produces at its own convenience according to its incomprehensible way of playing its game with human lives.

Desperate Remedies, Hardy's first published novel, contains the seeds of the deceit-betrayal theme further developed and explored in his later prose works. Aeneas Manston is one of the first Hardy characters to condemn and oppose Fate's capriciousness. "I had gained one," he complains, "whose beauty had departed, whose utterance was complaint, whose mind was shallow, and who drank brandy every day. The revulsion of feeling was terrible. Providence, whom I had just thanked, seemed a mocking tormentor laughing at me. I felt like a madman." Since Manston's nature is that of a man who will not put up with a situation he dislikes, he rebels against his fate by killing his despised wife, when he gets the opportunity. For his rashness in taking his destiny into his own hands, he is punished. Likewise, Miss

"Enough that in the present case, as in millions, the two halves of an approximately perfect whole did not confront each other at the perfect moment; part and counterpart wandered independently about the earth in the stupidest manner for a while, till the late time came. Out of which maladroit delay sprang anxieties, disappointments, shocks, catastrophes -- and what was called a strange destiny." Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 44.

"Our evil actions do not remain isolated in the past, waiting only to be reversed: like locomotive plants they spread and re-root, till to destroy the original stem has no material effect in killing them." Thomas Hardy, "For Conscience' Sake," Life's Little Ironies. Macmillan Library Edition (London, 1952), pp. 73-4. Subsequent references will be to this edition.

Aldclyffe's initial success in trying to arrange circumstances to suit herself and the subsequent abrupt reversal of her plans together illustrate that Fate tortures "by letting people have their way for a time, [sic] then suddenly it overthrows all that they have built up and goes on its own course." In this novel, too, the potent force of physical attraction is first hinted at when Cytherea initially encounters Manston. "It is next to impossible," notes Hardy, "for an appreciative woman to have a positive repugnance towards an unusually handsome and gifted man." Fortunately, Cytherea, like Fancy Day, is only momentarily drawn by this magnetic force; it is, however, instrumental in bringing disaster to both Tess and Grace Melbury. Just mentioned in passing in *Desperate Remedies* is the problem of supporting a family which Nature has induced people to produce without any concern on her part as to their ability to obtain food. Bread, it is noted, is sent to one home and children without bread to another. This identical situation creates overwhelming consequences in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, both of which were written later.

19  *Desperate Remedies*, pp. 243-4.
Finally, one can rightly say that each character in this novel is, in some way, a victim of fate: Miss Aldclyffe, because she feels she must refuse love after her first unfortunate experience; Manston, because of his illegitimacy; and Cytherea, because she has, by her father's death, been left a naive, bewildered orphan. Hardy, accordingly, treats all his characters with sympathy in this first novel; he even grants the two principal ones a happy ending. In *Desperate Remedies*, then, although Fate causes some unwarranted grief and unhappiness, it does not as yet betray to the point of destruction.

The word "doomed" appears more frequently in *The Woodlanders* than in *Desperate Remedies*. Giles's party was doomed to fail (80). He could not, as much as he tried, prevent Fitzpiers's meeting Grace because "he could not hinder what was doomed to arrive" (139). Fitzpiers later reiterates the same idea when he says, "There's destiny in it, you see. I was doomed to join your picnic, although I did not intend to do so" (163). Marty was "always doomed to sacrifice desire to obligation" (174). Then, too, a sense "of 'the something that infects the world'" is inherent in the recurring images of the decaying woods and in Marty's wistful reflection about the pine trees. "It seems to me," she muses, "as if they sigh because they are sorry to begin life in earnest-- just as we be" (73).

Fate deserves reproach in this novel. It causes Giles's financial ruin for, "as fate would have it" (115), he encounters Felice Charmond's coach at a time when he was "less gentle than he might otherwise have shown himself" (115) because of Grace's breaking off with him the previous day. He consequently loses his houses because of "the mere caprice of the woman he had met the day before, in such an unfortunate way" (124). A quirk of fate prevents him from seeing what Grace had written on the wall, in a last attempt at reconciliation. Felice meets Fitzpiers again after his wedding and just before he is about to leave for his Budmouth practice -- an unfortunate time, it turns out, for them and those related to them. Fitzpiers takes Melbury's horse by mistake and by a weird series of events shortly thereafter deserts Grace for Felice. Finally, Grace, having just barely escaped death by a man-trap, falls with relief into Fitzpiers's arms, elects to stay there, and so betrays the dead Giles.

Fate and natural law work together in The Woodlanders to thwart man's opportunity for joy. Physical attraction -- the law of Nature -- drew Grace to Fitzpiers with a power she could not oppose, for he "exercised a certain fascination over her -- or even more, an almost psychic influence" (188).  

"How powerless is the human will against predestination! We were prevented meeting; we have met." The Woodlanders, p. 227.

"Fitzpiers acted upon her like a dram, exciting her, throwing her into a novel atmosphere which biased her doings until the influence was over, when she felt something of the nature of regret for the mood she had experienced." The Woodlanders, p. 189.
Grace is hence condemned to choose an inconstant rather than a faithful lover. Even before she fully realizes the tragic consequences of her choice, Grace somehow senses that it was not she, but events, that disappointed her and Giles's dream of happiness together. After Fitzpiers deserts her, she curses the whole human condition with a passion rarely seen in her.

"Grace was wild with sorrow -- bitter with all that had befallen her -- with the cruelties that had attacked her -- with life -- with Heaven" (387).

The characters whom events most severely punish in The Woodlanders are doubtlessly Giles and Marty -- "Giles for loving the refined Grace, Marty for loving Giles, and both for being steadfast in love."²³ Neither of them is a rebel against destiny; neither is recklessly passionate, like Felice Charmond. There is no reason why Giles or Marty should be so surely marked as Fate's victim from the start. That these two should be made to suffer while those who contributed much to their misfortune are spared, is the inexplicable decision of the universe's capricious ruling force.

²³ Abercrombie, p. 121.
Michael Henchard is destroyed by two elements — his own character and his misfortune. The reader, like the Mayor, cannot help thinking, at times, that "the concatenation of events .. was the scheme of some sinister intelligence bent on punishing him" (128). It is undeniable that Henchard acted heartlessly when he sold his wife in a moment of youthful, drunken folly, but it is also true that, ever since, Fate had claimed him as its plaything. Ironically, it is precisely when he tries to atone for his rash act by remarrying Susan, that his misfortunes and downfall begin. First, he accidentally opens Susan's letter and, because of what he learns, banishes Elizabeth Jane from his sight. Next, he gambles, "back[s] bad weather," and suffers heavy financial loss (189). Then, because the judge is absent, he is called to court where he is confronted with the furmity woman who reveals his past. When he finally comes to realize that he might "get to like" (287) Elizabeth Jane as his own after all, Newson arrives to claim her. The capriciousness of Fate is further underlined when the reader is informed that "the once flourishing merchant and Mayor ... stood as a day-labourer in the barns and granaries he formerly had owned" (229). As a result of these events,

24 "Susan, Farfrae, Lucetta, Elizabeth -- all had gone from him, one after one, either by his fault or by his misfortune." The Mayor of Casterbridge, p. 295.

25 Later Henchard's superstitious mind came to think that "some power was working against him" constantly; that it was spending its time "roasting a waxen image" of him, or "stirring an unholy brew" to confound him. The Mayor of Casterbridge, p. 191.
Henchard comes to believe fervently that man's actions are not free. Rejected by Elizabeth, weary of life, yet still a little proud, he decides not to try again to restore himself into her favour. He is defeated by "the ingenious machinery contrived by the Gods for reducing human possibilities of amelioration to a minimum" (319).

By the time Hardy wrote Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure, he did not even try to conceal his "fierce indignation" against the injustices of the universal plan. His famous line. "'Justice' was done, and the President of the Immortals (in Aeschylean phrase) had ended his sport with Tess." compares Tess's part in the human drama to that of a puppet bound to act out every line written for it and directed by a master-puppeteer. The words "fated," "doomed," and "destined" appear frequently in the novel. Tess, for example, had hoped to be a teacher "but the fates seemed to decide otherwise" (50). Her association with Alec, in which the "coarse appropriates the finer" (80), "was to be" (80).

Tess fears life. She imagines that each of its "very fierce and cruel" tomorrows is forever warning mankind about its approach with the words, "I'm coming! Beware o' me! Beware o' me!" (139).

---

26 "See now how it's ourselves that are ruled by the Powers above us! We plan this, but we do that." The Mayor of Casterbridge, p. 243.
27 Abercrombie, p. 137.
Nor does she harbour any illusions about the human condition. As a young girl, she already regarded the world as a "blighted" planet (30), for, she reasoned, if it were otherwise, their "father wouldn't have coughed and creeped about as he does, and wouldn't have got too tipsy to go this journey; and mother wouldn't have been always washing and never getting finished" (30). Her worst suspicions and fears are warranted. To begin with, because she is the sole responsible member of her family, it comes as "a thing of course" (37) that she should be the representative of the Durbeyfields at the D'Urberville mansion. There she meets the wrong man at the wrong time. This, too, it is implied, was inevitable. "In the ill-judged execution of the well-judged plan of things," writes Hardy, "the call seldom produces the comer, the man to love rarely coincides with the hour for loving" (44). Thus Nature is shown once again to care little whether Alec, the man Tess meets, is "the right and desired one (for her) in all respects -- as nearly as humanity can supply the right and desired" (44). She smoothly proceeds to unite "two utterly unlike beings in a moment of madness" by supplying the perfect seductive atmosphere. In addition, timing seems

29 D'Exideuil, p. 139.
30 "Darkness and silence ruled everywhere around." Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 79.
to be on Alec's side. At almost any other moment, Hardy tells the reader, Tess would have refused Alec's invitation, but this time it came when a tired Tess had just quarreled with some other female workers, and when "fear and indignation at these adversaries could have been transformed by a spring of the foot into a triumph over them" (73). Thus a semi-drugged Tess lets down her defenses for a brief, but for her, fatal moment.

The second half of Tess's life unfolds, but her suffering is not alleviated; if anything, the ominous clouds darken and threaten even more. Having met Angel Clare, she forces herself to avoid him, to prevent any possible involvement between the two of them. But Hardy makes it quite clear that the human will is weak against "the force of Nature's irresistible law" (144), and that "despite ... many months of lonely self-chastisement, wrestlings, communings, and schemes to lead a future of austere isolation, love's counsel would prevail" (201). Furthermore, he emphasizes that the very lush, erotic Var Vale setting, with its "oozing fatness and warm ferments" (166), makes it "impossible that the most fanciful love should not grow passionate" (166). Hence Tess bows "to the inevitable result of proximity" (193), though not before she makes one last attempt to enlighten Angel by means of a letter which she slips unknowingly under the mat, instead of into her lover's hands.

31 It is notably impossible at this particular season "when the rush of juices could almost be heard below the hiss of fertilization." Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 166.
Two incidents follow each other in rapid succession and together lead Tess towards the act of murder. They both stem from her ill-fated trip to old Clare's home. The first occurs when she encounters, instead of the old father, his snobbish, narrow-minded sons, overhears their uncharitable conversation, and, consequently, decides not to stay and meet their father. Her erroneous assumption that offspring must reflect their parents in all ways is disastrous for her at this moment. But Fate is not satisfied with one triumph. Within minutes of this first fatal incident, Tess is confronted with another. Fate reintroduces Alec into her life. Hence he is conveniently there, after old John's death, for Tess to turn to. Finally, Hardy implies that even Tess's last step, murder, is inevitable. "A woman," he writes, "should not be try'd beyond her Strength, and continual dropping will wear away a Stone -- ay, more -- a Diamond" (419). Thus Tess's life nears its end. Perhaps Marian is the character who, in an illuminating moment, sees most profoundly that it was Fate that constantly hounded Tess. Marian confidently absolves both Angel and Tess: "You've no faults, deary; that I'm sure of. And he's none. So it must be something outside ye both" (323). She points her finger, and rightly, too, at one of the betrayers. Like Marian, Hardy condemns no character entirely or outrightly for his own fate; he is always aware of the eternal omnipresence and omnipotence of an external power, of the "something outside," either as Fate or as Nature.
All the characters in Jude the Obscure are conscious of both the insignificance and the cruelty of human existence, and all their worst apprehensions ultimately prove warranted. The young Jude recognizes an affinity between himself and the birds he was hired to chase away. Both seemed to him "to be living in a world which did not want them."

Jude, much like the young Thomas Hardy, did not wish to grow up in such a world, since "Nature's logic was too horrid for him to care for" (23), and the knowledge "that mercy towards one set of creatures was cruelty towards another sickened his sense of harmony" (23). Almost intuitively, he feels he will not succeed. Time only proves his fears justified.

Jude's fatal meeting with Arabella is a trap laid with no warning by Nature for an innocent. Using Arabella as a catalyst, Nature arouses Jude's physical desires, which she had, it seems, implanted within him long ago for her later use. The conquest takes place as planned. It was "as if materially, a compelling arm of extraordinary muscular power seized hold of him -- something which had nothing in common with the spirits and influences that had moved him hitherto" (49). "The unvoiced call of woman to man, which was uttered very distinctly by Arabella's personality, held Jude to the spot against his intention -- almost against his will" (46), and, like a robot, he,"in commonplace obedience to

conjunctive orders from headquarters" (45), could do little but obey. Once again, Nature demonstrates that she cares little for the individual's "reason and his will, nothing for his so-called elevated intentions" (49). She moves Jude along into the arms of a woman "for whom he had no respect, and whose life had nothing in common with his own except locality" (49). Yet after Arabella and Jude separate, hope remains that perhaps Jude can still fulfill himself intellectually and spiritually, that perhaps his brief interlude with Arabella will leave no permanent scars and will soon fade into the past, remembered, if at all, merely as an unpleasant episode of his youth.

It is not to be. His union with Sue -- one they both tried to prevent, but one which forces and laws other and stronger than theirs wished to see established -- brings personal tragedy to the two of them. After the death of her children, Sue cries out against Nature's law as "mutual butchery" (318). She recognizes Nature as the betrayer that first makes individuals feel it is her "intention," her "law and raison d'être" (350), that they "should be joyful in what instincts she afforded" (350) them, and then stabs them in the back "for being such fools as to take Nature at her word!" (350).

