THE POLITICAL THOMAS HARDY: A STUDY OF THE WESSEX NOVELS
AND A COMPARISON WITH BORIS PASTERNAK

by

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This thesis puts forward the case for a political reading of Thomas Hardy's Wessex Novels. Although the political aspects of these novels cannot be seen as his main preoccupation, it is argued that an awareness of the political motivation of Hardy is necessary for a proper and responsible reading. Through biographical and textual material, and through a comparison of Hardy with Boris Pasternak, it can be shown that a consistent political theme runs through the Wessex novels from the beginning to the end.

The main reason why this political theme has not been generally appreciated is attributed to a misconception about Hardy's role as a novelist. For too long Hardy has been popularly described as a defender of the peasant or rustic. In fact, Hardy's interest was with those people who were just above the lowest class. Since he was himself from this slightly higher class, he was naturally sensitive to their difficulties in social improvement. Hardy therefore attacked the systems in society that protected the wealth and power for the middle and upper classes at the expense of the poorer people.

The first chapter follows Hardy's early career both as an architect in London, where he developed strong political views that tended towards socialism, and as an aspiring novelist in a market which would not accept expression of those political views. The early novels show evidence of his suppressed political anger as Hardy lapses into outbursts of bitter social satire. The satire disappears after The Hand of Ethelberta when the novels complete a gradual movement towards tragedy. This meant that the discord between the early novels' general optimism and his political anger was eliminated. As a harmonious part of the later novels, Hardy's political attitudes are not so easily discerned. For this reason a special critical
approach is needed.

The second chapter compares Hardy's novels and political views with those of Boris Pasternak. Pasternak's poetic political novel provides a model for analysing the later more poetic Wessex Novels. Utilising the genre of the "lyrical novel," it is shown how the poet-novelist often pays less attention to narrative development and concentrates on shaping his central concerns within a symbolic structure.

The third chapter makes a political reading of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* based on the political attitudes established in the first chapter, and on the techniques of the lyrical novel defined in the second. The consistency of Hardy's political views in the Wessex Novels becomes apparent as the same concerns of the early novels are found through an analysis of the novel's symbolic structure.
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Introduction

When Kingsley Amis described comparatists as "non-academics working in a non-discipline to a non-end," he was making a point that no one in Comparative Literature should ignore. In such a large area of study, which even extends beyond literature into the other arts, it is easy for the comparatist to become a dilettante, a "dabbler" in other disciplines. To put it bluntly, Comparative Literature almost demands dilettantism. Even such an eminent comparatist as George Steiner has been attacked on this account. His wide range of interests necessarily leads him into many disciplines of the sciences and arts; and he frequently offends the specialists as he "tres-passes" into their domains without their specialised training.

But even if Comparative Literature is a "non-discipline"—should it be a discipline of comparison, of influence studies, of thematic studies, or what?—it still performs an important function in this age of over-specialisation. Comparative Literature breaks down the boundaries of national literatures and performs the difficult task of drawing disparate elements of the sciences and arts into the study of literature. The comparatist is able not only to broaden and enrich the study of literature, he can also develop new perspectives, new ways of approaching the well worn paths of literary criticism.

This thesis endeavours to provide some new insights on the political content of Thomas Hardy's Wessex Novels. In order to do this it will utilise a comparison of Hardy with Boris Pasternak. By using a comparison in this way—to further the understanding of Hardy's political attitudes—an answer can be made to Amis's charge against Comparatists working to a "non-end." The example of Pasternak, as a lyrical writer with undeniably strong political content in his novel *Doctor Zhivago*, will bring to the reader's atten-
tion ways in which Hardy's later novels can be seen as being more political than has previously been recognised.

The breakthrough in communications during the early nineteenth century brought significant changes in the political organisation of Britain. With the building of the canals and railways, the "first rapid improvements in methods of transport since the Roman era," the virtual confinement of political activity to Westminster ended. The centre of government was now connected, like the brain through the nervous system, to the extremities of the country. The Wessex Novels (*Desperate Remedies*, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, *The Hand of Ethelberta*), for example, show how closely Dorset was connected with London. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Tess knows that the milk she and Angel deliver at the local train station in the evening, will be consumed by Londoners "at their breakfast tomorrow." With such communication, the whole country became more politically conscious; unions began to spread into the remote agricultural communities, and provincial attitudes and practices which had continued with little change for generations were eroded with increasing rapidity.

Hardy's awareness of these and other changes was heightened by his stay in London from 1862 to 1867. These were the years when England came very close to political breakthrough during the Reform League's struggle for universal manhood suffrage. Hardy's exposure to the ideas of socialism at this time, though deliberately played down afterwards, left an enduring mark. This can be demonstrated with evidence from an unusual source. The entry on Hardy in the official Soviet Encyclopedia of 1961 comes very close to the political essence of the Wessex Novels despite its simplified summary:

The best novels and stories maintain a faithful depiction of the vitality of country and of provincial life in England from 1830 to 1880. Their events are depicted in the setting of the ancient county of Wessex, which symbolises the tenor of life, marking the traits of its patriarchal character and its
dying in the conditions of capitalism. In the early novels (Under the Greenwood Tree and Far From the Madding Crowd) rural life is idealised and contrasted with the capitalistic city. The aspiration of the writer to vital truth and to psychological depth destroys the depiction of idyllic settings. In The Mayor of Casterbridge, The Return of the Native and The Woodlanders the idealisation of life yields to increasingly severe realism which reveals the animosity of capitalism to man, and the narrowmindedness of agricultural life with its spirit of greed for money and its religious prejudice. The peak of his creativity came in his novels Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure where the tragic condition of common man under capitalism is shown. Tess, the country girl and farm-hand, captivating in her freshness and sincerity, is a well-rounded character—one of the best female characters in nineteenth century English literature....The common man appeared in Hardy's work as the basic character. The democratism of the author becomes apparent in the deep sympathy for the common people's misery and lack of rights, in the exposure of bourgeois civilisation and hypocritical morals, the egocism of the landowners, bourgeois law and marriage, the complacency of the petty bourgeois and the callousness of the rich. The persecution of Hardy by the bourgeois faction of the press partly explains why Jude the Obscure was his last novel.

The study of the early novels will show Hardy's great difficulty in expressing his socialist views as he became caught between the practicalities of the commercial writer and the idealism of the political reformer. There is a suggestion of a wish fulfillment in the portrayal of Will Strong, in The Poor Man and the Lady, who takes up politics in London and gives rousing talks to the working classes. And clearly Hardy expected to be able to do his political reforming through his novels, until this first attempt was refused by Macmillans for being too politically subversive and socialistic. The requirements of the commercial world of publishing forced him to restrain, in his novel-writing, the evidently fervent political ideas that he had brought home after his five years in London.

As Hardy's career progressed, this conflict between political and commercial interests was complicated by another conflict. This might be called his "social schizophrenia" in that Hardy became divided by his radical and his conservative instincts. Coming from the lower class—his mother was
brought up by poor law charity, and all his relatives from Puddleton and Stinsford had been servants or labourers⁶—Hardy had nevertheless achieved considerable social advance through his parents' business ventures and through his self-education and success as a novelist. His newly attained status brought out his conservative instincts. Whereas, on the one hand, he still "envied rebellion and non-conformity,"⁷ on the other hand he grew snobbish and "establishment." His novels become a mixture of simmering subversiveness and laboured sophistication as the autodidacte struggled towards social and literary respectability.

It is in this social situation that Hardy's true concerns can be seen. It will be argued that the popular conception of Hardy as the apologist of the peasant or rustic labourer is wrong. His real concern can be found to involve people of slightly higher status, like himself, who were endeavouring to rise in the social scale. The rare descriptions of rural poverty, like the hiring procedure that Gabriel Oak experiences at Casterbridge, are primarily included to heighten the central drama of the protagonist's attempt to establish himself in society above the poorer classes.

The first chapter follows the early part of Hardy's career. The important experiences of the political turmoil in London during the 1860's, and the expression of those experiences in his early novels form the basis of the argument in this thesis for a more politically orientated reading of the Wessex Novels. The first chapter will discuss all the early novels up to The Hand of Ethelberta. It was after this novel that the overt political comments, the indignant outbursts against society, virtually ceased in the novels. But Robert Gittings should not have claimed that in The Hand of Ethelberta "Hardy made his last gesture to the class to which he really belonged...The note of protest, which had begun with The Poor Man and the Lady, is virtually dropped, its last flarings perhaps being Sol Chickerel's speeches to his sister."⁸ Hardy's political protests clearly continued
throughout his novels. What actually happened after The Hand of Ethelberta was that Hardy's political feelings became compatible with the growing tragic vision of the later novels. Whereas, in the early novels, the political pessimism and anger had run counter to the optimism and happy endings, it was now absorbed more harmoniously and thus less obtrusively into the symbolic structure. Thus critics have tended to neglect the continuation of Hardy's political complaints after The Hand of Ethelberta.