Sue submits. She cannot fight against "all the ancient wrath of the Power above" (354), against the tragic doom which she sees overhanging their family "as it did hang over the house of Atreus" (292). Jude, too, realizes that "nothing can
be done . . . . Things are as they are, and will be brought to their destined issue" (351). He had dreamed, had striven, had loved, and to what end? In perhaps his most exasperated and enlightened moment, Jude sums up in his sad and "feverish life" (406) in three stages. "There is something," he muses, "external to us which says, 'You shan't!" First it said, 'You shan't learn!' Then it said, 'You shan't labour!' Now it says, 'You shan't love!'" (349). The reader cannot help concluding that Fate seems to have marked Jude, from his birth, for its favourite sport.

In Hardy, then, Fate and Nature, the individual's first betrayers, are omnipotent, implacable, and immovable forces. According to their own incomprehensible, often unjust, plan, they control and determine the lives of countless individuals, with little regard for personal worth, aspirations, or ideals. In a universe governed by such powers, freedom of will is, of course, unheard of. Since the individual knows not what move these powers are next contemplating, since he has no way of discovering what their long-range plans are, he is powerless to counteract their force. Man is not, however, totally powerless. Though the forces governing the universe are, in toto, indifferent, at times even malicious, man can, by exercising his reason, correct what is remediable in the world. Since it is, however, next to impossible for a man to strike out effectively at something he can neither see nor understand, Fate and Nature are, perhaps, this individual's most frustrating and most terrifying betrayers.
CHAPTER TWO

BETRAYAL of the INDIVIDUAL -- HEREDITY and ENVIRONMENT

"The lives of men are controlled from both within and without, by understandable and predictable urges as well as by incomprehensible and unpredictable forces." Heredity and environment, both of which profoundly influence people's behaviour and thinking, are just such "understandable and predictable" determinants. On one hand, individuals may have inherited certain weaknesses from their parents, accordingly acting as they do because they are the offspring of a particular family. Or they may have been lavishly endowed at birth with strong, passionate natures, which subsequently overwhelm and master what rational and moral restraining elements do exist in them. They cannot choose otherwise. On the other hand, some youthful experience may have permanently affected them, as in Melbury's case. Or they may suddenly find themselves educated above and consequently alienated from their own class. Since Hardy recognizes the existence of determinants like heredity and environment, he sympathizes with the plights of his characters.

Hardy is, however, much more interested in the psychological effect environment may exercise upon a particular nature than in heredity. Very seldom does he supply a character's full biographical and hereditary background in order to explain that character's motivation. Only in Tess of the D'Urbervilles does he attempt

1 Webster, p. 133.
to fill in some of these blanks; even then, his original intent was to illustrate and lament the degeneration of the once proud, virile D'Urberville blood. Furthermore, what really absorbs Hardy is watching how a particular nature placed in a certain environment or situation will react. In his novels, more often than not, individuals simply cannot adjust to their plight or surroundings. Nor will their environment change to fit their requirements. Betrayed by both heredity and environment, many Hardy characters are inevitably, and almost predictably, destroyed.

In *Desperate Remedies*, it is obvious, though not stressed, that Manston inherited his passionate nature from his mother, Miss Aldclyffe. His rashness manifests itself both in his irrepressible obsession for Cytherea and his impulsive act of murder. It ultimately leads him to the gallows. Hardy's next novel, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, just barely hints that Fancy Day inherited her closeness, her tendency towards secrecy, from her father, Geoffrey. Whether this impulse, which directs her to remain silent about Maybold's proposal, will betray her in the future remains conjectural. In the same work, Mrs. Dewy's remark that her husband's side of the family is "so easy" to deceive (11), can be applied to her son especially.

---

Naive and guileless, Dick trusts Fancy too implicitly for his own good. The fact that Dick did not inherit his father's common sense as well makes the reader somewhat fearful for him, should his trust be rocked by the slightest deception.

If anyone is the victim of heredity, Tess is. First of all, she inherits her mother’s beauty. It blooms early, endowing her with an animal luxuriance, an outward ripeness that makes her, as a young girl, appear "more a woman than she really was" (43). One wonders how different Tess's life might have been had she been extremely plain or even less developed in her youth.

In addition, Tess, a genuine D’Urberville (though of debased blood), inherits, through her father, a latent streak of impetuosity. Aroused by strong emotion, it twice manifests itself in her, once when she slaps Alec with a leather glove and the second time when she murders him.

On the whole, however, by the time Tess is born, the confidence, the determination, the strength, once innate in D’Urberville blood, had almost totally disappeared. The dispositions inherited by the D’Urberville descendants were, instead, "acquiescent and drifting." Consequently, old John and Tess both tend towards the passive. If only, one laments, Tess had experienced more misgivings about Alec's intentions. As Morrell points out, "The seduction is not a sudden one; she knows what to expect, but does nothing with the reprieve." If only she had delivered her letter

---

3 McDowall, p. 80.

of confession to Angel personally, or forced him, at some time, to hear the whole truth. If only she had pleaded her case before her judge, after she had revealed all. If only she had, at that time, reacted in some way other than passively, with some words other than "I shan't do anything, unless you order me to; and if you go away from me I shall not follow 'ee; and if you never speak to me any more I shall not ask why" (261). Finally, if only she had not lost courage at another crucial moment -- when she mistakenly judges her father-in-law's moral character by that of his sons. The common denominator to all these citations is that she repeatedly fails to act in such a way as to mold her own destiny. That she could not have acted in any other manner is even more unfortunate. In the final analysis, Tess's submission was, after all, simply "a symptom of that reckless acquiescence in chance too apparent in [and inherited by] the whole D'Urberville family" (289).

Tess was as proud as old Durbeyfield, though unlike her shiftless father in that she was willing to assume responsibility for her family while he was not. This pride prevented her from admitting to Angel's parents her desperate need for money.

5 "Well, as I killed the horse ... I suppose I ought to do something." Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 35.

6 Alec recognizes Tess's fierce independent streak. At one point, he says to her, "But you won't, Tess ... you'll never ask for [help] -- you'll starve first!" Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 408.
Confronted ultimately with the choice of either turning to Alec for financial help or selling Angel's jewels to save her family from starvation and a nomadic life, the consistently proud Tess finally succumbs to the former.

Ironically, had Tess inherited another family trait, the "folk instinct of concealment and anonymity," which her mother possessed in abundance, she might have shared a long, felicitous wedded life with Angel, none the less happy because of what he did not know. Tess, however, just as Joan feared, chooses, instead, to bare her past to her lover. In so doing, she alienates and temporarily loses her source of life.

Hardy assumes that environmental as well as inherited forces influence people's actions and thoughts. He especially devotes much time to this assumption when unfolding the characters and decisions of both Grace Melbury and her father.

Fancy Day can be called Grace Melbury's fictional predecessor in that she, too, is the product of two environments. Born in the country, educated in the city, she really belongs to neither world. The voice of her higher urban education whispers to her to seek material possessions and uproot herself permanently from her rural environment in pursuit of them. When Maybold promises her a glittering, comfortable future should she accept his marriage proposal, it is these forces which dictate her initial answer.


"Your musical powers shall be developed; you shall have whatever pianoforte you like; you shall have anything ... to make you happy — pony-carriage, flowers, birds, pleasant society ... a few months of travel." Under the Greenwood Tree, p. 183.
Simultaneously, however, there also exists in Fancy an insuppressible longing to adapt to and become well-versed in the traditional rural ways of her beloved ones. Ultimately, the latter triumphs; Fancy, unlike Grace, finds the strength to resist temptation even if only for the time being. Whether the material desires and ambition which the city had inoculated her with -- and which had already once, though only briefly, successfully asserted themselves -- will overwhelm Fancy in the future or not is left, at the novel's end, an open question.

Grace Melbury suffers more permanently and tragically because of what she has been made into. Half-lady, half-peasant, educated above her class, she is caught between two worlds and committed totally to neither. Her urban upbringing had "overlaid with implanted tastes" (96) everything in the woodlands once so dear to her. It is no wonder that she, like Fancy, is drawn powerfully towards the urban, cultivated, intellectual man. Marriage to Fitzpiers suggests to Grace "the possibilities of a refined and cultivated inner life, of subtle psychological intercourse" (196). Thus "external phenomena" have "a great influence upon [her] feminine opinion of a man's worth ... founded on non-essentials" (41). Too late does true knowledge -- the ability to distinguish between what "was great and little in life" (264) -- come to Grace. Too late does she learn that Giles was "honesty, goodness, manliness, tenderness, devotion" (26), in short, all of them incarnate.

9 "It is my nature ... to love refinement of mind and manners ... to be ever fascinated with the idea of surroundings more elegant and pleasing than those which have been customary." Under the Greenwood Tree, p. 189.
Melbury's is a pathetic story. He betrays himself and deprives his daughter of happiness, all the while convinced he is doing what is best for her. Since as a child he had himself been the butt of cruel laughter because of his ignorance, he vowed that his own children would never be mocked for the same reason. The craving for social position overpowers his better feeling and judgment. Herein lies the root of his future unhappiness. Once he had already provided Grace with an education -- one she regrets -- he talks himself, after much internal conflict, into revoking his vow to give her to Giles. He justifies his decision with the following argument: "I didn't foresee that, in sending her to boarding-school and letting her travel ... to make her a good bargain for Giles, I should be really spoiling her for him" (90). Having subsequently met Fitzpiers and been overwhelmingly impressed by his "good professional station and venerable old family" (185), Melbury next urges Grace to wed him instead of Giles. When the older man recognizes finally the sorrow

10 "They may laugh at me for my ignorance, but that was my father's fault, and none o' my making .... But they shall never laugh at my children." The Woodlanders, p. 31.

11 He exalts in his feeling inferior to his daughter (36), raves about her accomplishments, though he himself hates boasters (63), and prides himself on her higher education, hence her status (192).

12 "That touching faith in members of long-established families as such, irrespective of their personal condition or character, which is still found among old-fashioned people in the rural districts, reached its full perfection in Melbury." The Woodlanders, p. 190.
he has caused, guilt-ridden and overanxious to "repair the almost irreparable error of dividing two whom nature had striven to join together" (334), Melbury abandons "the cautious supervision of his past years" (334), embroils himself in legal matters he does not understand, and hopes blindly for the best. By the end of the novel, the middle-aged Melbury is a shattered man who has "entirely lost faith in his own judgment" (270).

Though one tends to think of Angel as Tess's arch-betrayer, he, too, is betrayed by what he has unconsciously become. Although he likes to consider himself a free-thinker, his thoughts and actions are, in fact, determined -- principally by his parents' puritanical outlook. Although he himself was quite certain he had, by his adult years, succeeded in sloughing off any such influence that may have once existed, puritanism had, on the contrary, taken deep root in his nature and had grown with every passing year. When tested by Tess's revelation of her past, Angel's puritanism proves strong enough to triumph over pity, forgiveness, even love. It unconditionally condemns Tess's past action as "impure" and "contemptible." Angel acknowledges how unrelenting and inhuman he had been too late for his and Tess's happiness.
There are, however, times in Hardy when both environment and heredity combine to defeat the individual. Which of the two is the more responsible in such cases, he never makes quite clear. On one hand, individuals, having inherited a certain character, cannot seem to adjust to or alter their predicament. Their natures are, almost invariably, consistent and inflexibly fixed. On the other hand, their environment betrays them because it does not yield to the efforts they do make on their own behalf. It refuses to adjust to fit their requirements. As a result, a clash inevitably occurs. Just as inevitably, it is the individual who is shaken and broken by the conflict.

Abandoned by her lover, Miss Aldclyffe reacts by choosing a life of penance and loneliness for what she considers her moral lapse. Tried, she does not waver from her decision, even when love and marriage become possibilities in her life. Her passionate nature cannot, however, abide forever by her original resolution to renounce love. Given another opportunity after her father's death to love and be loved, she cannot, this time, refuse. Her hunger for affection motivates her to seek out her illegitimate son. Having taken this step, she next schemes "body and soul" (403) to obtain for him the woman he deems would make him happy. Simultaneously, however, even as she plots and lies on her son's behalf, Miss Aldclyffe is repelled by and disgusted with herself for having "descended" (226) to such baseness. Still, she cannot
seem to desist. She cannot refrain, as a result of her own unhappy experiences, from "reveng[ing] herself upon life"\textsuperscript{13} and trying to arrange it, for once, according to her own desires and dreams. She fails. Broken and repentant, Miss Aldclyffe on her death-bed is a pitiful spectacle.

Edward Springrove participates in his own momentary downfall. Having at last found love, he knows not how to proceed. He almost loses Cytherea because he lacks the will to pursue her and take his destiny into his own hands. His decision to do nothing, to drift in the current of circumstance, is near-fatal for himself and Cytherea. The latter's nature, too, tends dangerously towards passivity. Confronted with the evidence against Edward, she reacts not with a strong, determined will to discover the truth for herself and act accordingly, but with a mute and meek silence. Immediately, she prepares to sacrifice herself in marriage to Manston. Though both Edward and Cytherea ultimately escape permanent unhappiness, they do so through no effort on their own part.

Gentle, patient, and unquestioning, Giles does not belong to the age into which he was born. He is an anachronism -- a giver not a taker, a quietist rather than an aggressor. His virtues of self-control, wisdom, and love are almost extinct in his day

\textsuperscript{13} Guarard, Thomas Hardy: The Novels and Stories, p. 103.
and, hence, almost unrecognizable. Little wonder that Grace, educated in a society which was obsessed with dashing, flamboyant, witty, well-mannered young men, is virtually blind to Giles's qualities. And Giles does nothing to inform her. He knows when to sacrifice his claims but not when to advance them. Hence, true to his nature, he never pleads his own case, never competes with Fitzpiers for Grace's affection, and never makes any wilful attempt to change the course of events to favour him. Too late does Grace inform him that, had he shown only the slightest boldness in courting her, she would have been his first. Yet, even knowing this, Giles, the reader suspects, would, almost certainly, not have acted differently. His suffering stemmed from his lacking the one virtue which might have been his salvation and key to paradise — perseverance. One somehow doubts he ever could have acquired it.

Fitzpiers is Giles's exact opposite. Impatient and undisciplined, he plunges into unknown waters. He must know and experience all. He must possess every attractive woman he meets. Ironically, Fitzpiers is not made to suffer long nor permanently for his past indiscretions and recklessness. After vowing to reform and become a husband in the true, full sense to Grace, Fitzpiers succeeds in winning her back. The reader, however, knows him well enough by now to predict that when temptation again confronts Fitzpiers, as it doubtlessly will, he will not
be able to resist. Since "his fatal weakness is that he cannot wait," he will doubtlessly continue to fall "into grossness and marital infidelity." 14 He has a promiscuous nature and could never be true to one woman even if he should adore her. His misfortune is that although he recognizes his weakness, he cannot seem to control it.

Marty's nature decrees that she quietly and obediently accept her lot. Consequently, she never rebels against the unspoken law governing her life -- the one which dictates that she always abandon her dreams. 15 Likewise, she never, even for a moment, considers advancing her own desires and personal hopes. Giles, therefore, dies without ever knowing she loves him. She suffers silently and alone; her nature would never have it otherwise.

Marty is set in sharp contrast to the novel's feminine rebel, Felice Charmond. "Inconsequence" expresses Felice (234). Motivated by a hungry heart and "wild desires" (237), she indulges in passion without any regard to the possible ensuing repercussions. Consequently, that she will want the dashing, sophisticated, restless, married Fitzpiers once she meets him is almost inevitable. For wishing to possess every attractive man who comes her way and for finally loving one of them, she pays, first with suffering and then with her life.

14 Grimsditch, p. 126.
15 "Poor Marty was always doomed to sacrifice desire to obligation." The Woodlanders, p. 174.
At the end of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, even Michael Henchard himself finally recognizes that he was largely responsible for his own downfall. He is head-strong, energetic, and self-centred. As a young man, he does not, for example, hesitate to sell his family so that he can begin again, alone and independent. His inability to restrain or control any of his emotions — especially his temper, "the same unruly volcanic stuff beneath the rind" (115) that had once banished a wife — is his greatest weakness. There was not much "chance of much rational conduct" where Henchard was concerned at any time. Times of stress and trouble especially, which ought to have forced him to come to grips with his immediate problems and to seek a solution, arouse, instead, what is most irrational in his nature.

Here is a man who, in his bull-headedness, listens to no one and acts only on his own convictions. In business, Henchard, the self-made merchant, epitomizes the typical farmer and rural businessman whose methods have not changed since he first learned them from his father. No one can convince him better techniques exist. He knows and cares nothing about machinery, chemistry, or book-keeping. What was good enough for his ancestors is good enough for him. Hence, as the agricultural success of


Farfrae, the organization man, becomes more apparent, Henchard's gnawing jealousy and need to prove himself the better man, transform his affection for his former protégé into dislike and distrust. Henchard insists that he who is not for him must be against him; accordingly, he declares Farfrae his rival. Furthermore, the northern man's success only incites Henchard to cling more tenaciously to his own out-moded methods. He refuses to acknowledge the obvious — that, although "strength and bustle" are enough to build up a firm, "judgment and knowledge are what keep it established" (52). Morrell suggests that if Henchard had only been able to adopt some of Farfrae's ideas "the new might have helped the old to survive." One of Henchard's weaknesses is, however, that he cannot compromise or moderate his convictions either in business or personal matters. Nor can he ever swallow his pride and admit his need for love and friendship, both of which, as Morrell points out, "were realities and recurring possibilities in his life." Instead, he "neglected and destroyed them."

18 He relies heavily, for example, on a fortune-teller in business matters.
19 Morrell, p. 25.
20 He, for example, banishes Elizabeth from his house; since she was not his, he cannot see why he ought to love her.
21 Morrell, p. 17.
For simply being what he is, Henchard lives and dies a lonely, wretched man.

Theatrical, fickle, emotional, Lucetta is another Felice Charmond. Having already drifted into intimacy with Henchard, she had honestly intended to marry him. When, however, Lucetta falls in love with Donald Farfrae, her imprudent, passionate nature dictates that she must possess him. For her inability to say "no" to her desires and "yes" to her duties, for being a slave to her passions, Lucetta pays with her life.

Angel's inflexible idealism might not have been such a fatal flaw in him had he fallen in love with a peasant girl whose past was unblemished. The ideal feminine form -- honest and spotless -- which he had conceived and into which he tried to force the real Tess is shattered by her confession. All he can see for the moment is that she was not "true" or "honest" or "pure" according to his own definition of these words. His narrow mind can only grasp that Tess was not as he had envisioned her. Rather than cope with the situation as it stands, he chooses to run from it. Furthermore, his nature is such that nothing can move him once he comes to a decision. His "power of self-mastery was appalling -- almost

22 Hers was a heart that "bore transplanting very readily!"
*The Mayor of Casterbridge*, p. 247.
inhuman" (274). "Within the remote depths of his construction ... there lay hidden a hard, logical deposit ... which turned the edge of everything that attempted to traverse it. It had blocked his way with the Church; it blocked his way with Tess" (274).

When he finally recognizes that the cause of his anger existed in his own mind, and not in Tess, and is at last ready and eager to accept her as she is, it is too late for their finding happiness together.

Jude's nature is strongly sensual and passionate. His initial unfortunate experience with women makes his weakness for the flesh apparent even to him himself. Hence he tries, at first, to resist Sue's physical influence on him. "The human, [however, becomes] more powerful in him than the Divine" (215). He cannot refrain from seeing Sue, despite incessant warnings from their great-aunt and the fact that Sue is already married. He has to possess her completely. Significantly, it is only when he loses her that he also loses his desire to live.

Weakness for alcohol is Jude's second undoing, and he knows it. He drinks because liquor is an outlet through which he can, even if only momentarily, assert his individuality. He drinks because alcohol alone gives him the ability to live with, even to defy 23

23 "He was a man of too many passions ... 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 the Obscure, p. 202.

24 "My two Arch Enemies you know -- my weakness for womankind and my impulse to strong liquor." Jude the Obscure, p. 366.
the exasperation and bewilderment he so frequently experiences. Ultimately, his penchant for finding solace in spirits leads to his remarrying Arabella and to the blurring of his "nobler vision" (404) forever.

In addition, the dream of Christminster, which Jude faithfully nurtured all his life, haunts, possesses, and finally destroys him. As a young boy, he had idolized Phillotson, his schoolmaster, who subsequently resigned and departed for Christminster. From that day on, Jude yearned to leave his great-aunt, his village, his ignorance far behind him and seek knowledge and truth in the "city of light" (30). Sue warns him of the probable suffering that lies before him if he persists in pursuing his impossible dream. Jude, however, shuts his eyes and ears to all such warnings; "his imagination lives always in its accomplishment, never in the difficulties before him, or in the embarrassment such a desire must cause to a life like his." Hence this burning, idealistic passion for Christminster ultimately consumes Jude.

Early in Jude the Obscure, Hardy hints that Sue possesses a perverse but consistent tendency to inflict pain wilfully

25 "I was gin-drunk." Jude the Obscure, p. 404.
26 "You are Joseph the dreamer of dreams, dear Jude. And a tragic Don Quixote. And sometimes you are St. Stephen, who, while they were stoning him, could see Heaven opened." Jude the Obscure, p. 214.
27 Abercrombie, p. 156.
upon herself "for the odd and mournful luxury of practising long-suffering in her own person" (183). With the death of her children, this tendency comes to master her whole being. It overrules her intellectuality and reason; it gives her a feeling of guilt. She soon becomes convinced that the death of her children was undoubtedly a sign from God that she was a sinner who now must mend her ways. As a result, she feels she must leave Jude and return to Phillotson. In so meekly, mutely, and irrationally admitting defeat, Sue betrays herself and renounces forever her sole claim to happiness. Considering all the evidence, one can validly uphold the theory that Sue committed spiritual suicide.

The reader of Hardy is incessantly shaken by the inability of his characters to direct their own lives. Some, like Manston and Tess, are determined by hereditary factors about which they, of course, have no say. Others, like Fancy Day, Grace Melbury, and Angel Clare, are products of their environment and especially of the educational system which molded them in their formative years.

28 "She was no longer the same as in the independent days, when her intellect played like lambent lightening over conventions and formalities." Jude the Obscure, p. 356.
29 "They were sacrificed to teach me how to live! -- their death was the first stage of my purification." Jude the Obscure, p. 376.
30 Arabella so perceptively notes: "She's never found peace since she left his arms, and never will again till she's as he is now (dead)." Jude the Obscure, p. 423.
Like Fate and Nature, determinants like heredity and environment betray an individual principally because they leave him no freedom of choice or will.

Hardy is, however, most interested in less clearcut cases. Watching how a given nature placed in a certain environment reacts particularly absorbs and fascinates him. The results soon become uncomfortably apparent. The individual in Hardy, having inherited a certain nature, cannot adjust to his environment and the situations he finds himself in. Nor does the outer world ever conform to his requirements. The individual in Hardy, then, unable to change his circumstances and unable to change himself to fit them, is sooner or later crushed. Betrayed by both heredity and environment, he never, Hardy implies, even had a chance.
CHAPTER THREE

THE BETRAYAL of the INDIVIDUAL by ANOTHER

The fascination that the betrayal of one individual by another held for Hardy derived, perhaps, from an early experience of his own. According to Deacon and Coleman's recent biography of Hardy, 1 he had, as a young man, been engaged to one Tryphena Sparks. The betrothal was, however, a short-lived one. Separated by distance from her young man, Tryphena had in the interim met another. Not without qualms, she finally decided to break her engagement. In her defense it must be stated that, although she offered no explanation to her bewildered fiancé, she was honourable enough to end one relationship before embarking upon another. Whether this exact incident was the original source for the many such betrayals that recur repeatedly in Hardy's work is irrelevant. That so many such betrayals of one individual by another do appear in his novels is of greater importance and interest to this paper.

Although Hardy's characters betray one another, more often than not, unconsciously, almost blindly, they nevertheless succeed all too well. When their eyes are finally opened, it is frequently too late to change what they themselves have done. Since most of the individuals involved in almost all such cases had been sincerely convinced that they were right, their moment of recognition is

1 Lois Deacon and Terry Coleman, Providence and Mr. Hardy (London, 1966).
inevitably pathetic. Melbury, for example, is shattered to discover himself the principal author of Grace's unhappiness. Angel and Henchard both are grief-stricken by the heartache their errors cause. The sorrow such betrayals subsequently bring proves limitless and overwhelming to both betrayed and betrayers.

Besides, some of Hardy's characters betray others intentionally. Of these, several -- Miss Aldclyffe and Fitzpiers, for example -- repent the unhappiness they have caused. But others, notably Alec and Arabella, deceive over and over until they finally succeed in ruining the lives of their victims. Whether the betrayal of one individual by another is conscious or not, however, matters little in Hardy's works. The results are the same. At least one of the people directly concerned undergoes much mental anguish and suffering.

Although the deception of man by man is an essential plot-ingredient in Desperate Remedies, the lives of the two central and innocent characters are not permanently ruined by it. The novel opens with a story of double betrayal. Deceived in her youth and abandoned by one young man, Miss Aldclyffe subsequently meets another. This time it is she who betrays. She encourages her new lover's courting. Yet when he proposes, she refuses, offering
only a vague explanation that something divides them eternally. With these words she abruptly ends forever her own and her lover's chances for happiness. As a direct result of her action, the young man's personality changed almost overnight from a winning openness to a moody nervousness; shortly afterwards, he wed a woman he did not love. Cynical and bitter, the middle-aged Miss Aldclyffe labels all men betrayers and sneers at their ephemeral love. Edward Springrove, she emphasizes to Cytherea, is no exception. Manston, on the other hand, is. Since she is so totally committed to her son's happiness, she is prepared to sacrifice Cytherea's in order to promote it. Nor does she decide to do so blindly. She is well aware that she may be ruining both Cytherea's and young Edward's life by her "cunning, half-misrepresentations" (283). She elects, however, to keep her eyes fixed firmly on her goal and ignore the suffering she herself inflicts daily on one who had been like a daughter to her.

2 "I have met deceit by deceit, till I am weary of it -- weary, weary -- and I long to be what I shall never be again -- artless and innocent, like you. But I suppose that you too, will prove to be not worth a thought, as every new friend does on more intimate knowledge." Desperate Remedies, pp. 90-1.

3 "Why, he has had loves before you ... and you are but a temporary link in a long chain of others like you." Desperate Remedies, pp. 94-5.

4 "I shall never forget you for anybody else, as men do." Desperate Remedies, p. 96. Nor does she absolve women of deceit. In her opinion, they are, nine times out of ten, not "fresh spring meadow[s]" (94), as men think, but "dusty highway[s]" (94), and their love is almost always "the hulk of an old wreaked affection, filled with new sails and re-used." Desperate Remedies, p. 93.
Edward might have spared both himself and Cytherea much heartache had he been a little more commanding. His error does not lie in his falling in love with Cytherea while he is still engaged to another. He is to blame rather for begging Cytherea to forgive him without revealing what it is he is asking her to forgive. Bewildered, Cytherea wonders whether she ought to believe he had trifled with her feelings. Nor does Edward act swiftly to resolve his dilemma so that he could assure and marry her. He prefers to let matters ride until Cytherea learns of his engagement for herself. Justifiably upset, she accuses him of "deep deceit" (136). By the time Edward is ready to prove his fidelity to her with marriage, it is almost too late. If not for the course events themselves took, he would never have had his chance.

In the meantime, other characters also are busily employed in the art of betrayal. Mans ton, desperately in need of someone to impersonate his murdered wife, purposely deludes Anne into thinking he loves her. In addition, Owen can be said to betray Cytherea, though this point is disputable. On one hand, it can be argued that Owen, worried about Cytherea's welfare should anything happen to him, truly believed his sister would be most secure, and even moderately happy, with Manston.\(^5\)

\(^5\) "How many thousands of women like you marry every year for the same reason, to secure a home, and mere ordinary, material comforts, which after all go far to make life endurable, even if not supremely happy." Desperate Remedies, pp. 266-7.
hand, it can be argued that Owen, who is ill and afraid he will die without the best medical care, purposely nourished a guilt complex in Cytherea for daring to think first of her own happiness. That is, a strong case does exist for accusing Owen of spiritual blackmail.