In order to appreciate fully the political content of the later major Wessex Novels, it is necessary to make a different critical approach. It is the purpose of the second chapter to establish this approach. Through a comparison of Hardy with Pasternak, it will be shown that the later Wessex Novels should be read as "lyrical novels." Pasternak's Doctor Zhivago, with a careful symbolic structure beneath an apparently fragmented narrative surface, provides a key to the reading of the poet's novel. Hardy, in fact, had written of his novels that "He had mostly aimed at keeping his narratives...as near to poetry in their subject as the conditions would allow." And it will be argued that the important political concerns of his major novels are to be found in their fundamental symbolic structures.

The third and final chapter will employ the conclusions of the first two chapters in a political reading of Tess of the D'Urbervilles. The same political grievances of his early career will be found in this novel through the method of critical analysis established in the second chapter. The philosophical and political attitudes will be seen working in close harmony within the basic symbolic structures of the novel. The effectiveness of Tess as a vehicle for political complaint will become apparent through an analysis of these structures. In her role as the predominantly passive victim of social conventions, she demonstrates Hardy's perennial theme of society's lack of concern for individual rights.
This thesis, then, argues for a greater awareness of Hardy's political message in both his early and later novels. The case for such an argument must be established under a triple handicap: Hardy's reticence in later life over the political attitudes of his youth, his tendency to avoid politics in the novels for commercial reasons, and his careful avoidance of "edification." But this last point is an important reason why Hardy's novels are still read today; as Robert Heilman has written: "Mere protest can produce only topical works that will have brief lives." The political element, of course, was only one factor in the composition of the Wessex Novels. This thesis does not argue for a dominant political theme in Hardy's writing. Rather, it aspires to introduce into the critical canon an awareness of Hardy's complex political attitudes throughout his novel-writing years.
Footnotes


3 Thomas Hardy, Tess of the D'Urbervilles (London, 1912), ch. XXX. In view of the general unavailability of the 1912 Wessex Edition of Hardy's novels, all references to the Wessex Novels will be given only by chapter.


8 Gittings, p. 209.


10 Ibid., p. 225. "...the drama, like the novel, should not be for edification."

Chapter I

Political Aspects of Hardy's Early Novels

It is difficult to make a study of Hardy's life, especially his early life, without resorting to some conjectures. Purdy has shown that the official biography of Hardy—The Life of Thomas Hardy 1840-1928 by Florence Emily Hardy—was written by the biographee himself, and that the selectivity of its material is designed to conceal much of his personal life. Zeitlow describes The Life as "a myth of retrospective self-justification" in suggesting that Hardy, in his last years, decided upon the public image he wished to leave to posterity. For apparently the same reason, Hardy also destroyed many of his private papers, manuscripts and letters. The resulting absence of information and documentation has not surprisingly given rise to excessive speculation about some of the carefully hidden aspects of Hardy's life; but, in the final analysis, what has been proved by a study like Lois Deacon's Providence and Mr. Hardy is not that Hardy fathered a child by his half-sister, but that lack of documentary evidence is liable to lead to sensational theories.

In tracing the political aspects of Hardy's career, the same problem exists. The critic must deal with the first novel without the aid of a manuscript. And the information in The Life offers only a careful selection of material that reflects an attitude held half a century later. The image of the young Hardy portrayed in The Life is almost that of a completely apolitical man. Yet, as we shall see, this public image is far removed from the way Hardy felt in his early years.

One reason for this contradiction could well be Hardy's retiring personality, his self-enforced "distance" from life, which appears as early
as his childhood. In a celebrated recollection, Hardy recalls "lying on his back in the sun, thinking how useless he was," and covering his face with a straw hat: "he did not want at all to be a man, or to possess things, but to remain as he was, in the same spot, and to know no more people than he already knew (about half a dozen)." In the same way, he had a lifelong distaste for coming into physical contact with other people. In The Life he calls this trait aloofness rather than shyness.

With such a personality, it is not surprising to find Hardy beginning his literary career with lyrical, contemplative poetry, and remaining loyal to this mode of expression throughout his life. In his youth, after nine years of architectural training, he considered resigning his position in favour of the church because he felt "that architecture and poetry—particularly architecture in London—would not work well together." Late in his life Hardy was to say, "Lyrical activity was essential for my existence." And at one point in his self-education he had even gone to the extreme of reading nothing but verse: "as in verse was concentrated the essence of all imaginative and emotional literature, to read verse and nothing else was the shortest way to the fountain-head of such, for one who had not a great deal of spare time." Later on, however, during his years in London, he did take to reading Trollope and to attending the readings of Dickens.

Nevertheless it was poetry that Hardy wrote in his early twenties. Not until he managed to publish a satirical essay, "How I Built Myself a House," did he begin to question the wisdom of restricting himself to poetry: "It may have been the acceptance of this jeu d'esprit that turned his mind in the direction of prose." Further, evidence of Hardy's dissatisfaction with his inability to publish any of his poetry is found in another entry in The Life:

It should be mentioned that several months before leaving London he had formed an idea of writing plays in blank.
verse—and had planned to try the stage as a supernumerary for six or twelve months, to acquire technical skill in their construction—going so far as to make use of an introduction to Mark Lemon, the then editor of Punch...for his opinion on this point.11

But soon after this Hardy dropped such plans, and in the Summer of 1867 left London to settle in Dorset permanently. This move was in part for the sake of his declining health; but Hardy was growing tired of urban life: "He constitutionally shrank from the business of social advancement, caring for life as an emotion rather than for life as a science of climbing." 

And away from such distasteful society, Hardy finally decided upon an alternative mode of literary expression:

Almost suddenly he became more practical, and queried of himself definitely how to achieve some tangible result from his desultory yet strenuous labours at literature during the previous four years. He considered that he knew fairly well both West-country life in its less explored recesses and the life of an isolated student cast upon the billows of London with no protection but his brains—the young man of whom it may be said more truly than perhaps of any, that 'save his own soul he hath no star.' The two contrasting experiences seemed to afford him abundant materials out of which to evolve a striking socialistic novel—not that he mentally defined it as such, for the word had probably never, or scarcely ever, been heard of at that date.12

13 Thus, "abandoning verse as a waste of labour," Hardy began his first novel, The Poor Man and the Lady.

Hardy's application of the word "socialistic" in the above passage suggests the possibility that Hardy was quite deeply involved with the political affairs of the time. "Socialist" first appears in the English language in 1833 having been borrowed from the French word "socialisme." Socialism, in its original meaning, was "the ownership and control of the means of production, capital, land, property by the community as a whole, and their administration of distribution in the interests of all." This was indeed a revolutionary theory in the middle of the nineteenth century,
especially for a novelist. What evidence can be found of Hardy's political involvement up to the time of his first "socialistic" novel?

Hardy's stay in London from April 1862 to July 1867 was undoubtedly the most important factor in Hardy's political interest. The impact of the "commercial capital of the world" upon such an alert and impressionable mind must have been considerable. And Hardy seems to have made every effort to absorb as much as possible of this thriving city. In his first year there, he wrote to his sister, Mary, that he would go to the Great Exhibition "two or three times a week." The few pages in The Life that describe Hardy's discovery of London are a mass of detail about geographical changes, unusual eating places and eccentric characters, society gossip, the theatre and the opera. He became so involved with London that he knew "every street and alley west of St. Paul's like a born Londoner, which he was often supposed to be."

But Hardy is not so forthcoming with details of his political experiences. There is, however, enough detail to suggest considerable interest in politics. It is known that he was a frequent visitor to the House of Commons and he talks with familiarity about such leading politicians of the time as Palmerston and Russell. A strong interest in politics is also indicated in Hardy's statement that he knew "almost by heart" J.S. Mill's On Liberty. This information comes from a letter to The Times in 1906 which gives more insight into Hardy's political attitude of the time than anything else he offers in The Life:

It was a day in 1865, about three in the afternoon, during Mill's candidature for Westminster. The hustings had been erected in Covent Garden, near the front of St. Paul's Church; and when I—a young man living in London—drew near the spot, Mill was speaking. The appearance of the author of the treatise On Liberty (which we students of that date knew almost by heart) was so different from the look of persons who usually address crowds in the open air that it held the attention of
people for whom such a gathering in itself had little interest. Yet it was, primarily, that of a man out of place. The religious sincerity of his speech was jarred on by his environment—a group on the hustings who, with few exceptions, did not care to understand him fully, and a crowd below who could not.

But this account of his seeing Mill is noticeably absent from the chapter of The Life concerning this period in London. Since he has omitted such an important experience, it is quite likely that he also omitted witnessing other important political events like the famous Hyde Park confrontation on May 6th, 1867 when between 100,000 and 150,000 people defied official legislation and congregated in order to demonstrate support for manhood suffrage.

At least it is documented that Hardy knew personally the leaders of this important confrontation which led to the second Reform Act of 1867. These leaders were the heads of the Reform League. In an off-hand way Hardy tells how he came to know these political activists through his office location:

It may be added that the ground-floor rooms of this 8 Adelphi Terrace were occupied by the Reform League during Hardy's stay overhead.... The heads of the League were familiar personages to Bloomfield's pupils, who, as became Tory and Churchy young men, indulged in satire at the League's expense, letting down ironical bits of paper on the heads of members, and once coming nearly to loggerheads with the worthy resident secretary, Mr. George Howell—to whom they had to apologize for their exasperating conduct.*

Hardy, it should be noticed, does not identify himself with these pranks. Rather, the epithet "worthy," which he applies to Howell, suggests sympathy and respect. Indeed Hardy held generally the same attitude as the Reform League towards the class structure of British society.

The Reform League was created in order to agitate for manhood suffrage and for vote by ballot. A recent historian of the beginnings of socialism claims "the League was unquestionably the most important organisation of working class reformers." In 1865 Karl Marx was actively involved in the
formation of the League. He wrote to Engels: "The great success of the
International Association is this: The Reform League is our doing." Marx
may well have been a frequent visitor to Adelphi Terrace at this time, and
it is not at all inconceivable that he was even acquainted with Hardy.

The climax of the Reform League's agitation occurred in this Hyde Park
confrontation of May 1867. It was a nervous time for England. The League
had grown to 600 branches and reminded the ruling classes of the fragility
of their power. The victory of the League in this confrontation was commonly
known as "the great surrender" as Parliament passed the Second Reform Bill.

Hardy left London immediately after these momentous events, and it is
hardly surprising that the novel he then set about writing was to be "social-
istic." It is not recorded if Hardy became at all involved with the Reform
League, but his very presence in the same building, at a time when the whole
country's attention was focussed upon the League, must have exposed him to a
considerable amount of its activity. His later confession that he knew
Mill's On Liberty almost by heart establishes his sympathy with the general
concepts of the League's cause. It was, perhaps, his class sensitivity that
made him reluctant to support the league openly. Having raised himself just
above the working class, he was probably also anxious to show his separation
from them. Thus, like his future friend, Leslie Stephen, who published
Essays on Reform in 1867, Hardy was more likely an enthusiastic onlooker
rather than a participator. This would fit well with the trait of vicarious
experience that Hillis Miller finds in Hardy. Nevertheless, despite Hardy's
political inactivity in London, and despite the lack of information on even
his political interests, we may safely conclude that he left London in 1867
extremely dissatisfied with Victorian society.

The key to this conclusion is The Poor Man and the Lady which he wrote
as soon as he returned to Dorset. It supports conjectures drawn from the
very sketchy material which Hardy provides that he was much more politically concerned with radical reform than he ever admitted publicly. But here again the researcher is handicapped; *The Poor Man and the Lady* was never published and late in his life, perhaps in order to hide his youthful political excesses, Hardy had the only existing manuscript burnt. The contents of this first novel are only accessible through three far from satisfactory approaches. First, there are the reactions of the three eminent readers who were given the book to assess with a view to publication. Second, Hardy used parts of the novel in subsequent works so that pieces of it can now be restored. And finally we have a very mediocre novella, *An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress*, which is based on the remaining parts of the original manuscript. None of these approaches makes up for the loss of the manuscript, but at least a fair picture of his attitude behind the novel can be obtained.

The recorded reactions to the original manuscript of *The Poor Man and the Lady* indicate a passionate political novel. The first reader, John Morley, advised Alexander Macmillan of its "hard sarcasm" and "cynical description" in dealing with the upper classes. Macmillan himself spoke of "a wholesale blackening of a class," and told Hardy: "You 'mean mischief.'" And then Meredith, according to Hardy, called the book "socialistic, not to say revolutionary." Hardy recalled Meredith lecturing "in a sonorous voice":

he...strongly advised its author not to "nail his colours to the mast" so definitely in a first book....The story was, in fact, a sweeping dramatic satire of the squirearchy and nobility, London society, the vulgarity of the middle class, modern Christianity, church-restoration, and political and domestic morals in general, the author's views, in fact, being obviously those of a young man with a passion for reforming the world—those of many a young man before and after him.

Alexander Macmillan's correspondence expands upon this evidence of Hardy's political passion in *The Poor Man and the Lady*. In a letter accom-
panying the manuscript, a letter which was perhaps too political for in-
clusion in The Life, Hardy explained how he had planned his attack on the
upper classes, freely admitting his subversive intentions:

In writing the novel I wish to lay before you...the fol-
lowing considerations had place.

That the upper classes of society have been induced to
read, before any, books in which they themselves are painted
by a comparative outsider.

That, in works of such a kind, unmitigated utterances of
strong feeling against the class to which these readers be-
long may lead them to throw down a volume in disgust; whilst
the very same feelings inserted edgewise so to say--half con-
cealed beneath ambiguous expressions, or at any rate written
as if they were not the chief aims of the book (even though
they may be)—become the most attractive remarks of all.32

Macmillan's reply gives the fullest account of a political fervour in The
Poor Man and the Lady which could not be controlled. Hardy's intentions
for "edgewise" insertion of political criticism, for half concealed criti-
cism of the upper classes, were apparently unable to hold their own against
his emotions:

Your pictures of character among Londoners, and especially the
upper classes, are sharp, clear, incisive, and in many respects
true, but they are wholly dark—not a ray of light visible to
relieve the darkness, and therefore exaggerated and untrue in
their result. Their frivolity, heartlessness, selfishness are
great and terrible, but there are other sides, and I can hardly
conceive that they would do otherwise than what you seek to
avoid, "throw down the volume in disgust." Even the worst of
them would hardly, I think, do things that you describe them
as doing....

The utter heartlessness of all the conversation you give
in drawing-rooms and ball-rooms about the working-classes, has
some ground of truth, I fear, and might justly be scourged, as
you aim at doing, but your chastisement would fall harmless
from its very excess....Indeed, nothing could justify such a
wholesale blackening of a class but large and intimate know-
ledge of it.33

With such an insight into the vehemence of Hardy's political motives,
it is no surprise to find the hero of the novel closely following Hardy's own
experiences; he is also a young architect who goes to work in London from
Dorset. This Will Strong seems to be his author's alter ego. So when
Macmillan writes, "Will's speech to the working men is full of wisdom,"
it suggests that the episode was something of a wish-fulfilment for Hardy,
perhaps communicating here with the workers in a way that J.S. Mill had
failed to do.

In the second method of reconstructing *The Poor Man and the Lady*, re-
ferences to individual scenes by Morley and Macmillan have enabled critics
to identify passages in later novels which Hardy had lifted from this un-
published manuscript. For example, the description of Rotten Row in *A Pair
of Blue Eyes* seems likely to have been taken from *The Poor Man and the Lady*
since it is said in Macmillan's letter: "The scene in Rotten Row...is full
of real power and insight." To support this Millgate has discovered that
the scene in the original serialised version of *A Pair of Blue Eyes* also
contained some clumsy satire of the very kind which the three readers found
in *The Poor Man and the Lady*.

This connection with *A Pair of Blue Eyes* is the most rewarding since
the bitter sarcasm of this later novel is probably the closest example we
have of the polemic in *The Poor Man and the Lady*, and it will be discussed
in detail when this paper comes to *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. The other borrowings
from the manuscript of *The Poor Man and the Lady*—the early descriptions of
the tranter's house in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, the descriptions of Knap-
water House—are not relevant to this enquiry into political content; but
they do confirm a pattern of borrowings from *The Poor Man and the Lady man-
script*, which adds weight to the value of the important ones in *A Pair of
Blue Eyes*.

The final source of information on the content of *The Poor Man and the
Lady* is the novella, *An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress*. This work
was published by Hardy in 1878 but thereafter totally ignored by him. It is
a thin work and more of a commercial effort than any of his other novels.
It seems quite certain that this novella was the remains of the original manuscript of *The Poor Man and the Lady* after it had been pillaged for material in other novels (*Desperate Remedies, Under the Greenwood Tree, A Pair of Blue Eyes*). Its failure to use the standardized Wessex place names, which puts it at least before *Under the Greenwood Tree*, would seem to support this.

It was not until after Hardy's death that two book editions of *An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress* were published from the serial edition. Mrs Hardy published an edition of 100 copies at the Curwen Press, Plaistow, prefacing the book with the following:

*An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress* is an adaptation by the author of his first novel, *The Poor Man and the Lady*, which was never published. The manuscript of the latter was destroyed by Thomas Hardy some years before his death and no copy remains. 39

An American edition has a much more elaborate introduction by Carl Weber. By researching every source for details of *The Poor Man and the Lady*, Weber creates a long list of its contents. He then extracts all those incidents which appeared in later novels or which were adversely criticized by the readers of *The Poor Man and the Lady* manuscript, and finds that he is left with forty items, all of which are to be found in *An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress*. Such a tidy argument does not stand up to close scrutiny. First, his argument is based on the most unlikely fact that all the basic details of *The Poor Man and the Lady* were somehow mentioned by those few people who wrote about it. Second, some of Weber's specific claims are suspect. For example, he claims that the speech by the hero in Trafalgar Square was omitted after adverse comments by John Morley; but Morley never criticized this part of the original *The Poor Man and the Lady* manuscript. Macmillan, in fact, did the opposite and praised it. Likewise Morley did not, as Weber claims, criticize the scene where the hero is turned out of the Allamont's house. In short, one suspects Weber of trying too hard to
make a neat thesis. Nevertheless Weber's argument moves in the right di-
rection, and does much to support the view that An Indiscretion in the Life
of an Heiress was adapted from the remnants of The Poor Man and the Lady
manuscript, after the recent utilisation of its content for The Hand of
Ethelberta. The whole process of adaptation appears to have been rushed,
and the fact that he did not bother to change the place names to his stand-
ard Wessex ones indicates that Hardy did not edit too thoroughly.