In Hardy's next novel, Under the Greenwood Tree, the theme of human deceit, though not so obvious or pronounced as in Desperate Remedies, is nevertheless present. The novel focuses on a winsome, flirtatious young lady whose coquetry is never, however, according to Hardy, "so decided as to banish honesty" (48). Having come to know Fancy well, the reader is quite apt to question Hardy's pronouncement. He normally suspects that her insatiable desire for admiration, her materialistic aspirations, and her awareness of the power of her charms will ultimately lead her to betray Dick's supremely innocent serenity.

Fancy's fickleness and capriciousness permeate the novel. She herself confesses her delight at being stared at by and being attractive to men who mean nothing to her. "She obviously enjoys

6

"Many a woman has gone to ruin herself ... and brought those who love her into disgrace, by acting upon such impulses as you possess now." Desperate Remedies, p. 278.

7

Dick accuses her often of possessing these traits. "You make any one think," he reproaches her, "that loving is a thing that can be done and undone, and put on and put off at a mere whim." Under the Greenwood Tree, p. 125.
having Maybold, Dick, and Shinar (sic) in love with her at the same time, even going considerably out of her way to make Farmer Shinar (sic), the suitor she is drawn to least, propose."8 She is often perfunctory, thoughtless, self-centred, and childish in her treatment of Dick. She does not hesitate to fabricate stories to make him jealous. She does come very close to losing him once, but manages to appease him before he acts on his convictions. It remains for Maybold, rather than Dick, to discover Fancy's potential for deception. Initially shocked, he, then, warmly urges her to confess all "in justice to an honest man who relies upon your word to him" (188). Fancy, however, predictably chooses to keep her secret. Only such a decision, she insists, would prevent "the happiness of a trusting and generous man" (189) from being blighted.

And so, Fancy and Dick begin married life "with a secret standing between them which, told, would discolour the entire future of their relation."9 Dick thinks Fancy good and artless on their wedding day; trustfully, he vows they will never have secrets from each other thenceforth. Fancy, whose eyes were "too refined and beautiful for a tranter's wife; but, perhaps,

8 Webster, p. 99.

9 Pearl Howell Conyers, "The Causes of Defeat in the Characters of Thomas Hardy's Novels" (unpublished Master's thesis, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1928), "Conclusion."
not too good" (201), acquiesces even as the nightingale's liquid voice makes her involuntarily think of the secret she has kept from Dick. As it happens, Fancy's decision to keep silent seems wise, even harmless, for the time. Yet the "jarring" song of the nightingale at the end of the tale suggests "the ugliness of deceit," even the "feminine ... capacity for betrayal"; it may very well also portend future trouble in Fancy and Dick Dewy's married life. Fancy's tendency to refrain from revealing large matters, while "punctiliously" reporting small ones, may very well be a potentially disastrous one to her marriage. Should Dick, so firmly convinced that "it is best to be truthful ... [because] an honest woman ... shines most brightly, and is thought most of in the long-run" (125), find Fancy guilty of deception or secrecy just once, it is doubtful whether he would ever believe her again. The suspicions of a totally trusting man, when aroused and confirmed just once, could completely poison a hitherto compatible, even ecstatic, relationship.

Finally, two somewhat mild male indictments of woman's general capacity for fickleness and deceit are found in this novel. First, the consensus of opinion among all the male characters is

10 Compare Tess's decision to tell all, and the ensuing results.
11 George Wing, Hardy (Edinburgh, 1963), p. 44.
12 Rodgers makes this point, p. 71.
13 Large matters, in this instance, can be exemplified by Maybold's proposal; small matters, by Fancy's harmless flirtation with Shiner.
that women are "all alike in the groundwork" (112); all are interested only in "getting young men and leading 'em astray" (112). Reuben makes an even more perceptive comment about a woman's ways. "This is how a maid is," he muses. "She'll swear she's dying for thee, and she is dying for thee, and she will die for thee; but she'll fling a look over t'other shoulder at another young fellow, though never leaving off dying for thee just the same" (115). When reading Hardy, one cannot help wondering, at times, whether or not such remarks contain his own personal convictions.

The Woodlanders, especially when examined from the viewpoint of human relationships, could almost be sub-titled "a novel of betrayal." The first act of betrayal in the novel -- that of Giles by Melbury -- serves as a catalyst for the others which shortly follow. Melbury had always assured Giles that Grace was to be his eventually. "A curious kind of partnership existed between Melbury and the younger man -- a partnership based upon an unwritten code, by which each acted in the way he thought fair towards the other, on a give-and-take principle" (26). Melbury, however, slowly begins to regret his vow. He soon becomes convinced that he would be sacrificing Grace to one unworthy of her,
should he keep his word. After much internal conflict, he
decides to break the long-standing promise. Unknown to him,
his exact words — "I feel I am sacrificing her for my own sin"
(18) — are laden with irony. Melbury does, in fact, sacrifice
Grace for a personal dream and ambition. He longs more than
anything to see one of his own flesh and blood educated, refined,
and admired. Hence, he sends his daughter to the best, most
fashionable schools, relentlessly forces upon her the unwanted
role of "the social hope of the family" (102), and rejoices daily
in the "article" (64) his humble house produced. He never considers
asking her whether she is happy, or what she wants. Too late he
learns how utterly miserable her schooldays had actually been,
and how insecure and alienated she had felt in her urban surround-
ings. 14

Melbury's second betrayal of Grace takes place after her
return to the woodlands. Without really knowing anything about
Fitzpiers's character or his feelings towards Grace, Melbury almost
immediately supports his suit. The fact that Fitzpiers was the
descendant of a well-to-do, noble, established family was enough

14 Grown up, Grace finally reveals the truth to him: "O, the misery
of those January days when I got back to school, and left you here
in the wood so happy! I used to wonder why I had to bear it. And
I was always a little despised by the other girls ... because they
knew where I came from." The Woodlanders, p. 267.
to satisfy him, and win his favour immediately. He hastily squashes
Grace's persisting doubts and fears about her engagement. 15
"I will say," he threatens, "that if you refuse, I shall for ever
be ashamed and aweary of 'ee as a daughter, and shall look upon
you as the hope of my life no more .... 0, you are an ungrateful
maid, Grace" (201). That much of the responsibility for Grace's
ensuing heartache belongs to Melbury is undeniable. 16 Still, he
cannot be seriously suspected of having acted against Grace purpose-
ly. 17 He suffers as much mental anguish as she for the unhappiness
he has caused her "for whom he almost solely lived" (257).

Grace, in turn, twice betrays Giles with the same offence --
choosing Fitzpiers's fickle love over Giles's pure, sincere devotion.
Although she does eventually come to regret her first act of betray-
al -- breaking her long-standing engagement to Giles and shortly
afterwards marrying Fitzpiers -- she does not, it seems, regret it
enough. Within weeks of Giles's death, she repeats the exact same
process. This second time, she betrays Giles, or at least his mem-
ory, for the same wayward, unworthy man. This second time, too,

15 "I must keep her up to this .... She sees it is for her happiness;
but still she's young, and may want a little prompting from an older
tongue." The Woodlanders, p. 190.
16 Grace, "though mentally trained and tilled into foreignness of view
as compared with her youthful time ... was not an ambitious girl,
and might, if left to herself, have declined upon Winterborne with-
out much discontent." The Woodlanders, p. 130.
17 Compare, for example, his action with that of Suke Dawson, who
betrays her fiancé willingly and openly.
she breaks a promise made to Giles.  

Grace is herself betrayed by the reckless, dashing, selfish Fitzpiers, who strongly and magnetically attracted her from the start. In their very first interview, Fitzpiers, little dreaming he would ever be put to the test, gallantly and thoughtlessly vows he could never deceive her. Yet even before their wedding, which Fitzpiers incidentally regards as merely a civil, not a moral, contract, he unhesitatingly lies to Grace about Suke's morning visit to him. Too late does Grace learn the truth about the incident. She discovers too late that the man she married possessed a "double and treble-barrelled" heart (252) geared to straying, and was himself totally "lacking in restraint and moral fibre." Ironically, it is his wife, Grace, who warns his mistress Felice of the suffering which awaits any woman foolish enough to choose Fitzpiers as a lover.

Grace predicts correctly. Fitzpiers, in fact, wrongs all three women in his life. He never behaves "anyhow but selfishly"

18 After Giles's death, Grace had sworn to worship faithfully at his grave. The Woodlanders, p. 417.

19 "The love of men like Fitzpiers is unquestionably of such quality as to bear division and transference .... His differed from the highest affection as the lower orders of the animal world differ from advanced organisms, partition causing not death but a multiple existence." The Woodlanders, p. 252.

20 Grimsditch, p. 124.

21 "He'll get tired of you soon, as tired as can be -- you don't know him so well as I!" The Woodlanders, p. 288.
towards any of them. He quickly tires of each of them. Yet, despite Fitzpiers's role as arch-betrayer, he suffers only for a brief interval -- when it appears he has lost Grace forever. He manages, however, to win her back. The reader is left, at the novel's end, to draw his own conclusions about the future stability of this marriage and the sincerity of Fitzpiers's repentance. Did he really see, one wonders, "how deep had been his offence to produce so great a wariness in [such] a gentle and once unscrupulous soul" (413)? Was he now truly ready and willing to be a responsible, faithful husband to Grace? The chorus of rustics is quite positive that Fitzpiers is incorrigible, and that he will betray Grace once again. Fitzpiers, they are certain, "will continue to be tormented by the daemon that continually set him after new conquests" in the past, and will undoubtedly, sooner or later,

22 Preston thinks that Fitzpiers only returned for the time being because "wandering about in an aimless fashion cannot long be indulged for financial reasons, and a fine little wife to rehabilitate him in social circles and the rather generous purse of his ... father-in-law ... to back him up and purchase him a good practice ... is not to be sneezed at." George Parlin Preston, "The Men and Women of Thomas Hardy" (unpublished Master's thesis, McGill University, Montreal, 1926), p. 18.

23 "She's got him quite tame [now]. But how long t'will last I can't say." The Woodlanders, p. 442.

24 "But let her bear in mind that the woman walks and laughs somewhere at this very moment whose neck he'll be coling next year as he does hers to-night; and as he did Felice Charmond's last year; and Suke Dawson's the year afore! ... It's a forlorn hope for her." The Woodlanders, pp. 439-40.

25 Webster, p. 168.
be mastered by it. Like Hardy, then, they are convinced that Grace is destined to suffer bitterly and endlessly for taking Fitzpiers back.

In the end, Marty, herself betrayed by Giles, who never came to recognize her as "his true complement in the other sex" (399), waits alone, faithful in life and death, to worship at Giles's grave. Marty is, in fact, the most innocent character in the novel; although she is betrayed, she never, consciously or otherwise, betrays another. Her moving elegy, full of unwavering loyalty, is the note on which the work ends.

An early betrayal is the seed from which the entire action of The Mayor of Casterbridge springs. Henchard, feeling trapped by his early -- and what he considers imprudent -- marriage, drunkenly decides to sell his family. "For my part," he declares, "I don't see why men who have got wives and don't want 'em, shouldn't get rid of 'em as these gipsy fellows do their old horses .... Why, begad, I'd sell mine this minute if anybody would buy her!" (13). But Henchard is not insensitive. Ashamed of his act, he vows abstinence from alcohol for twenty-one years. He remarries

"The ending of the story -- hinted rather than stated -- is," Hardy wrote later, "that the heroine is doomed to an unhappy life with an inconstant husband." F. Hardy, The Early Life, p. 289.

"Now, my own, own love ... you are mine, and only mine; for she has forgot 'ee at last, although for her you died!" The Woodlanders, p. 444.
the weary, middle-aged Susan when she returns, though, in following this "course of strict mechanical rightness" (85) with regard to his recently-returned wife, he is forced to wrong another woman. This, too, grieves him. Later, Henchard, though given the opportunity to gain revenge on Lucetta for having jilted him to wed his "rival," shows himself too humane to betray her.

Henchard wrongs Elizabeth Jane by refusing her affection at a time when she so desperately needed it. Yet she is able to forgive him for all those days she spent alone and unloved. Paradoxically, it is when she is happily wed that she herself turns against Henchard and betrays him. Paradoxically, too, she does so at the precise moment when he requires all the love and compassion she, who ought to know what such a need is, could give him. She, not Newson, the potential sufferer, unconditionally and mercilessly condemns Henchard's lying to her blood-father, without stopping to consider that his action had actually stemmed from fear of losing her. 28 Elizabeth Jane strongly feels that Henchard had betrayed both her 29 and her father 30. Hence, it is she who turns Henchard, a lonely old man, out into the night with nothing to seek

28 "The sudden prospect of her loss had caused him to speak mad lies like a child." The Mayor of Casterbridge, p. 293. Also, it seemed quite logical to Henchard, at the time, that "Newson's affection, cooled by years, could not equal his who had been constantly in her presence." The Mayor of Casterbridge, p. 294.
29 "But how can I [love you] when I know you have deceived me so -- so bitterly deceived me!" The Mayor of Casterbridge, p. 326.
30 "He did it to wrong you." The Mayor of Casterbridge, p. 316.
but death. The one time in her life that her sense of justice succeeds in triumphing over her compassion proves to be the worst of possible times. When balance is again restored and she rushes out into the night to seek a reconciliation, it is, as very frequently in Hardy, too late.

When Lucetta yields to her newly-conceived passion for Farfrae, she becomes Henchard's betrayer. She considers her relationship with him as a thing of the past. The success of her campaign to revitalize Henchard's affection does not interest her. The anguish Henchard was quite obviously undergoing also does not move her. She waves aside the argument that she was "in honour and conscience bound to marry the first (man in her life)" (215). And once she becomes Mrs. Donald Farfrae, she chooses to remain silent about her pre-marital affair. Only after Lucetta's death does Donald learn about his wife's past. In his magnitude of spirit, he does not reproach her either for her past indiscretion or her silence.