If the editing of The Poor Man and the Lady was not thorough, what
evidence of its political bitterness still remains in An Indiscretion in the
Life of an Heiress? The most important element is the structure of the
story which is based upon class strife: "It was a hard matter at first for
me to forget you, certainly; but perhaps I was helped in my wish by the
strong prejudice I originally had against your class and family. I have
fixed my mind firmly upon the differences between us, and my youthful fancy
is pretty fairly overcome." As in all Hardy's novels, the catalyst for
social strife is love. A rich heiress falls in love with the hero Egbert:

It plainly had not crossed her young mind that she was on
the verge of committing the most horrible social sin—that
of loving beneath her, and owning that she so loved. Two
years thence she might see the imprudence of her conduct,
and blame him for having led her on.44

The hero is an educated but lowly born man like Hardy himself, who through
education has risen to a greater understanding of the inequalities of soci-
ety: "...and he entered on rational considerations of what a vast gulf lay
between that lady and himself, what a troublesome world it was to live in
where such divisions could exist, and how painful was the evil when a man of
his unequal history was possessed of a keen susceptibility." This higher
education in someone not of high birth compounds the difficulties of court-
ship; the hero offends both intellectually and socially: "You talk in that
strain to make me feel regrets; and you think that because you are read in a
few books you may say or do anything." The heiress, Miss Allenville, being only sixteen, is naturally fickle and unpredictable. And Hardy uses this characteristic to make his most potent political comment.

Egbert, the hero, lives with his grandfather who is a tenant farmer on the Allenville estate. The previous generation had life tenancy, but now it is renewed annually. And just as Egbert and Miss Allenville fall in love, her father, squire Allenville, decides to dispossess Egbert's grandfather in order to enlarge his park. Through his friendship with Miss Allenville, Egbert is able to arrange a postponement of the project since his grandfather is deeply attached to his home. But when Egbert exceeds his own discretion and emotionally expresses his love to Miss Allenville, he finds that the enlargement scheme is to be carried out after all and that "Miss Allenville was extremely anxious to have it put in hand as soon as possible."

The fate of the grandfather's house—and his life, as it turns out—are thus subject to the whims of a spoilt sixteen year old adolescent. This situation effectively portrays a facet of the social system that Hardy found so distasteful; the vulnerability of the tenant farmer who has no freehold is highlighted by the old grandfather's bitter expectation of this tragedy:

'I thought it would come to this,' said old Richard, vehemently. The present squire Allenville has never been any real friend to me. It was only through his wife that I have stayed here so long. If it hadn't been for her, we should have gone the very year that my poor father died, and the house fell into hand. I wish we had now. You see, now she's dead, there's nobody to counteract him in his schemes; and I am to be swept away.

This theme of the power of the squire over his tenants is taken up again in Desperate Remedies and in The Woodlanders. In An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress it is most effectively conveyed by this irony of the grandfather having to depend on the whims of the squire's daughter for his home.

Other efforts tend to be sentimental:
The old farmer's amiable disposition and kindliness of heart, while they had hindered him from enriching himself one shilling during the course of a long and laborious life, had also kept him clear of every arrow of antagonism.

Since the love story and the fate of the grandfather's house form the basic structure of the novella, it would appear that these situations were also an integral part of the original *The Poor Man and the Lady*. And they give a very good indication of Hardy's early attempts to mould his feelings of political dissatisfaction into art. It seems likely, however, as Weber has argued, that these two themes—the love story and the dispossessioning of the grandfather—were the most effective parts of the longer *The Poor Man and the Lady*. In his adaptation for the novella, Hardy must have omitted a considerable amount of material; for we know from the reactions of the readers that there was originally a large amount of youthful political polemic. With *Far From the Madding Crowd* and *The Return of the Native* behind him, his literary sensibility would have been offended to the point of exclusion by such excesses. And he may well have remembered the criticism of the political material made by the original readers of *The Poor Man and the Lady* ten years before.

The novels of Hardy were to be deeply influenced by those three readers of *The Poor Man and the Lady*. After his failure to publish his novel in 1868, he decided that the advice of his very experienced readers should be heeded to the letter. In *The Life* he concluded that "the satire was obviously pushed too far." It was surprising for him to find "that, in the opinion of such experienced critics, he had written so aggressive and even dangerous a work." Meredith had, in fact, warned him that if he published *The Poor Man and the Lady*, "the press would be about his ears like hornets." And he advised Hardy either to rewrite the story and tone down the political content, "Or what would be much better, put it away altogether for
the present, and attempt a novel with a purely artistic purpose, giving it a more complicated 'plot' than was attempted with *The Poor Man and the Lady.*" Hardy chose the second alternative, applied it "too literally" as he later saw it, and wrote *Desperate Remedies* which was simply crammed with plot and which avoided political rancour almost completely.

The commitment to plot is forewarned in the epigraph to the novel. It is a quotation from Sir Walter Scott:

> Though an unconnected course of adventure is what most frequently occurs in nature, yet the province of the romance-writer being artificial, there is more required from him than mere compliance with the simplicity of reality.

This, as Millgate says, "serves as an apologia for the contrivances of the plot and points towards such elements in the story as the heightened, melodramatic quality of much of the action." This was a volte face after *The Poor Man and the Lady* which was subtitled "A Story with no Plot;" and Hardy considered *Desperate Remedies* "the melodramatic novel quite below the level of *The Poor Man and the Lady.*" Continual complaints about the formal demands of the novel originate from this time when, against "his natural grain" and judgement, Hardy made great concessions to the commercial and formal demands of the novel.

In the same way Hardy also toned down his political venom. There is still some social bitterness in *Desperate Remedies* but the political comment has been drastically cut to a few outbursts that do not have central relevance to the theme. But these outbursts are important for this thesis since they confirm that Hardy still harboured the same old political feelings. Early in the novel, just as Flaubert had done a few years before, Hardy attacks the bourgeois shopkeeper, not only for what he represents but also for his lack of human sympathy:

> Ancient potwallopers, and thriving shopkeepers, in their intervals of leisure, stood at their shop-doors—their toes hanging
over the edge of the step, and their obese waists hanging over their toes—and in discourses with friends on the pavement formulated the course of the improvident, and reduced the children's prospects to a shadow-like attenuation. The sons of these men (who wore breastpins of a sarcastic kind, and smoked humourous pipes) stared at Cytherea with a stare unmitigated by any of the respect that had formerly softened it.  

Here, as always, the basis for Hardy's complaint is the lack of respect for another's individuality. This is also at the root of his contempt for the class system:

Miss Aldclyffe, like a good many others in her position, had plainly not realized that a son of her tenant and inferior could have become an educated man, who had learnt to feel his individuality, to view society from a bohemian standpoint, far outside the farming grade in Carriford parish, and hence he had all a developed man's unorthodox opinions about the subordination of the classes.  

Hardy's portrayal of Miss Aldclyffe follows that of Squire Allenville in *An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress* in that, as squire, she has complete control over her tenants; and the injustice of such a situation is again emphasised by the fact that her decisions over Farmer Springrove's situation are founded upon the whims of feminine fancy just as Squire Allenville's were through his daughter.

Also in *Desperate Remedies* can be found what must be the blackest scene of poverty that Hardy ever described. Surprisingly, it is urban poverty; and alcohol is seen as the immediate cause, though not the fundamental one. Alcoholism here is treated quite differently from its somewhat comic depiction in *Far From the Madding Crowd*; it is even described more realistically than the pathetic addiction of John Durbeyfield:

A few chairs and a table were the chief articles of furniture in the third-floor back room which they occupied. A roll of baby linen lay on the floor; beside it a pap-clogged spoon and an overturned tin pap-cup...A baby was crying against every chairleg, the whole family of six or seven being small enough to be covered by a washing-tub. Mrs Higgins sat helpless, clothed in a dress which had hooks and eyes in plenty, but never one opposite the other, thereby rendering the dress almost useless as a screen to the bosom....
It was a depressing picture of married life among the very poor of a city. Only for one short hour in the whole twenty-four did husband and wife taste genuine happiness. It was in the evening, when, after the sale of some necessary article of furniture, they were under the influence of a quartar of gin.

Poverty is an important theme in Desperate Remedies. The financial vulnerability of Cytherea and her brother forces her into an undesired marriage:

"Marrying for a home—what a mockery it was!" And while one can agree with Kenneth Boulding that "art almost depends on inequality and injustice," Desperate Remedies still exposes its author as more dissatisfied than most with the socio-political structure of English society—and this despite Hardy's conscious effort to mellow his political radicalism.

With his next novel, Under the Greenwood Tree, Hardy made even greater concessions to commercial demands. Encouraged by John Morley's praise of his rustic characters in The Poor Man and the Lady, and by similar favourable reactions in the Spectator and Athenaeum reviews of Desperate Remedies, Hardy designed a short novel around these rustic types, using some of the manuscript of The Poor Man and the Lady. With nearly a decade of living in London behind him, he had the experience to know what aspects of rural life would be likely to please his predominantly urban readership. And Under the Greenwood Tree turned out to be his most popular novel in the nineteenth century.

Now over thirty, Hardy had no doubt outgrown excessive youthful enthusiasm for liberty and individualism. Yet it is hard to reconcile his previous political conscience with the depiction of rural life that appeared in Under the Greenwood Tree. In this novel there is little evidence of sympathy for the people he is describing. In effect, Hardy has taken on the patronizing tone of a sophisticated Londoner to describe the very rustics amongst whom he grew up. His avowed attempt to "draw the characters humourously,
without caricature." was not successful. As Robert Draffan has pointed out, Hardy's emphasis is on "the physical gaucherie of the group." And his attempt at humour produced "superciliousness, patronage, condescension, and arrogance in the portrayal of the choir." A particularly distasteful instance of Hardy's humour occurs in the description of the choir's interview with the vicar; Draffan puts it well when he calls it "an exercise in depreciation." One wonders how aware Hardy was of this rather distasteful element at the time he was writing the novel. The sympathy for the rustics that was apparent in the first two novels has diminished considerably; and since Hardy is perhaps best known for his rustic characters, it is a point that will be discussed again.

It is not at all surprising that Hardy later felt the need to apologize for the novel's treatment of its subject:

In rereading the narrative after a long interval there occurs the inevitable reflection that the realities out of which it was spun were material for another kind of study of this little group of church musicians than is found in the chapters here penned so lightly, even so farcically and flippantly at times. But circumstances would have rendered any aim at a deeper, more essential, more transcendent handling unadvisable at the date of writing.

These "circumstances" were, in part, commercial, and they led to a description of rural life that clearly had no relationship with the horrifying conditions that actually existed either at the time of writing, or in 1835, the year in which Hardy clumsily tried to set his novel. Under the Greenwood Tree shows none of the suffering from social inequality; there is no realistic social context. The hardship and bleak future that faced the Dorset rustics is ignored as Hardy provides something closer to a pastoral idyll:

"...That couple between 'em have heaped up so much furniture and victuals that anybody would think they were going to take hold the big end of married life first, and begin wi' a grown-up family."

With this idealising of rural life, Hardy went even further than he had
done with *Desperate Remedies* to avoid political content. The original version was, in fact, even less politically suggestive than the finalized one we have today. Millgate has shown that in the revisions Hardy made in 1896 and 1912 the social gap between Fancy and Dick was widened by making Geoffrey Day much more prosperous and by increasing the dialect of Dick. Thus the original version of *Under the Greenwood Tree* avoided overtones of class inequality and moved completely away from the spirit of *The Poor Man and the Lady*. Where Hardy had been writing from personal conviction, he was now a professional novelist, having mastered his trade very quickly.

But despite commercial success, Hardy was not at all proud of his newly found status. And through his thirty years as a novelist Hardy continued to demean novel-writing. It was "mere journey work." He "did not care much for a reputation as a novelist," and after *Jude the Obscure* decided to "abandon at once a form of literary art he had long intended to abandon at some indefinite time."

And in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, his next novel, one can see further evidence that this status of professional novelist made Hardy ill-at-ease. First of all, he makes his naive heroine into something of a successful novelist. Then he puts some very significant words into the mouth of Knight as he talks with the heroine, Elfride, about novel writing:

'Why don't you write novels, Mr. Knight?'
'Because I couldn't write one that would interest anybody.'
'Why?'
'For several reasons. It requires a judicious omission of your real thoughts to make a novel popular, for one thing.'

Nevertheless, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, like *Desperate Remedies*, shows that political matters are still nagging at Hardy. Stephen Smith's story has a close affinity with that of the hero of *The Poor Man and the Lady*; Stephen is yet another of Hardy's heroes who come from lowly social position but have a higher education. Using Stephen as a catalyst of this class prejudice he
hated so much, Hardy makes one of his strongest attacks on Victorian society, its class system being the main method of maintaining a minority control of the country.

One of the finest of Hardy's portrayals of class prejudice occurs when the Rev. Swancourt finally discovers that Stephen is not of high birth. Initially the vicar had high opinions of him—"You belong to a well-known ancient county family—not ordinary Smiths in the least"—and even when he found Stephen was not a member of the nobility, he was still sure of his breeding—"You may be only a family of professional men now." But the final discovery that Stephen is only "the son of one of my village peasants" is too much for him and he complains to his daughter:

He appeared a young man with well-to-do friends, and a little property; but having neither he is another man....And any man, on discovering what I have discovered, would also do as I do, and mend my mistake; that is, get shot of him again, as soon as the laws of hospitality will allow.

Then Hardy adds a masterly touch: "But Mr. Swancourt then remembered that he was a Christian. 'I would not, for the world, seem to turn him out of doors,' he added; 'but I think he will have the tact to see that he cannot stay long after this, with good taste.'" Mr. Swancourt is, of course, much more than a Christian; he is a vicar. Avoiding didacticism, Hardy has deftly shown how contrary to the true principles of Christianity class prejudice is.

In *A Pair of Blue Eyes* there is also some scathing social satire, most of which, after some hostile reaction, was deleted by Hardy for the book edition. This satire shows that social inequality and injustice still weighed heavily on Hardy's conscience, but finding socio-political comment still detrimental to his career, he again has to accept an "omission of your own thoughts."

It is in chapter 14 that the first strong satire appears. The recently
married Mrs Swancourt takes a drive in Hyde Park with her family, and tries to show her step-daughter how well she knows London society. After a long period of observation from the outside, she claims to have learnt about the "artificiality" of high society just as the farmer has learnt "the signs of nature":

'Just look at that daughter's-sister class of mamma in the carriage across there....The absorbing self-consciousness of her position that is shown by her countenance is most humiliating to a lover of one's country. You would hardly believe, would you, that members of a fashionable world, whose professed zero is far above the highest degree of the humble, could be so ignorant of the elementary instincts of reticence.'

'How?'

'Why, to bear on their faces, as plainly as on a phylactery, the inscription, "Do, pray, look at the coronet on my panels."' 82

There then follows the passage which has been compared to the probable style of The Poor Man and the Lady. Hardy deleted this part from the 1895 book edition. Mrs Swancourt is still speaking:

'...or, "Look at the leaves and pearls in my coronet;" or, "Look at the leaves pure and unmixed in mine. I don't say," they seem to go on saying to the shabby people, "that I wish you to think us connected with the Norman conquest of you, wretched Nobody-knows-who," or whatever the word of the season is for the poorer inhabitants of the country, "but we are, and there is our crest and significant motto."'

'O Mrs Swancourt!' said Elfride.

'But I much prefer the manners of my acquaintance of that class to the way some of us, with no title but much wealth, look at the strugglers for gentility. There's a specimen--there's another. The glance in them is modified to "0, moneyless ones, this bracelet I wear, weighing three-quarters of a pound, is real gold! Solid, you know--solid,--right through to the middle and out the other side."' 82

Hardy's distaste for snobbery can be seen throughout his novels, but it was never dealt with in such a bitter way. Though clearly aware of the detrimental effect such writing would have on his commercial success, it is interesting to see that Hardy can still not resist attacking the establishment classes.
Later, in Chapter 36, Hardy engaged in further satire. Here his target was the provincial equivalent of the fashionable world of London. He begins with an attack on the shop-keeper who gets harsher treatment than he did in *Desperate Remedies*. In these passages there were interesting amendments for the 1877 book edition. These will appear underlined, and the deleted original will follow in brackets. Again it will be noted how Hardy tones down his satire by omission, by reduction of affected language, and by replacement of exaggerated words:

'When we came here six months ago,' continued Mrs. Smith, 'though I had paid ready money (upright gold) so many years in the town, my friskier shopkeepers would (they'd) only speak over the counter. Meet them ('em) in the street half-an-hour after, and they'd treat me with staring ignorance of my face.'

'Look through ye as through a glass window (winder)!' 

'Yes (Ay), the brazen ones would. The quiet and cool ones (quiet-cool) would glance (glare) over the top of my (me) head, past my (me) side, over my (me) shoulder, but never meet my (me) eye. The gentle-modest would turn their faces south if I were coming east, flit down a passage if I were (was) about to halve the pavement with them.'

There then follows a passage that was completely deleted:

'There's that Joakes's wife—knew me a girl—married a poor little calico-needles-and-pins sort of drapery man, with nothing between him and starvation but his counter and yard measure. They scrimped and they pimped in that mite of a shop; entreated for my custom; and so they got on, till he's now Lord Mayor of St. Kirrs; and as for she, she's Lord—'

'Lord knows what, you may as well say.'