Finally, Susan deceives her husband into thinking the child she brings back with her to be his own. Compared, however, with Henchard's earlier barbaric treatment of her, Susan's offence is

"I won't be a slave to the past -- I'll love where I choose!"
The Mayor of Casterbridge, p. 179.
forgivable and unselfish. It is the offence of a mother naturally concerned for her child. Unknown to Susan, however, the repercussions of her action foil Henchard's desperate last attempts to replace ambition by love.

Tess's whole being cries out for sincerity and devotion from those she loves. Tragically, all the people she encounters during her brief, unhappy life are egocentric, self-deluding, and deceiving. Honest and trusting, Tess has never learned "the rooted tradition of deceit." Although she cannot bear to give Angel up, at the same time she cannot bear to deceive him, or keep secrets from him either. Given the opportunity at last to reveal all, she mercilessly deletes nothing "rather than preserve a silence which might be deemed a treachery." (227).

Angel, whom she had just forgiven for the same indiscretion, and whom she thought the epitome of goodness and mercy, turns

Henchard learns too late the valuable lesson that one does not need to own or possess someone completely in order to love him or be loved in return by him.

Morrell, p. 20.

"Having begun to love 'ee, I love 'ee forever -- in all changes, in all disgraces, because you are yourself. I ask no more." Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 260.

"To her sublime trustfulness he was all that goodness could be -- knew all that a guide, philosopher, and friend should know. She thought every line in the contour of his person the perfection of masculine beauty, his soul the soul of a saint, his intellect that of a seer ... The compassion of his love for her, as she saw it, made her lift up her heart to him in devotion." Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 218.
against her with revulsion. His reaction is violent. "He looked
upon her as a species of impostor; a guilty woman in the guise of
an innocent one" (260). "He could regard her in no other light
than that of one who had practised gross deceit upon him" (288).
"How can forgiveness meet such a grotesque -- prestidigitation as
that!" [sic] (259), he coldly asks. Solidly convinced that he is
the victim and the innocent, he departs for Brazil without relent-
ing or making any promises to return. Only once, in a moment of
panic and bewilderment, does Tess herself reproach him. Too late
does Angel himself come to recognize fully "how utterly and irre-
trievably this little womanly thing [had been] the creature of [his]
good or bad faith and fortune" (248). Too late does he come to
realize, with a shock, that he had "neglect[ed]" Tess, "hurt" her,
and failed "to consider" her -- all of which "crimes" he had once
promised himself never to commit (248). The role of the husband
and protector is ultimately his to play for just three days.

36 "The woman I have been loving is not you." Tess of the D'Urbervilles
p. 260.
37 "He seems to attach very little importance to his own moral lapse,
complacently accepting different codes of conduct for men and women." Grimsditch, p. 119.
38 "Why have you treated me so monstrously, Angel! ... You know that
I did not intend to wrong you -- why have you so wronged me? ... It
is all injustice I have received at your hands!" Tess of the D'Urbervilles,
p. 409.
39 These, interestingly enough, are Angel's own words, uttered even
before he married Tess.
Alec, Angel's human co-arbiter of Tess's fate, swaggers onto the stage early in the drama. He is easily recognizable as a spoiled, aggressive rake with plenty of money to flash about and an equal amount of leisure time. Pursuing Tess becomes a pleasant pastime for him, rendered even more enjoyable and challenging by her constant resistance. Alec's persistence, coupled with Nature's treacherous support, finally breaks Tess's defence down for a short time. The last words Alec carelessly flings at the young Tess before he rides out of her life -- for the time being -- are, "I did wrong[you] -- I admit it" (84). To them, he adds the casual postscript that should certain circumstances arise, just a line from her would be promptly acknowledged.

When the two meet again later in the novel, Alec finds himself tempted by Tess again. This second time, he refuses to be dismissed by her. Furthermore, he never stops insisting that, since Angel had gone from her forever now, no possible reason existed for her to defend herself against him any longer. He finally manages to convince Tess, worried about her family's welfare and, by now, passive about her own fate, to live with him. Only once more is she ever aroused by passion in her lifetime. When Angel's return belies Alec's prediction, Tess is con-
sumed by hatred for her betrayer. Bitterly accusing him of tearing her life to pieces and making a "caged wretch" (437) of her, she stabs Alec to death. He had betrayed her once too often.

Then, too, Tess, from the moment of birth, is betrayed by both her parents. Her father, a man lacking in self-control, common sense, and responsibility, neglects his paternal duties and provides his family with no guidance. In addition, old Durbeyfield's self-delusion and pride, intensified by his accidental discovery of his family's former greatness, further prevent him from lifting a finger on his children's behalf. Incredibly, he even toys seriously with the idea of soliciting all antiquaries to set up a private fund for him. Tess's mission to the D'Urberville mansion -- the first step she takes towards unhappiness --

40
His six children entirely depended on "the judgment of the two Durbeyfield adults for their pleasures, their necessities, their health, even their existence. If the heads of the Durbeyfield household chose to sail into difficulty, disaster, starvation, disease, degradation, death [which they did], thither were these half-dozen little captives under hatches compelled to sail with them." Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 21.

41
"Tis wrong for a man of such a high family ... to slave and drave at common labouring work." Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 394.
stems directly from her conviction that someone had to assume responsibility for the family, since her father would not.

The dreams of Tess's mother, Joan, assume a different shape. She envisions her daughter marrying a gentleman and in this way raising the family's social status. When such a "gentleman" enters Tess's life, Joan is ecstatic. She warmly encourages Tess's relationship with Alec, though she knows nothing about his character. Her philosophy is that even if he does not marry her daughter before, he will afterwards. Hence Joan deliberately withholds warnings about men from Tess. When her daughter returns home pregnant and unwed, Joan's immediate thoughts are for herself and her shattered dreams, rather than for Tess. Nor does she ever stop to ponder how much she herself is to blame for Tess's moral lapse. Joan's, then, is, undoubtedly, one of the "main moral failure(s)" in the novel. In retrospect, Joan might have yet made one solid contribution towards Tess's happiness had she been able to convince her daughter not to tell Angel about the past. Unfortunately, however, Tess, for possibly the first time in her life, chooses to reject a piece of her mother's advice.

"Why didn't ye think of doing some good for your family instead o' thinking only of yourself? See how I've got to teave and slave, and your poor weak father with his heart clogged like a dripping-pan." *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, p. 89.

Morrell, p. 2.
Jude, like Tess, is betrayed by almost everyone he knows. Physician Vilbert, who promises the young lad classical grammars in return for remedy orders and then fails to keep his word, sets the pattern for others to follow. This is the first glimpse Jude receives of "what shoddy humanity" (34) some men are made of. He is destined to have many more such glimpses.

Shortly after Jude's first disillusioning experience, he encounters Arabella, "a complete and substantial female animal" (44), who calls to him with the unvoiced call of sexual passion. Too easily governed by his gross instincts, Jude obediently succumbs to Arabella's physical charms. She, on the other hand, having quickly discovered his supreme naivété where women are concerned, proceeds systematically and calculatingly, with "intuitive wit" and "contemptuous ease" to exploit her feminine wiles to entrap him. She sucks in her cheeks to falsely produce dimples. She urges her parents to leave the house so that she can use the bedroom. She finally tricks Jude into marriage by feigning pregnancy. Jude takes no warning from the portrait of Samson and Delilah hanging in the inn they go to (52). Like a lamb led to slaughter, he is conducted to the altar.

44 Wing, p. 75.
45 "The only thing that concerns her is to get possession of a man." Abercrombie, p. 161.
46 Arabella, then, obtains her goal "first by pandering to the baser side of his nature and then by deceiving him on a vital point." Grimsditch, p. 70.
This marriage of opposites soon crumbles and the two separate, but Arabella has not yet exhausted her potential to deceive. After Sue leaves Jude, she moves to reclaim the living corpse. First, she "who knew the landmarks well" (388) plies him with drink. Then, when he is "gin-drunk," she tricks him into remarrying her. As his health declines, however, she accuses him of having deceived her into becoming his nursemaid. Finally, she leaves him to die alone, begging for water. Discovering him thus, she bitterly re­proaches him for dying at a time when she wanted to go out and enjoy herself. Hesitating only for a minute, she leaves her hus­band's corpse and rushes out into the streets in search of a new lover. Weak women must, after all, as she puts it, "provide for a rainy day" (416). It seems that Arabella cannot refrain from betraying Jude, either dead, or alive.

Arabella and Sue relieve each other in the process of betraying Jude. "Either of these two women," notes Abercrombie, "would have been an efficient agent" of holding Jude back "from realizing him­self.... With the pair of them, Jude is simply devoured."47 Sue's actions and character reveal multiple paradoxes, which cause Jude much pain. She recurrently inflicts suffering on those around her, it is suggested, just so that she can subsequently

47 Abercrombie, pp. 160-1.
grieve for the sufferer "again and again ... in all her colossal inconsistency" (183). In addition, she invites a man one minute, refuses him the next, and charms away his anger the third. She expects the male to "dance attendance" on her at all times (275) and is obsessed with the idea of arousing sexual desire in and being loved by him, while she herself gives "poor returns" (275) in exchange. After Arabella's visit, Sue even confesses that her original intent had been to hurt Jude.

Her greatest betrayal of both herself and Jude occurs after the tragic hanging of her children. As a result of this incident, Sue is suddenly seized with "a lust for self-abasement," with the need to repent for her "wickedness" in having "pandered" to her desires. What follows is a kind of "fanatic prostitution" (373) off herself, stemming from an urgent inner need to cleanse and absolve herself. In her "creed-drunk" state, she is totally blind to the toll her reaction is bound to take on Jude. To his entreaties, she is deaf. Since she fails him at the moment of

\[48\]
Even Jude, at one point, accuses her of being a flirt. Jude the Obscure, p. 212.

\[49\]
"It began in the selfish and cruel wish to make your heart ache for me without letting mine ache for you." That is, "the craving to attract and captivate, regardless of the injury it may do the man -- was in me." Jude the Obscure, p. 365. Sue inadvertently does fulfill this original intent.

\[50\]
Child, p. 78.

\[51\]
Jude begs her, "Stay with me for humanity's sake! You know what a weak fellow I am. My two Arch Enemies you know -- my weakness for womankind and my impulse to strong liquor. Don't abandon me to them, Sue, to save your own soul only!" Jude the Obscure, p. 366.
his greatest need, it is she who drives him into the bar and into Arabella's greedily outstretched arms. Since she deprives him of herself, of love, of sympathy, at the crucial hour, it is she who kills his hope, his soul, his reason for living.

52 Of Sue, Arabella says, "She's the rat that forsook the sinking ship!" Jude the Obscure, p. 399.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE BETRAYAL of the INDIVIDUAL by SOCIETY

Hardy emerges as a social critic in the course of his novel-writing. Rather than contemplate this world as the best possible, he takes a full, clear look at the worst in it. And although he soon comes to recognize his age as brutal in many respects, he does not throw his hands up in despair or seek a private retreat from it. Instead, he proceeds to separate the ills inherent in the world into two categories -- those man can himself remedy and those he cannot. Recognizing the second list of ills as being produced by Fate and Nature over which man has no control and by which he is often manipulated, Hardy focuses his attention on the remediable human maladies. Accordingly, he formulates a working motto for himself: "First correctly diagnose the complaint -- in this case human ills -- and ascertain the cause: then set about finding a remedy if one exists."\(^1\)

The conviction that those human ills and abuses which are man-made can consequently also be remedied and corrected by man is obviously inherent in this motto. Hence, though Hardy believed that Fate and Nature, the forces in control of the universe, are in toto indifferent, sometimes even malicious, he simultaneously maintained that man,

\(^1\) In a letter, written August 28, 1914, Hardy wrote, "We are living in a ... brutal age." The Letters of Thomas Hardy, edited by Carl J. Weber (Waterville, Maine, 1954), p. 100.
\(^2\) F. Hardy, The Later Years, p. 183.
happily endowed with reason, could do something about the human condition. If man were to open his eyes to the frequently antiquated, unrealistic, or simply corrupt laws of his age, Hardy is quite certain man could, with thought, care, and time, permanently remove many of the existing social maladies. Thus, though Hardy admitted that much injustice did exist in the world, he also insisted that man need not add to it. Society, in Hardy's mind, then, potentially held much of its destiny in its own hands. Yet everywhere he looked, Hardy saw it misusing its power and potential. He saw it not only impeding the individual whom it should have, in good faith, protected, but also crushing him with its artificial, inflexible, pat laws and its rigid, conventional, and complacent moral attitudes. Hardy took it upon himself first to diagnose the cause of the betrayal of the individual by society and then to attempt to find a remedy, if one existed.

What, then, are the exact elements in society that defeat and destroy the individual? First there exists the dilemma of the Everyman, caught between "the excesses of the law of Nature," a law

3 "Whatever may be the inherent good or evil of life," Hardy noted, "it is certain that men make it much worse than it need be." Quoted by Granville Hicks, *Figures of Transition* (New York, 1939), pp. 128-9.

4 Hardy was acutely aware of "the terrible insistencies of society -- how severe they are, and cold, and inexorable -- ghastly towards those who are made of wax and not of stone ... a stab for this error, and a stab for that -- correctives and regulations pretendedly framed that society may tend to perfection." *The Woodlanders*, p. 237.
which demands his passions be unchained and satisfied, and the law of society, which demands he respect its decrees. Hardy is unnerved by society's pat solution to the problem. He cannot accept that marriage is the only way to resolve the conflict between the two laws, nor that the only reasonable, civilized, and necessary solution is for the individual to marry, as soon as possible, the person for whom he feels the slightest physical passion. Hardy was only too aware of the potential harm this "imposing a permanent bond as the penalty for a passing desire" could produce. He clearly saw the potential disastrous combinations which society thereby encouraged. He saw marriages of two total strangers (like Jude and Arabella) with no love, respect, or understanding for each other. He saw marriages which ultimately impeded the moral, intellectual, and emotional expansion of the individuals trapped in them.

Next, Hardy considered Victorian society's attitude towards individuals already wed, and unhappily so, to unfaithful or unworthy partners. It pained him to observe that society merely shrugged its shoulders at and turned its back on the dilemma of these people. This insensitivity and nonchalance aroused Hardy once more to

5 D'Exideuil recognizes this dilemma of the individual, p. 131.
criticism. He urged society to grant greater freedom of divorce to emancipate such individuals from their nets and let them fly freely and straight again.

Hardy's criticism was not, however, aimed only at society's codified laws. It was also often sharply aroused by "the hatefulness of cant everywhere, but especially in morals, where no rule-of-thumb is of service, but heart and mind must continually be exercised; [by] the cowardice of mere propriety, and all obedience to something learned in other circumstances instead of something felt in these." 7 Society's views concerning illegitimate relations, illegitimate children, and "purity," for example, had been both formed and frozen long ago into hard, unspoken, but nevertheless iron-clad rules. Any deviation from the conventionally-accepted moral route, in all cases, regardless of particular circumstances, it was automatically understood, had to be punished promptly and severely. That there could be no morality without dogma was another accepted theory. If any individual broke one of these unwritten laws, voluntarily or otherwise, society was quick to punish him and continued to do so until he either returned to the fold or perished. In Jude the Obscure, Sue bitterly states that these very opinions held by the conventionally "moral" very often made "the best intentioned people reckless, and actually

become immoral" (313). In the end, they often crucify the innocent as well.

Lastly, Hardy exposes the hypocrisy of a society which first accepted a double standard of morality and then mercilessly proceeded to hound only the woman. Hardy's pages are filled with his pleas for a rational, just, sane treatment of the individual by society.

In Desperate Remedies, Hardy underlines the urgent need for reform in the laws of a society that allows only life-time land leases. In two later works, The Woodlanders and Tess of the D'Urbervilles, he reiterates this argument even more strongly. Using as illustrations the deaths of old South and Durbeyfield, both of whom had lived on property leased for the course of their lives, Hardy nakedly exposes the inherent rottenness of a legal system that allows individuals to be permanently ruined economically when, and just because, another individual dies.

In the preface to The Woodlanders, Hardy ponders whether the erratic heart "who [sic] feels some second person to be better suited to his or her tastes than the one with whom he has contracted to live" (V) is depraved or not. "From the point of view of marriage as a distinct covenant or undertaking, decided on by two people freely cognizant of its possible issues, and competent to carry them through," he answers, "Yes" (V). "Yet," he insists, "no
thinking person supposes that ... there is no more to be said on this covenant" (V). Hardy is a thinking person and has something to add to the subject. He sets up the following situation. Having undergone a marriage ceremony, Fitzpiers and Grace are man and wife in society's eyes. Shortly afterwards, however, Fitzpiers humiliates Grace by his extra-marital affairs and subsequently abandons her for another. Does society agree to free her to seek happiness with one who would be her husband in the true sense of the word -- a protector, a comforter, and a kindred soul? It does not. Instead it insists Grace bear her cross, It refuses to grant her a divorce because, in its eyes, "Fitzpiers's conduct had not been sufficiently cruel to Grace to enable her to snap the bond" (349). Society's "new" divorce law, which Grace had mistakenly thought to be "a mysterious, beneficent, god-like entity, lately descended upon earth, that would make her as she once had been without trouble or annoyance" (335), betrays her hopes.

Again, it is only after Fitzpiers leaves Grace that Melbury clearly comes to see for himself the irrationality, even cruelty, inherent in one of the most generally-accepted opinions of his day. Until then he had never questioned society's unwritten law that "a woman once given to a man for life [should take], as a rule, her lot as it [comes], and [make] the best of it, without external interference" (250). His daughter's particular case convinces
him, however, that this widely-accepted idea lacks both humanity and reason. Shocked by the discovery, Melbury, who had previously supported the marriage of Grace to Fitzpiers, wishes to see it dissolved immediately. Totally convinced that only divorce could counteract or amend the unfortunate results of the match he had hitherto wrongly encouraged, Melbury puts his entire trust in the new law. It subsequently, however, betrays his hopes.

Finally, society betrays Grace as well when its set of values determines her actions at a crucial moment in her life -- the time of her sojourn in Giles's cabin. Although she no longer considered herself bound to Fitzpiers by any divine law, she felt that she had to be true to the conventional and artificial social standards of morality, which she had unconsciously adopted. Hence she informs Giles that, though she loves him as she has never loved another, she is still bound and vowed to someone else; consequently, she must ask him to vacate his home or do so herself. As a result, she comes to see too late that "cruel propriety (as practised by her, killed) the dearest heart that ever woman clasped to her own!" (378). Only when it is too late is she willing and ready to give all of herself to the one man who, she realizes, was more than worthy of her. Her saintly adherence and fidelity to the moral path paved by society and tradition led her astray.
Condemnation by the mob can be ruthless, heartless, and lethal. Once the Mayor of Casterbridge's past is brought to light by the furmity woman's story, the very same citizens who had elected Henchard mayor prefer to trade elsewhere. Unreasonably and mercilessly, they make "the black spot of his youth [wear] the aspect of a recent crime" (218). They do not stop to consider what Henchard had made of himself since that impetuous, foolish act of his early manhood, nor what they had gleaned of his character since his arrival in Casterbridge. Nor do they stop to consider what beneficial reforms he had, as mayor, introduced to their town. Only after they condemn him and contribute to his downfall do they stop to examine all the evidence. Only then was "Henchard's whole career ... pictured distinctly to his neighbours" (221). Only then did they come to see "how admirably he had used his one talent of energy to create a position of affluence out of absolutely nothing" (221). By the time they are ready to regret his fall and make amends for their previous behaviour towards him, Henchard is already a broken man.

Society would not forgive Lucetta for her past indiscretion, although she had not intentionally initiated it, but had rather drifted into it. Even though she proves herself a loyal, devoted, and loving wife to Donald Farfrae, the general public will not
allow her to go unpunished. As self-appointed arbiters of justice and staunch upholders of the traditional morality, they heartlessly and smugly proceed with their two-fold plan -- to enlighten her husband and to crucify her publicly. Their chosen weapon of torture performs flawlessly. Lucetta dies shortly after the skimmy ride -- "a victim to the standards of other people." 8

_Tess of the D'Urbervilles_ is the story of "a lovely nature tortured by the action of circumstance -- true; but circumstance working through the timidity and stupidity of man himself." 9 Since Tess had bowed before the law of Nature, society, in its obsession to uphold some semblance of civilized order, indignantly demands she pay the full penalty of human law. Tess herself belongs to the conventional moral school of thought. She has been socially conditioned to think of herself thereafter as an insult to both the social and the natural law. She has been schooled into seeing herself as "a figure of Guilt intruding into the haunts of Innocence" (94). Yet, simultaneously, she cannot help feeling that, had she been left alone by society to live under Nature's law alone, she might have still known happiness. 10

8 Rodgers, p. 80.
9 Child, p. 66.
10 "Alone in a desert island would she have been wretched at what had happened to her? Not greatly. If she could have been but just created, to discover herself as a spouseless mother, with no experience of life except as the parent of a nameless child, would the position have caused her to despair? No, she would have taken it calmly, and found pleasures therein. Most of the misery had been generated by her conventional aspect, and not by her innate sensations." _Tess of the D'Urbervilles_, p. 101.
Hardy is not quite so ready as society and Tess are to condemn the woman who refuses to suppress, or simply does not suppress, automatically and immediately, her physical urges as "unnatural" and "detrimental" to society. Tess's action, Hardy insists, was in accord with natural law and not opposed to it, as she had been trained to think. "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" (94). Furthermore, "but for the world's opinion," Hardy points out, "those experiences (of Tess) would have been simply a liberal education" (110).

When social opinion proves, however, insufficiently powerful to crush Tess, one who is "a slave to its customs and conventionality" (302) appears to complete the process. In Angel Clare, Victorian conventional morality rules supreme. Although he had been personally molded by the puritanism of his parents, their thinking had been, in turn, socially determined by the restrictive and well-defined ethos of the day. Few at the time were independent or courageous enough to oppose the existing social norm. Angel himself, despite "his attempted independence of judgment" (302), is ruled absolutely by it. He invokes the double standard of morality. He recoils with horror and repugnance from Tess after her confession. That is, he immediately whips out society's yardstick to measure the soul of the woman trembling before him, and almost instantaneously pronounces her impure and unworthy of him.
Illumination and objectivity come to Angel only after he has been absent from his own country and society for some time. His spiritual guide to enlightenment is one who had "sojourned in many more lands and among many more peoples than Angel" (390), and who had thereby attained broader tolerance, understanding, and wisdom than he. This man opens Angel's eyes to his own and his society's narrow-mindedness, heartlessness, and guilt. Slowly, Angel comes to realize how grave an injustice can arise from one's allowing oneself, or a society's allowing itself, "to be influenced by general principles, to the disregard of the particular instance" (391). Slowly and painstakingly, he gropes for a personal and meaningful definition of the term "the moral woman" (389), taking great care not to be influenced by "the old appraisements of morality" (389). And after much soul-searching, he concludes that "the beauty or ugliness of a character lies, not only in its achievements (as society had decided), but in its aims and impulses; its true history lies, not among things done, but among things willed" (389). Only then does he come to see Tess as she innately is -- a woman "who always wished to walk uprightly; to seek out whatsoever things were true and honest, and of good report" (116). Like Hardy, he finds her, even after she commits murder, to be "a pure woman."
Nevertheless society notes only black and white facts. It spends no time examining the circumstances which led up to this individual -- and unique -- case. All it can see is that a murder had been committed. Having looked up the rule applicable in all such instances, it promptly demands Tess's life in return for Alec's. Then, having satisfactorily fulfilled its role in its own eyes, it closes the case of Tess of the D'Urbervilles with the smug conviction that "justice" was done."

Hardy makes three very clearcut points in the postscript to the preface to Jude the Obscure. First, he reiterates his conviction that "the civil law should be only the enunciation of the law of nature" (VII) and therefore not in opposition to it. "A marriage," he next states, "should be dissolvable as soon as it becomes a cruelty to either of the parties -- being then essentially and morally no marriage" (VII). Lastly, he finds fault with society's insistence that human instincts must be adapted to "the rusty and irksome" (VIII) mould of marriage, in all instances, without exception. To reinforce his argument that society must adopt a new and more realistic stand on such issues as marriage and divorce, Hardy relates the unhappy story of several individuals thoughtlessly and mercilessly crushed by its relentless and inhuman wheels.

Hardy is quoted as having said: "I consider a social system based on individual spontaneity to promise better for happiness than a curbed and uniform one under which all temperaments are bound to shape themselves to a single pattern of living. To this end I would have society divided into groups of temperaments, with a different code of observances for each group." F. Hardy, The Later Years, p. 23.
For having been momentarily "surprised by a new and transitory instinct" (68) and for having then "drifted ... far into intimacy" (63) with the more than acquiescent Arabella, Jude is forced by society and social convention into accepting a permanent contract for a mere passing fancy. Sue, like Hardy, is keenly aware of the traps, called marriages, which women, like Arabella, lay to catch men, like Jude. The society that encourages such tactics cannot be considered anything but seriously warped, in her opinion.

In supporting this marriage, society further betrays Jude because it neither considers nor cares that the penalty it exacts from him may check, possibly forever, his academic aspirations. Jude muses about society's total indifference to his future. He finally concludes that there "seemed ... something wrong in a social ritual which made necessary a cancelling of well-formed schemes involving years of thought and labour, of foregoing a man's one opportunity of showing himself superior to the lower animals ... because of a momentary surprise by a new and transitory instinct" (68). To Hardy, the correct word is not "seemed" but "was."

There doubtlessly was something wrong with the existing "artificial system of things, under which the normal sex-impulses [were] turned into devilish domestic gins and springes to noose and hold back those who wanted to progress" (226).

12 In Jude's case, this mere passing fancy "had no necessary connection with affinities that alone render a life-long comradeship tolerable." Jude the Obscure, p. 76.
When Jude tries to establish another relationship with a woman, social convention again crushes him, this time permanently. Since both he and Sue are convinced that legalized marriage is an artificial, hollow institution and that it is "as culpable to bind oneself to love always as to believe a creed always, and as silly as to vow always to like a particular food" (233), they decide to live together common-law instead. Their rebellion, before long, arouses social ire. They are silently persecuted. "Nobody molested them ... but an oppressive atmosphere began to encircle their souls" (308). Jude's professional services are shunned. Mournful migrations of the Fawley household, which is to end unhappily, begins shortly afterwards. The bewildered Jude cannot comprehend why the social formula of his time opposes his desire to follow his own inclinations, which "do [him] and nobody else any harm, and actually give pleasure to those [he] love[s] best" (338). Sue's tone is more bitterly critical and rebellious. "I can't bear that they ... should think people wicked because they may have chosen to live their own way!" she fumes. "It is really

Sue, however, is more adamant about this point than Jude. A marriage ceremony seems to her to be 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." Jude the Obscure, p. 218. Hardy also is quite amazed that the marriage vow, with no divorce clause, seems to astound no one but himself: "The two swore that at every other time of their lives till death took them, they would assuredly believe, feel, and desire precisely as they had believed, felt, and desired during the few preceding weeks. What was as remarkable as the undertaking itself was the fact that nobody seemed at all surprised at what they swore." Jude the Obscure, p. 64.
these opinions that make the best intentioned people reckless, and actually become immoral" (313). Ultimately, these very opinions indirectly cause the death of this ill-fated couple's children. They also, in turn, lead to Sue's irrational decision to embrace once again the very precepts of a convention that she had rejected with scorn.

Jude spots the disease spread throughout the society of his day but cannot suggest a cure. In the final analysis, he and Sue fall victim to the general epidemic. They are betrayed by a society which was not "illuminated enough for such experiments as (theirs)" (364).

Besides, society, in acknowledgement of Phillotson's charity in giving Sue her freedom, rewards him with mental and emotional

These opinions are embodied in the three Christminster landladies who "questioned Sue's respectability and refused her lodging on account of her burdensome children." Rodgers, p. 93.