'Well, that woman, after talking to me by the half-hour in her shop, and getting her shop-maids to push all sorts of rubbish into my hands, which I have bought only to oblige them many a time, has met me an hour after, when sunning herself among her dress acquaintance on the pavement, looked as if she'd been shot at catching sight of me, with my honest bundles and baskets a-coming along, and edged all in a consternation round the corner, to escape meeting and speaking to me. You see they can't afford very well to do the stranger to your face, for fear of losing your custom, so they wamble off.'

After this, there are more amendments:

'There was the spruce young bookseller would play the same tricks; the butcher's daughters; the upholsterer's young men. Hand in glove when doing business out of sight with
you; but caring nothing for an old woman when playing the gen-
teeel away from all signs of their trade (but ready to spend
money rather than speak when cutting their dash outside the
door.)

Hardy then goes on to attack the whole political hierarchy of the provin-
cial English town:

'Why, 'tis all over town. Our worthy Mayor alluded to
it in a speech at the dinner last night of the Every-Man-his-
own-Maker Club (Every-Man-his-own-Hero Club which presented
him with a beautiful silver smoking service and emboosed set
of spitoons, for his able support of the Soul-above-Shops
Association; which I am happy to say we have started in op-
position to the Honour-your-Betters Society, kept up by the
country squires).'

'And what about Stephen?' urged (screamed), Mrs. Smith
(ecstatically, cutting a caper).

'Why your son has been fêted (feeted) by deputy-gover-
nors and Parsee princes and nobody-knows-who in India; is
hand in glove with nabobs, and is to design a large palace,
and cathedral, and hospitals, colleges, Halls, and fortifica-
tions, by the general consent of the ruling powers, Christian
and Pagan alike (Christian, Pagan and Devilish alike).'

'Twas sure to come to the boy,' said Mr. Smith unas-
sumingly (Mrs. Smith grandly).

'Tis in yesterday's St. Laurence's Gazette (Kirrs Chron-
icle), and our worthy Mayor in the chair introduced the sub-
ject into his speech last night in a masterly manner. ("Yes,"
said he, "St. Kirrs has her glories, gentlemen. And I blush
with pleasure when I find recorded in today's paper the in-
tellectual and artistic prowess of our friend Mr. Stephen
Smith, son of Mr. John Smith, so well known to us all. Strat-
ford has her Shakespeare, Penzance has her Davy, Bristol has
her Chatterton, London has her Heaven-knows-who, and St. Kirrs
has her Smith. Yes, fellow townsman," he went on in the chair,
"we may well be proud to find that Mr. John Smith, to whom,
humble in life as he is, I am related on the mother's side,
was a native of this town—"

'Not at all,' said John. 'I wer born in Snoke's Hut,
Duddlecomelane, half a mile out of St. Kirrs; I'll take my
oath I wer!'

'Half a mile's nothing where glory's concerned; don't be
so foolish particular, John! Quarrel wi' your own bread and
cheese—that's you.) 'Twas very good of the worthy Mayor in
the chair, I'm sure.'

In view of these considerable changes—Chapter XXXVI is reduced to only just
over five pages—it is surprising to find Hardy adding the following foot-

note to the Preface in 1912:
To the ripe-minded critic of the present [book] an immaturity in its views of life and in its workmanship will of course be apparent. But to correct these by the judgement of later years, even had correction been possible, would have resulted, as with all such attempts, in the disappearance of whatever freshness and spontaneity the pages may have as they stand. 87

Although the changes in A Pair of Blue Eyes are not extensive, they were corrections made "by the judgement of later years." This footnote to the Preface, like the disguised authorship of The Life, shows the extent of deception Hardy used to shape his public image.

Nevertheless, despite deletions of socio-political matter from chapters XIV and XXXVI, Hardy still left some strong criticism of society in A Pair of Blue Eyes. And, as before, the general theme is against the ruling class, against the systems in society that maintain high standards of living for a few at the expense of the majority. Early in the story Hardy makes a mockery of the peerage system with the amusing story of how the haughty Luxellians obtained their status as peers. The original Lord Luxellian had been a hedger and ditcher who lent his smock frock to King Charles the Second; he was made a peer for this service. An attack is also made on the sterile formality of aristocratic life. The natural instinct of the Luxellian children is to escape from their parents home with Elfride: "And sleep at your house all night? That's what I mean by coming to see you. I don't care to see people with hats and bonnets on, and all standing up and walking about." 89

The pressure of class differences dominates this novel more than any other of Hardy's except The Hand of Ethelberta. One of the reasons for this is the close parallel between Stephen and Hardy himself; Hardy was clearly airing some of his own personal grievances against the class system. But apart from this, there is another interesting description of urban life in London where the difference between rich and poor is so great:
Bede's Inn has this peculiarity, that it faces, receives from, and discharges into a bustling thoroughfare speaking only of wealth and respectability, whilst its postern abuts on as crowded and poverty-stricken a network of alleys as are to be found anywhere in the metropolis. The moral consequences are, first, that those who occupy chambers in the Inn may see a great deal of shirtless humanity's habits and enjoyments without doing more than look down from a back window; and second, they may hear wholesome though unpleasant social reminders through the medium of a harsh voice, an unequal footstep, the echo of a blow or fall, which originates in the person of some drunkard or wife-beater, as he crosses and interferes with the quiet of the square. Characters of this kind frequently pass through the Inn from a little foxhole of an alley at the back, but they never loiter there.\textsuperscript{90}

This urban description, and another of the London docks, which are both quite irrelevant to the story, must have been included by Hardy out of personal sympathy for the plight of the poor. But what is quite amazing is that Hardy does not on any occasion mention the equally depressing suffering of the poor in his own county. The suspicion that he has more interest at this time in the commercial potential of his urban readership is hard to avoid. The great popular success of \textit{Under the Greenwood Tree}, and of his next novel \textit{Far From the Madding Crowd}, must be attributed primarily to an ability to kindle the urban appetite for pastoral fantasy.

Hardy's somewhat reprehensible avoidance of the realities of rural life in his native Dorset manifests itself most clearly in \textit{Far From the Madding Crowd}. So far we have seen Hardy as a satirist of the upper classes of London and the provinces, and as a sympathiser, to varying degrees, with those less fortunate. Yet it is essential to see that those he supports are not the rural peasants and labourers; Egbert, the Springroves, and Stephen Smith are in a class just above the poorest. Hardy came from the same situation as his early heroes, and it is thus not surprising that his moral support and interest is behind them. It is not sufficiently recognized, however, that his attitude to the poorest rustic stock was not one of real sympathy. This, of course, goes against the most popular image of Hardy as a novelist
of the Dorset peasantry. And it is therefore all the more important to set the record straight. We have already noted the lack of sympathy for the rustics in *Under the Greenwood Tree*. This was accounted for by the demands of Hardy's social career. The same may be said for *Far From the Madding Crowd*. And with this later novel it really becomes apparent that Hardy has very little interest in the great social injustice being experienced by the peasant labouring class of his part of the country.

In *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Hardy's most complete study of peasant life, his portrayal of the peasant is far from sympathetic. Oak, again a man just above the status of the peasant, is the centre of interest for Hardy. This hero puts the rustics to shame; where he is capable, they are incapable: "The assemblage—belonging to that class of society which casts its thought into the form of feeling, and its feelings into the form of commotion—set to work with a remarkable confusion of purpose." In noting their inability to cope with a fire, their helplessness when the sheep fall sick, their easy corruption by Troy, and their pathetic failure to warn Bathsheba of Troy's return, it is hard to claim the rustics have been idealised. "Drink, Shepherd, and be friends, for tomorrow we may be like her," says Mark Clark, referring to the dead Fanny, and he sums up the essence of the failure of the rustics which puts them only a little above animal life: a *carpe diem* attitude which never lets them plan ahead or adapt to change. Thus although one enjoys the humour extracted from Joseph Poorgrass, one must admit that he is pathetically shy, over-superstitious, easily manipulated and deceived, and mentally simple. His own comment on his condition at the supper party might well apply to his condition throughout life: "I be all but in liquor, and the gift is wanting in me." Hardy had intended his novel to have even more humour at the rustics' expense, but, as Gittings writes, his "heavy-handed rustic humour" was considerably toned down under the influence
of Lionel Stephens, seven pages being omitted between chapters XXII and XXIII. It is therefore surprising that Hardy showed such concern about his representation of the rustic characters—he expressed the hope to his illustrator for the serialised edition that "the rustics, although quaint, may be made to appear intelligent and not boorish at all,"—for it is clear that, in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, he had reservations about their way of life. In fact, the rustics in *Far From the Madding Crowd* are merely artistic vehicles for comic relief from the serious concerns of the main plot.

Hardy had, indeed, done everything possible to avoid the controversial subject of agricultural unrest. This fact has been ably documented by Millgate. He shows that the setting of the novel, Puddletown, was one of the least affected areas of unrest. A report in the *Daily Telegraph* on April 30th, 1872 finds it to be "a model Dorsetshire village" where the traditional way of life still provided relative prosperity. Hardy had chosen "a village where unionisation had not yet become an issue." And further, he set his story in the past, thereby avoiding specificity and controversy. Nowhere in *Far From the Madding Crowd* is there the slightest indication of the unrest that existed in Dorset during the period Hardy was writing the novel.

As soon as the commercial success of *Far From the Madding Crowd* was assured, Leslie Stephen was urging Hardy to write another novel as quickly as possible. Because of this, Hardy later claimed he was forced to write *The Hand of Ethelberta* before the real impact of *Far From the Madding Crowd* could be assessed. The following entry in *The Life*, in making an excuse for the quality of *The Hand of Ethelberta* out of these circumstances, shows how heavily Hardy depended upon the critical reception of his novels:

This was the means of urging Hardy into the unfortunate course of hurrying forward a further production before he was aware of what there had been of value in his previous one: before learning, that is, not only what had attracted the
public, but what was of true and genuine substance on which to build a career as a writer with a real literary message.\textsuperscript{99}

Hardy goes on to explain that he did not wish to be typecast as a rural novelist—"...he had not the slightest intention of writing forever about sheep-farming"—and claims that The Hand of Ethelberta "had nothing whatever in common with anything he had written before." This last claim is not really true: The Hand of Ethelberta is based on the social satire that this thesis has traced through Hardy's early career. It is fair to say, however, that social satire had not been prominent; only in the unpublished The Poor Man and the Lady had it played a major role.

Thus in The Hand of Ethelberta the full impact of Hardy's socio-political satire became fully evident to the public for the first time. And it is quite possible that Hardy drew from his manuscript of The Poor Man and the Lady extensively for satiric material, thereby preparing it for publication as An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress two years later. The Hand of Ethelberta, however, was not successful. Rutland's early claim that "of social satire Hardy was incapable" has remained unchallenged. Irving Howe has gone so far as to call the novel "inexecrable." Hardy's failure can perhaps be traced to his social position and to his temperament. Juvenalian satire demands an exuberance, a gusto that a writer like Dickens had. Hardy was not the kind of writer who had this quality; he was too much of an introvert and not the kind of person to argue vigorously in public life. Steele's dictum that "There is a certain impartiality necessary to make what a man says bear any weight with those he speaks to," may well reflect an attitude from an earlier age, but it still points to the weakness of Hardy's satire. Hardy was too removed from upper class society, too bitter towards it, so that his satire appears as vicious and narrow-minded, and motivated by a deep grudge. As Arthur Pollard has written:
Satire is always acutely conscious of the difference between what things are and what they ought to be. The satirist is often a minority figure; he cannot, however, afford to be declared an outcast. For him to be successful his society should at least pay lip-service to the ideas he upholds. If it does, he is placed in a more subtle and potentially more effective position than that of simple denouncer of vice. He is then able to exploit more fully the differences between appearance and reality and especially to expose hypocrisy.\textsuperscript{105}

In his early novels Hardy comes across as a writer with a grudge; much of his criticism of the upper classes is dangerously close to inverted snobbery. And this tendency was probably stimulated by his marriage to a woman socially higher than himself who complained that in \textit{The Hand of Ethelberta} too many of the characters were servants.\textsuperscript{106}

Nevertheless, the harsh criticism, or more often the unqualified dismissal, of \textit{The Hand of Ethelberta} is not fully deserved. The tendency towards authorial invective in his satire is replaced largely by plot manipulation. The satirical situations are set up primarily through Ethelberta's rise into the upper classes by her first marriage and through her subsequent double life during which she has to hide her origins while she searches for a second husband. In achieving maximum effect from this situation, Hardy has utilized the seventeenth century Comedy of Manners techniques of theme, characterization and convention, and humour. With the resonances of this approach to social problems, and with situations portraying the hypocrisies and inequalities instead of Hardy's direct authorial voice, there is a great improvement. In achieving this, Hardy was perhaps again acting on the advice of Leslie Stephen, whose letters, Millgate says, "reflect editorial hesitancy about Hardy's habitual directness."\textsuperscript{107}

In \textit{The Hand of Ethelberta} Hardy manages to control his emotions over the predominantly political content almost all the time. For example, the precarious situation of Ethelberta is not exploited excessively, though Hardy could have made many authorial comments on the prejudice it exposes. Instead
he generally lets the situation speak for itself. Lady Petherwin's outburst during an argument with Ethelberta thus comes as a great surprise that shocks the reader to great effect: "Then you are an ungrateful woman, and wanting in natural affection for the dead! Considering your birth—"

Only rarely is there a direct statement on the hypocrisy of Ethelberta's predicament: "'A few weeks hence,' she thought, 'when Menlove's disclosures make me ridiculous, he may slight me as a lackey's girl, an upstart, an adventuress, and hardly return my bow in the street.'"

In making Ethelberta's father a butler—"working for his living as one among a peculiarly stigmatized and ridiculed multitude"—Hardy heightens the social aspect of her situation. And Ethelberta's two brothers produce another kind of foil to Ethelberta; they can justifiably be seen as fore­shadowing the emerging proletariat. Where Ethelberta endeavours to join the aristocracy, her brothers are proudly disdainful of it and await its down­fall:

'My brothers, you perceive,' said she, 'represent the respect­able British workman in his entirety, and a touchy indi­vidual he is, I assure you, on points of dignity, after im­bibing a few town ideas from his leaders. They are painfully off-hand with me, absolutely refusing to be intimate, from a mistaken notion that I am ashamed of their dress and manners; which, of course, is absurd.'

Sol especially has little respect for the aristocracy. In one of the finest parts of the novel, when he and the aristocratic Edgar Mountclere journey from London to Dorset, Hardy manages to keep the class antipathy simmering just below the boiling point. The closest they come to arguing is when Sol uses Mountclere's status to persuade a publican to open his doors in the middle of the night:

'Don't be a fool, young chopstick,' exclaimed young Mount­clere. 'Get the door opened.'

'I will—in my own way,' said Sol testily. 'You mustn't mind my trading upon your quality, as 'tis a case of necessity. This is a woman nothing will bring to reason but an appeal to
the higher powers. If every man of title was as useful as you are tonight, sir, I'd never call them lumber again as long as I live.'

'Thow singular!'
'There's never a bit of rubbish that won't come in use if you keep it seven years.'

Sol is not using "lumber" in the North American sense of timber. Lumber, in Hardy's time, would have meant "disused articles of furniture and the like, which only take up room: useless odds and ends." Sol's image of lumber is repeated by him later with revolutionary implication when he upbraids the newly installed Viscountess Ethelberta for deserting her class: "Berta, you have worked to false lines. A creeping up among the useless lumber of our nation that'll be the first to burn if there comes a flare. I never see such a deserter of your own lot as you be!" Ethelberta, feeble in defence of her position, tells Sol, "It is absurd to let republican passions so blind you to fact," and claims that a family with a long historical background has great universal appeal. This gives Sol the chance to make another potent political statement: "'I don't care for history. Prophecy is the only thing can do poor men any good.'"

Having created so many situations which show the social inequalities of his time, Hardy would seem to have had no need to resort to authorial sarcasm. But he did: "Neigh, and the general phalanx of cool men and celebrated club yawners, were so much affected that they raised their chronic look of great objection to things, to an expression of scarcely any objection at all." And he still had to have his occasional attack on the nobility:

'The way of marriage,' said Ethelberta....Yes, I must try that way....I must buy a "Peerage" for one thing, and a "Baronetage," and a "House of Commons," and a "Landed Gentry," and learn what people are about me. I must go to Doctors' Commons and read up wills of the parents of any likely gudgeons I may know. I must get a Herald to invent an escutcheon of my family, and throw a genealogical tree into the bargain in consideration of my taking a few second-hand heirlooms of a pawnbroking friend of his. I must get up sham ancestors,
and find out some notorious name to start my pedigree from. It does not matter what his character was; either villain or martyr will do, provided that he lived five hundred years ago. It would be considered far more creditable to make good my descent from Satan in the age when he went to and fro on the earth than from a ministering angel under Victoria. 118

Yet this hurried novel—it was researched and written in less than a year—gives intermittent evidence that the improvement of Hardy's craft in Far From the Madding Crowd was being maintained. His use of setting and scenery as a means of amplifying and enriching the story, which was to be such an effective technique in his later novels, is continuing to develop. At the ruins of Corfe Castle, for example, the ravages of time upon the ruins comment for Ethelberta upon her social aspirations:

Persons waging a harassing social fight are apt in the interest of the combat to forget the smallness of the end in view; and the hints that perishing historical remnants afforded her of the attenuating effects of time even upon great struggles corrected the apparent scale of her own. She was reminded that in a strife for such a ludicrously small object as the entry of drawing-rooms, winning, equally with losing, is below the zero of the true philosopher's concern. There could never be a more excellent reason than this for going to view the meagre stumps remaining from flourishing bygone centuries, and it had weight with Ethelberta this very day. 119

But as yet Hardy still has to rely on didactic authorial direction to communicate the significance of the setting. This problem is even more evident in his description of Enckworth Court where Hardy wants the reader to draw a parallel between the deceptive façade of the building and that of its owner:

Without attempting to trace an analogy between a man and his mansion, it may be stated that everything here, though so dignified and magnificent, was not conceived in quite the true and eternal spirit of art. 120

And the discussion of the refacing of Enckworth Court is ended with the statement: "as long as nobody knew the truth, pretense looked just as well." Hardy is too anxious not to let the significance escape the read-
er. It is perhaps this lack of confidence in communicating with the reader that has, up to this point, led Hardy to direct political statements. Nevertheless, The Hand of Ethelberta is the last novel in which Hardy uses his socio-political satire. As Hardy finally comes to terms in his last novels with the technical problems of his craft, the political message is absorbed harmoniously into the aesthetic structure.