"I perceive there is something wrong somewhere in our social formulas: what it is can only be discovered by men and women with greater insight than mine." Jude the Obscure, p. 338.

His nature suggests "an inherent wish to do rightly by all." Jude the Obscure, p. 169.

"I would have died for her; but I wouldn't be cruel to her in the name of the law." Jude the Obscure, p. 245.
torture and with financial and professional obscurity.\textsuperscript{19} Ironically, only the "scum" of society -- "two cheapjacks, a shooting-gallery proprietor ... a pair of boxing-masters ... two travelling broom-makers ... a gingerbread-stall keeper" (259) -- sympathize with and applaud Phillotson's generosity. Otherwise, the wheels of the cruel \textsuperscript{20} world grind on, mindless of the individuals destroyed and crushed in the process.

Finally, Jude's high aspirations and efforts to obtain learning are not only ignored but also actively squashed by society. Despite the aptitude and interest that he repeatedly and doubtlessly shows, Jude, unlike the sons of millionaires who can afford the luxury of an education, \textsuperscript{21} is denied entrance to the university. No student loan offices existed as yet to enable him to obtain an education. The government was not offering financial nor any other kind of aid to those it was supposedly governing well. Only after many long years of anticipation and hope does Jude finally admit that his dream will never be realized and that his mind will never communicate truths or ideas to others. Still, he

\textsuperscript{19} "No man had ever suffered more inconvenience from his own charity ... than Phillotson had done in letting Sue go. He had been knocked about from pillar to post at the hands of the virtuous \textsuperscript{[italics are mine]} almost beyond endurance; he had been nearly starved, and was now dependent entirely upon the very small stipend from the school of this village (where the parson had got ill-spoken of for befriending him)." \textit{Jude the Obscure}, p. 370.

\textsuperscript{20} "Cruelty is the law pervading all nature and society." \textit{Jude the Obscure}, p. 329.

\textsuperscript{21} According to Hardy, Christminster was "any old-fashioned University about the date of the story, 1860-70, before there were such chances for poor men as there are now." F. Hardy, \textit{The Later Years}, p. 249.
eagerly awaits reforms in his society's educational system and
speaks hopefully of change in it, which would benefit future
seekers of wisdom. As for himself and Sue, Jude had once soberly
noted, "Our ideas were fifty years too soon to be any good to us.
And so the resistance they met with brought reaction in [Sue],
and recklessness and ruin on me!" (414). The curtain falls pre-
maturely on the life of one whose ideas, hopes, and dreams society
had never recognized nor tried to understand.

Hardy, in all his novels, but especially in *Jude the Obscure*,
enumerated and illuminated some of the remediable ills, spawned
by society, which daily destroyed those individuals exposed to
them. He did so because he was genuinely convinced it was the
novelist's responsibility to hold a mirror up to society and make
it observe itself nakedly and honestly. His own novels are, in
fact, very much x-rays of society. They force those who read them
to see for themselves the internal disease their society's apparently
and deceptively healthy body harbours. And once the individuals
collectively known as society should be made aware of its ills
forcefully enough, then, Hardy was convinced, they would doubtlessly
act with compassion towards others and, most importantly, with a
determined effort to remedy existing wrongs.

"I hear that soon there is going to be a better chance for such
helpless students as I was. There are schemes afoot for making
the University less exclusive, and extending its influence." *Jude the Obscure*, p. 413.
To guide them in all this, they need look only to Hardy. In his novels, some of the most pressing human ills are diagnosed, their causes ascertained, and the remedies for them, if any such remedies exist, almost certainly suggested.
CHAPTER FIVE

BETRAYAL of the INDIVIDUAL by ECONOMIC FORCES and THE CHURCH

Every person at some time in life reaches a point when he can no longer muster up the strength to resist the endless difficulties that confront and impede him. How long and determinedly he has struggled before admitting defeat and succumbing to what he had, until then, considered the unacceptable, depends, of course, on the individual himself. The result is, however, inevitably the same in Hardy's novels. Economic pressure and human needs for food and clothing sooner or later defeat the most determined.

Hardy's characters almost always fight heroically and fiercely against economic pressure. The reason for their finally admitting defeat can frequently be traced to their concern for others -- usually their relatives -- rather than to fear for themselves. In addition, these same hapless people are very often misled by those who wish to see them in their own power at last. Finally, though it can be justifiably argued that the true betrayer in such cases is Fate, this chapter first examines the betrayal of the individual by economic forces.

Cytherea, the heroine of Desperate Remedies, is torn apart by two conflicting considerations. Her situation is a difficult one. Owen, her brother and only living relative, is seriously ill. Since she, his sole source of help, is homeless, dependent,
and penniless, she cannot afford to pay for his hospitalization or an operation. Miss Aldclyffe, aware of Cytherea's plight and the sudden advantage she herself acquires owing to it, dangles an attractive offer before the wretched girl's eyes. She promises to take special care of Owen if Cytherea agrees to wed Manston. In addition, the elderly woman utilizes every conceivable opportunity to underline to Cytherea the contrast between the kindness Manston has shown her and the fickleness Edward has apparently displayed. Manston himself tries to win Cytherea subtly and underhandedly to his cause, by paying Owen's debts and hiring a wheelchair for him. Even Owen argues that his sister "ought to act in obedience to the dictates of common sense ... and dread the sharp sting of poverty" (266). Cytherea is consequently forced to make a fateful decision. Having anxiously pondered the situation, she concludes she must, as a good Christian, abandon her hopes for happiness so that the desires of those more worthy and valuable than she could be realized. Thus, Miss Aldclyffe, Owen, and Manston exert great economic pressure on Cytherea until she can no longer resist. She veritably sells herself to Manston, convinced

1 "To combat the misfortune, there were two courses open -- her becoming betrothed to Manston, or the sending Owen to the County Hospital," which, she is told, is "another name for slaughterhouse." Desperate Remedies, p. 252.

2 "By a slight sacrifice ... she could give happiness to at least two hearts whose emotional activities were still unwounded. She would do good to two men whose lives were far more important than hers." Desperate Remedies, p. 257.
by their argument that she has to "provide herself with some place of refuge from poverty, and with means to aid her brother" (257).

Miss Aldclyffe also confronts Edward with a similar choice. He must choose either to forfeit Cytherea or free his father from financial oppression. Edward is convinced by Miss Aldclyffe that Cytherea loved another and is aware that his father's hopes, perhaps even life, depended upon the outcome of his interview with the elderly woman. He finally, then, yields to economic pressure. Fortunately, however, the damage wrought by economic forces in *Desperate Remedies* does not permanently scar the lives of its central characters.

Irresponsible and shiftless, old Durbeyfield, Tess's father, can hardly be called a good provider or an understanding parent. Joan, his wife, is a weak, passive, careless person who thinks little of exploiting "her daughter's fresh beauty by surreptitiously marketing it." The tremendous pressure to seek financial aid from the D'Urbervilles that the two of them constantly exert on their eldest daughter is keenly felt by Tess. Even the couple's five other children reproach her for her initial refusal to solicit the D'Urbervilles. Together they moan, "Tess won't go to be made a la-a-dy of! ... And we shan't have a nice horse, and lots o' golden money to buy fairling!" (49). Since she feels responsible for

---

Wing, p. 70.
Prince's death, knows that someone must take charge of the household, and "possesses an unselfish and conscientious mind, pure motives and strength of character. [she assumes] ... the position of leader." Consequently, Tess reluctantly sets out for the D'Urberville mansion.

Next it is Alec's turn to bribe Tess. Just before the seduction scene, he casually informs her that her father had received a new cob that very day and the children, new toys. Uncomfortably and involuntarily, Tess finds herself in the role of the grateful receiver. This is not, however, to imply that Tess succumbed to Alec this first time because of economic pressure alone. It suggests that Alec seemed to have mastered the art of dangling baubles before the eyes of those less well provided for than he. This well-learned lesson of his, its timely application, supported apparently by Fate, tripped Tess momentarily.

When old Durbeyfield dies, economic pressure almost crushes his hapless widow and family. With his death, the lease on their house and premises automatically expires. The family is forced to migrate. Hopefully, they set out for the family's ancestral home, only to be rudely informed that no reservations in their name had been made. Confronted with the hunger and homeless despair.

4 Grimsditch, p. 33.
5 "But where was Tess's guardian angel? where was the Providence of her simple faith?" Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 80.
written on the faces of Joan and the children, Tess is driven almost to distraction. Hence, when Alec opportunistically offers his aid once again, Tess's former resolution and determination waver.

It is then just a matter of time before Tess, worried to the point of exhaustion, finally surrenders to economic pressure. She feels she cannot, for her family's sake, refuse Alec this time. Had she been alone, she would have managed, no doubt. This time, however, she has others to think of. It is their suffering she finds unbearable, not her own. So that the family may be "fairly well provided for" (430), Tess agrees to sell her body to the devil. And nothing intervenes on Tess's behalf, as it does on Cytherea's, to prevent this transaction.

One of the principal reasons for Jude's failure to realize his dream of acquiring knowledge in letters was his lack of money. As a young boy, Jude refuses to allow his vision to be shattered by the pessimism of his rural acquaintances. Yet, at times, even he is acutely and painfully aware of his own disadvantages. He longs passionately, for example, for "a coach -- a friend at his elbow to tell him in a moment what sometimes would occupy him a weary

6 "Don't mention my little brother and sisters -- don't make me break down quite; ... If you want to help them ... do it without telling me. But no, no! ... I will accept nothing from you, either for them or for me." Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 384.

7 "Such places be not for such as you -- only for them with plenty o' money." Jude the Obscure, p. 121.

8 He frequently feels most discouraged after a day's work, when he is unable to "maintain the critical attention necessary for thorough application." Jude the Obscure, p. 121.
month in extracting from unanticipative, clumsy books" (121).

In desperation, he writes letters to the most appreciative and far-seeing scholars he can find, stating his difficulties and asking their opinion on how to advance his academic aspirations. The one answer he does receive urges him to adhere to his own trade and financial sphere. After all, it would take him roughly fifteen years before he could earn enough just to take entrance examinations. Besides, "it was next to impossible that a man reading on his own system, however widely and thoroughly, even over the prolonged period of ten years, should be able to compete with those who had ... trained teachers" (123). Slowly and agonizingly, Jude at last comes to the conclusion that learning was a privilege reserved for millionaires' sons only; his own destiny lay "among the manual toilers in the shabby purlieu which he himself occupied" (124). As a result, he becomes utterly "convinced that he was at bottom a vicious character, of whom it was hopeless to expect anything" (127), and he lives in a "hell of conscious failure" (133) from that day forth. Thus, "the difficulties down to twenty or thirty years back [from Hardy's time] of acquiring knowledge in letters without pecuniary means," combined with other factors, oppress and gradually overwhelm Jude while alive; they all ultimately bring about his early death.

The actions and decisions of many of Hardy characters, then, are often determined by economic forces. All too frequently, economic pressure is felt most acutely by his personae at crucial moments in their lives. It also seems to assert itself only after individuals have resisted and struggled against many other forces and so are tired and bewildered. It often compels individuals to surrender out of altruism or love for others who are suffering. It sometimes forces the individual to make a choice at a time when he is unable to think or act logically or forcefully on his own behalf. Or, as in Jude's case, economic forces determine an individual's position in society absolutely and permanently. In almost all instances, economic pressure either causes individuals pain or makes them act against their own happiness. Hence, that the individual in Hardy is often both betrayed and ruined by economic forces is indisputable.

That there is little hope materially for an individual in Hardy's world becomes quite apparent. Overwhelmed by economic pressure, his characters are often forced to act against their principles and beliefs. Or, like Jude, they are finally crushed by economic determinism. Where was solace and comfort to be found for such people, desperate for advice and help, or scorned and kicked about by society? The traditional answer had, of course,
been in the Church. Hitherto it had promised and seemed to provide spiritual regeneration and hope for such people. Hitherto, but no more, claimed Hardy. From all that he could determine, the nineteenth-century Anglican Church had also joined the ranks of the betrayers.

Despite the fact that Hardy did not believe in the existence of the God of the Established Church, he was very much concerned with the institution itself and those who gathered under its banner. What he saw led him to criticize the Anglican Church, especially its attitude towards and treatment of the individual.

First of all, the Church upheld, in Hardy's opinion, a dead faith and a code of ethics no longer meaningful. He grieved that it made no effort to adjust itself to the times and accordingly determine for itself what role it could still play in the modern world. But Hardy disagreed with the Church chiefly over the

"I have been looking for God fifty years, and I think that if he had existed I should have discovered him." F. Hardy, The Early Life, p. 293.

Church tradition in the form of music, for example, "provided a bond with society and a link with the past [for Hardy]. Since he believed that views such as his must be more and more common, he could not see why the church should not adapt itself to them, and its failure to do so deprived him, unnecessarily as he saw it, of something he would have cherished." Hicks, p. 119.

Compare "Although invidious critics had cast slurs upon [Hardy] as Nonconformist, Agnostic, Atheist, Infidel, Immoralist, Heretic, Pessimist ... they had never thought of calling him what they might have called him much more plausibly -- churchy; not in an intellectual sense, but in so far as instincts and emotions ruled." F. Hardy, The Later Years, p. 176.
definition of religion, for it refused to separate theology and morality. He charged it with staunchly maintaining that anyone following its commandments and observing its forms and rituals would, almost certainly, achieve salvation, regardless of motives or beliefs. He himself upheld a sharply contrasting point of view. A 1907 entry in Hardy's journal reads: "Religion is to be used ... in its modern sense entirely, as being expressive of nobler feelings towards humanity and emotional goodness and greatness, the old meaning of the word -- ceremony, or ritual -- having perished, or nearly." Thus, in Hardy's opinion, Tess's son benefited more from being baptized and buried by his mother in a fervent and almost mystical ceremony than in the tradition of the Anglican Church. Hardy's attack, then, is directed against the "stifling of religion by forms and creeds," against "not God but the Church."

That the marriage contract was permanent, sacred, and God-made remained one of the untouchable tenures of nineteenth-century Church dogma. The clergy comprised a large part of that segment of society which refused to recognize the validity of dissolving the union of two whom God hath joined together.

12 F. Hardy, The Later Years, p. 121.
15 "The Church don't recognize divorce in her dogma, strictly speaking ... and bear in mind the words of the Service .... What God hath joined together let no man put asunder." Jude the Obscure, p. 397.
Hardy takes a look at the stand of the Church on marriage in *The Woodlanders*. His heroine, Grace Melbury, examines her married life with Fitzpiers long and intensely, and finds it wanting in fidelity, sincerity, honour, and consideration. She was not a rebel against tradition or religion by nature. Nevertheless, she does question seriously the Church's -- and society's -- insistence that one's conscience is eternally bound by one's marriage vows, regardless of their being made with or without "full recognition of their force" (428). This gentle woman "of strong devotional sentiment" (428) is further staggered by the decree of the "new" divorce laws about which, no doubt, the clergy had its say. As a result, Grace, like Hardy but unlike the clergy, ultimately comes to feel that she is no longer bound to Fitzpiers by any divine law. Unfortunately, and in this matter unlike Hardy, she cannot defy as well society's verdict that Fitzpiers is still her husband in its eyes.

In *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy again exposes the sorrow that inevitably results from the Church's inflexible and unrealistic stand on indissoluble marriages. Blind to the obvious fact that between Jude and Arabella "there was no more unity than between east and west" (190), the Church firmly insists he marry the woman "he took advantage of" as soon as possible. In its eyes, the couple's
sexual intimacy automatically makes them one person in all ways. Sue recognizes what the Church is only reluctantly beginning to recognize -- that some women "can't give [their love] continuously to the chamber-officer appointed by the bishop's license to receive it" (213). By the time *Jude the Obscure* was written, the Church had begun, albeit uneasily, to grant divorces in certain cases. It appears much relieved, however, to find that Jude and Arabella plan to remarry. Their proposed action seems to reassure the Church that its first decision -- to make them wed -- was correct after all. Fittingly, Arabella glories in the success of her scheme to rewed Jude and even ridicules the very institution which helped her obtain this success.

Finally, Church dogma, which had been early and deeply implanted and nourished in Sue's subconscious, ultimately strangles her. The death of her children fills her with remorse and guilt for having consciously rejected and rebelled against the Church's teachings. It also convinces Sue that she must suffer for her transgressions. Hence she proceeds to conjure up the lessons of the Church, which she had once learned and subsequently rejected, in order to re-examine them. Her first marriage, she concludes, is solemn to God; therefore, she reasons, it has to be solemn to her as well. Furthermore, God punished her, she decides, because

16 "She said I ought to marry you again, and I have .... It is true religion! Ha-ha-ha!" *Jude the Obscure*, p. 398.
her life's sole object had been "a vain attempt at self-delight" (356). Her salvation now, she is certain, lies only in self-abnegation and self-flagellation. Horrified, Jude wonders whether much of the blame for Sue's violent and insane reaction does not belong to the Church. "You make me hate Christianity," he tells Sue, "if it's that which has caused this deterioration in you .... I am glad I had nothing to do with Divinity -- damn glad -- if it's going to ruin you in this way!" (362). Similarly, Hardy himself seems to feel that if the Church continues to force its potentially destructive teachings upon individuals and maintain its archaic stand on morality, then, in the very near future, few supporters with any affection or reverence for the Church and its traditions would be found anywhere.

Then, too, Hardy recoiled in distaste and horror from the insincere, "well-educated, hall-marked young men, correct to their remotest fibre," who were "turned out yearly by the lathe of a systematic tuition."18 The attitude of these present-day executioners of the Church law towards those "few unimportant scores of millions"19 outside, who were neither University men nor Churchmen, was superior and barely tolerant. These "unimpeachable models"18 made no effort to mingle with, respect, or under-

17 "We ought to be continually sacrificing ourselves on the altar of duty!" Jude the Obscure, p. 356.
18 Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 179. Angel's brothers, Felix and Cuthbert, are examples of this type.
stand the problems and way of life of the individuals who together formed those "unimportant scores of millions." On the contrary, they erected an invisible, but impregnable, wall between themselves and those lower socially and intellectually than they. As a result, they "neither saw or (sic) set forth life as it really was lived," nor perceived "the difference between local truth and universal truth; that what the inner world said in their clerical and academic hearing was quite a different thing from what the outer world was thinking" was unknown to them. Communication between the pastor and his flock, especially the intuitive communication of the heart, was conspicuously non-existent. Mercy and sympathy were strangers to these men's souls. Humanity, even in the women who devoted themselves to Church work, was rare. Mercy in Tess of the D'Urbervilles, for example, immediately suspects that Tess's walking boots belong to an impostor who schemed to enter town barefoot to arouse public sympathy. With few exceptions, most


20 Compare the young priest's attitude in "The Son's Veto." The hope of his mother that "he would soften as soon as he was ordained and in full swing of clerical work" was soon crushed. "His education had by this time sufficiently ousted his humanity to keep him quite firm; though his mother might have led an idylic life ... and nobody have been anything the worse in the world." **Life's Little Ironies**, pp. 51-2.

21 Old Clare, generous and merciful to the sinner, is such a rare exception, though he too "had in his youth made up his mind once and for all on the deeper questions of existence, and admitted no further reasoning on them." **Tess of the D'Urbervilles**, p. 177.
of the Church's officials, as far as Hardy was concerned, were narrow in opinion, hard in theory, and puritanical in outlook. They, too, no doubt, would have answered Tess's question -- "but ... suppose your sin was not of your own seeking?" (87) -- as their messenger, the slogan-painter, answered it. They would have replied that they could not split hairs nor manipulate the divine law for any individual case, regardless of the particular circumstances. Hardy protested against such clergymen "and other orthodox persons who felt it their duty to defend" 22 Church dogma that did not satisfy -- nor even take into account -- the common man's heart and soul.

The Christianity of his day, Hardy concluded, was a betrayer. Rather than encourage individuals to fulfill their potential, and rather than give them hope to struggle on, it seemed to devote itself to opposing their dreams and killing their divine spark. By continuing to blind itself to the necessary reforms in society, which its support could implement, and to the wretched lives of those who looked to it for solace, it was daily planting the seeds of its own destruction. Since Hardy, even as he wrote, saw its grasp on the masses slipping, he tried, in his novels, to acquaint it with its own shortcomings and weaknesses and make it ask itself what role it could still play in the lives of

22 Cecil, p. 23.
individuals. He could do no more than this. The rest depended on the Church itself. It could choose either rehabilitation or disintegration. It held its future in its own hands.

23 He noted, for example, that "the displacement of ... ecclesiastical bandsmen by an isolated organist ... or harmonium player ... has tended to stultify the professed aim of the clergy, its direct result being to curtail and extinguish the interest of parishioners in church doings." "Preface," Under the Greenwood Tree, V. Consequently, "an important union of interests," Hardy concluded, "has disappeared." "Preface," Under the Greenwood Tree, Vl.
CONCLUSION

In retrospect, this paper, owing to the nature of the theme it explores and the examples used to illustrate and reinforce it, seems to suggest that Hardy held an unhealthy, pessimistic, even morbid view on life. He, however, vehemently protested against such a charge. To acquit him, even after one writes a paper on the theme of betrayal and deceit in six of Hardy's novels, is not quite as difficult an undertaking as it may seem.

Like Jude, Hardy was convinced that "his plan should be ... to avoid morbid sorrow even though he did see uglinesses in the world." Nobody recognized more lucidly than he the existence of forces which man is too limited and impotent to control, though they almost always directly, often even fatally, influence the course of his life. From somewhere outside the human sphere, Fate, for example, determines both man's actions and life. An individual's deeds and thoughts are also determined by hereditary and environmental forces, almost always, in Hardy, beyond that individual's control. Therefore, no matter what measures man employs in an effort to counteract and interfere with the power of these particular forces, he almost invariably, Hardy concludes, must fail. Child is aware of this side of Hardy, and notes that

1 "I am a meliorist," Hardy wrote, "not a pessimist as they say." Quoted by Hicks, p. 128.
2 Jude the Obscure, p. 81.
when Hardy watches "from infinity" and sees the ills, betrayals, and defeats of individuals by such external, indifferent forces, he "shows human life as futile and trivial." But Child also recognizes another dimension to Hardy altogether. He observes that when Hardy, on the other hand, descends into "the stress and the turmoil" of life and looks "out from the very heart of some farmer or milkmaid, he shows human life heroically grand. [Then] there is no trace in his work of contempt for human will, endurance and passion." Hardy, then, does not predominantly dwell on and emphasize what is unjust in the general scheme of things. He recurrently reiterates his belief in the innate goodness, the heroism, the dignity of mankind. Nor is he ashamed to reveal the tenderness and pity, the sympathy and admiration he feels for every human being.

Thus, though the reader "may be struck by terror at [Henchard's] fate," he is simultaneously "aroused to admiration by Henchard's dogged courage." He is uplifted by Henchard's sense of justice.

3 Child, p. 21
4 Child, p. 21.
5 Yet even at those times when he does earnestly concentrate on the injustice of man's lot, Hardy cannot be called, as Abercrombie points out, a genuine, thorough-going pessimist: "To accuse, and passionately to accuse, the measureless injustice of man's state in the world, is certainly to confess tacitly that it is worth while having a sense of justice; nay, that it is good to exercise one's sense of justice." Abercrombie, p. 143.
6 "Pity for the individual, not despair of the race, is his motive." Canby, p. 276.
7 Webster, p. 150.
and generosity, by his burning energy and ambition to aspire "albeit ineffectually, towards the heights." The reader cannot help feeling what an honour it is "to belong to the same race with a man who so courageously resists an implacable and sinister Fate." So, too, if Giles dies, his ideals die with him, uncorrupted and intact. He never compromises his beliefs. Even as he dies, his spirit soars and triumphs. Similarly, if Tess is crucified, she is crucified only physically. Spiritually, she redeems herself. Her essence remains noble, pure, saintly, and undefiled by the physical and mortal. "After watching her struggle for content," the reader is convinced that life is not "contemptible" nor "the struggle futile," that "her fight [has] value in itself because of the nobility of her nature." So, too, "nothing can stamp out the manhood in Jude's character. Scourged, disgraced, starved, deserted, ridiculed, tricked, despised, he yet refused to bow his head. Weak though he was, with very human weaknesses, he maintained to the end an idealistic vision of the possibilities of human life." The stories of Henchard, Giles, Tess, and Jude, then, spiritually uplift the reader. They convince him that "the spirit of man, nourished by tradition and sustained by pride persist[es] through

8 Grimsditch, p. 178.
9 Webster, p. 150.
10 Webster, p. 178.
defeat," and ultimately triumphs over all earthly obstacles.

Hardy did not believe that because the universe seemed to be ruled by an amoral force, man himself need possess no scruples, moral standards, mercy or responsibility for his actions. On the contrary, Hardy seems to insist that man

must exert himself in carrying out ... responsibility with the greater determination and energy, just because he finds moral values missing in the cosmos. The more clearly man perceives Nature's indifference, the more determined must his Promethean resolve become .... Having come to realize that everything great and good has sprung out of his own soul, man will, as long as he values what is great and good, wish to preserve them and improve them.¹³

Hence, "since Fate is so harsh,"¹⁴ individuals should and must, Hardy firmly believed, be good and compassionate and true to each other. Perhaps Hardy was convinced of the virtues of personal humility and altruism most of all. Like Jude, he hoped for the day when "altruism ... will ultimately be brought about ... by the pain we see in others reacting on ourselves, as if we and they were a part of one body."¹⁵ Thus, though he was perhaps too acutely aware that "these virtues might be of no avail in the universe; [that] they might be born only to strive and suffer and be defeated; all the same, he ranged himself under their banner."¹⁶

¹⁴ Wynd, p. 8.
¹⁵ F. Hardy, The Early Life, p. 294.
¹⁶ Cecil, p. 156.
It was his firm belief that every personal struggle, every selfless deed, every hand extended in friendship and aid made man more divine and his earth that much better a place to live in.

Hardy also knew that individual efforts were not enough. As he looked about him, he saw much misery that men could collectively remove if only they were to confront those ills openly and energetically. "Whatever may be the inherent good or evil of life," he noted, "it is certain that men make it much worse than it need be."17 Thus, in the writing of his novels, the motto which most influenced and guided him was: "First correctly diagnose the complaint -- in this case human ills -- and ascertain the cause; then set about finding a remedy if one exists."18 In his novels, he exposed nakedly, critically, and unflinchingly much of the injustice, waste, and deceit he saw about him.19 Like Swift, his aim was to vex and alarm the world so that it would act, rather than divert it so it would smile. Since he loved mankind and realized there was much man himself could do to better his life on earth, Hardy pleaded incessantly for man to rid his world of its "thousand remediable ills." In his books, he tried to uncover

17 Quoted by Hicks, pp. 128-9.
18 F. Hardy, The Later Years, p. 183.
19 He did so because he believed that "if way to the Better there be, it exacts a full look at the Worst." Quoted by Webster, p. 45.
many of these ills for man. Like Jude, he never gave up hope that the world would arouse itself with time and, "by a process of moral evolution, become a kind of heaven." 21

In conclusion, then, Hardy, like Trewe in "An Imaginative Woman," "was a pessimist only in so far as that character applies to a man who looks at the worst contingencies as well as the best in the human condition." 22 If one wanted one word to describe Thomas Hardy, that word would have to be honest." In his honesty, lies his ultimate greatness.

20 "What are my books ... but one plea against 'man's inhumanity to man,' to woman, and to the lower animals?" Quoted by Hicks, p. 128.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY WORKS


All references made in the course of this paper are to these respective editions.

WORKS CONSULTED


Chew, Samuel C., *Thomas Hardy, Poet and Novelist*. Bryn Mawr, 1921.


Grimsditch, Herbert B., *Character and Environment in the Novels of Thomas Hardy*. New York, 1925.


Mizener, Arthur, "Jude the Obscure as Tragedy," *Southern Review*, VI (1940), 193-213.