There is another matter in which The Hand of Ethelberta is a pivotal novel in Hardy's career. D.H. Lawrence was the first to point out the new attitude in this novel to the conflict between emotion and reason:

The Hand of Ethelberta is the one almost cynical comedy. It marks the zenith of a certain feeling in the Wessex novels... that the best thing to do is to kick out the craving for "Love" and substitute common sense, leaving sentiment to the minor characters.

This novel is a shrug of the shoulders, and a last taunt to hope, it is the end of the happy endings, except where sanity and a little cynicism again appear in The Trumpet-Major, to bless where they despise. It is the hard, resistant, ironical announcement of personal failure, resistant and half-grinning. It gives way to violent, angry passions and real tragedy, real killing of beloved people, self-killing. Till now, only Elfride among the beloved, has been killed; the good men have always come out on top.  

With this change of attitude in the novels, the general outlook on life becomes parallel with the political outlook. Up to this point, the positive and hopeful endings of Desperate Remedies, Under the Greenwood Tree and Far From the Madding Crowd have run counter to Hardy's political views and expectations. But Southerington's claim that, at the time of this change in attitude of the novels, Hardy "appears to have had no clear understanding of what was happening to him," is quite wrong. Poems that were written more than ten years before The Hand of Ethelberta, like "Hap" and "Neutral Tones," show that Hardy had long felt that "joy lies slain" and that "love deceives, and wrings with wrong." The earlier tragedy of Fanny Robin also indicates that Hardy had long been pessimistic about life's dilemma between
emotion and reason.

The change in Hardy's novels at this time was not due to a newly evolving Weltanschauung but to his greater emancipation from strict adherence to commercial demands. More secure after the success of *Far From the Madding Crowd*, he became less obliged to carry out, as his Henry Knight had expressed it, "a judicious omission of your real thoughts to make a novel popular." *The Poor Man and the Lady*, it will be recalled, was written without commercial restraints and its conclusion reflects pessimism not only in the political attitude but also in the love story. For the mature Hardy, this convergence of the political and the philosophical pessimism obviates the need to rely on direct political statements or heavy political satire. The political aspects become assimilated into the novel's general outlook.

In order to evaluate this integrated political expression of the later novels, a different critical approach must be taken. The basis for an effective approach can be found in Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*. 
Footnotes


4 The word is from J. Hillis Miller, *Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970).

5 F. Hardy, pp. 15-16.

6 Ibid., p. 49.

7 Ibid., p. 50.


9 F. Hardy, pp. 48-49.

10 Ibid., p. 47.

11 Ibid., p. 54.

12 Ibid., p. 56.

13 Ibid., p. 57.


16 F. Hardy, p. 38.
Due to his precarious situation as a resident of Britain, Marx had to participate in politics with great discretion. Accordingly he left little information on his work with the Reform League.

The theme of Hillis Miller, *Distance and Desire*.

34
Morgan, p. 89.

35

36
Morgan, p. 90.

37

38
This theory of borrowings is questioned by Guerard, p. 31.

39

40

41
Weber gives no references, and I can find nothing to corroborate his claims.

42

43

44
Ibid., p. 44.

45
Ibid., p. 23.

46
Ibid., p. 57.

47
Ibid., p. 52.

48
Ibid., p. 37.

49
There is an interesting similarity in *An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress* and *The Woodlanders*: compare the scenes where Egbert and Giles return to the site of their former homes. *An Indiscretion*, pp. 112-13 and *The Woodlanders* (London, 1912), ch. XXVI.
50  T. Hardy, *An Indiscretion*, p. 35.

51  F. Hardy, p. 61.

52  Ibid., p. 62.

53  Ibid.

54  Ibid.

55  Ibid., p. 63.

56  T. Hardy, *Desperate Remedies* (London, 1912), title page.

57  Millgate, p. 31.

58  F. Hardy, p. 64.

59  Ibid., p. 85.

60  T. Hardy, *Desperate Remedies*, ch. I.

61  Ibid., ch. XI.

62  Ibid., ch. XVI.

63  Ibid., ch. XIII.

64  Kenneth Boulding, Address at Brigham Young University in February, 1972.

65  Morgan, p. 94.


67  Ibid., p. 58.
68  Draffan, p. 57.
69  Harold Orel, ed., Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings (Kansas, 1966), p. 6.
70  See Rutland, p. 153.
71  T. Hardy, Under the Greenwood Tree (London, 1912), 5, ch. I.
72  F. Hardy, p. 179.
73  Ibid., p. 99.
74  Ibid., p. 291.
75  T. Hardy, A Pair of Blue Eyes (London, 1912), ch. XVII.
76  Ibid., ch. III.
77  Ibid.
78  Ibid., ch. IX.
79  Ibid.
80  Ibid.
81  Ibid., ch. XIV.
83  T. Hardy, A Pair of Blue Eyes, XXXVI and Tinsley's Magazine, XII, June 1873, p. 498.
84  Ibid.
85  Ibid., ch. XXXVI and pp. 498–99.
86  

87  
Orel, p. 8.

88  
Not ch. XXXV as Millgate says on p. 364.

89  
T. Hardy, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, ch. V.

90  
Ibid., ch. XIII.

91  
T. Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd* (London, 1912), ch. VI.

92  
See chs. VI, XXI, XXXVI and LII respectively.

93  
Ibid., ch. XLII.

94  
Ibid., ch. XXIII.

95  
Gittings, p. 190.

96  
F. Hardy, p. 97.

97  
Millgate, pp. 100-101.

98  
Ibid., p. 102.

99  
F. Hardy, p. 102.

100  
Ibid.

101  
Ibid., p. 103.

102  
Rutland, p. 106.

103  
104  

105  
Pollard, p. 3.

106  
See Howe, p. 41.

107  
Millgate, p. 105.

108  
T. Hardy, The Hand of Ethelberta (London, 1912), ch. X.

109  
Ibid., ch. XXXV.

110  
Ibid., ch. IX.

111  
Ibid., ch. XVII.

112  
Ibid., ch. XLIV.

113  

114  
T. Hardy, The Hand of Ethelberta, ch. XLVI.

115  
Ibid.

116  
Ibid.

117  
Ibid., ch. IX.

118  
Ibid., ch. XIV.

119  
Ibid., ch. XXXI.

120  
Ibid., ch. XXXVIII.

121  
Ibid.
122

123
Southerington, p. 80.

124

125

126
T. Hardy, A Pair of Blue Eyes, ch. XVII.
Initially, the choice of Pasternak as a means of approaching the political content of Hardy's later novels might not appear a logical one. There are, of course, the obvious cultural differences between the two writers. And Pasternak's life, though not ravaged by the Russian Revolution to the extent that many lives of Russian writers were, contrasts strongly with the comfortable Victorian existence that Hardy enjoyed. Furthermore, the fifty years that separate them only accentuate these fundamental differences in culture and life experience.

Even the early education of the two writers was carried out under quite dissimilar circumstances. Pasternak's father was one of Russia's leading painters, and his mother was a concert pianist. The family circle of friends included Tolstoy, Verhaeren, Rilke, Scriabin, Rachmaninov, Rubenstein, Serov, Vrubel and Levitan. And as he developed into a poet, Pasternak had no trouble meeting and befriending the leading Russian poets like Mayakovsky and Bely. All this is a complete contrast to the quiet rural setting of Hardy's youth. It is true that he had some contact with William Barnes and that Henry Moule stimulated his studies. But Hardy was essentially a self-made man, a Jude with an inferiority complex. Even when he was in London, with Robert Browning living in the next street, he made no closer contact with established writers than going to hear readings by Charles Dickens.

Although Hardy's isolation was to some extent circumstantial, it was predominantly the outcome of a personality trait that again contrasts with Pasternak. Hardy's withdrawn "aloofness" and the emotional warmth of Pasternak to a large extent follow the popular conceptions of the re-
strained Englishman and the passionate Slav poet. Their personalities can easily be separated with extracts from their autobiographies:

Hardy was popular—too popular almost—with his school-fellows, for their friendship at times became burdensome. He loved being alone, but often, to his concealed discomfort, some of the other boys would volunteer to accompany him on his homeward journey to Bockhampton. How much this irked him he recalled long years after. He tried also to avoid being touched by his playmates. One lad, with more insight than the rest, discovered the fact: 'Hardy, how is it that you do not like us to touch you?' This peculiarity never left him.

On the way home from school the name Scriabin, all in snow, tumbled from the concert bill on to my back. I brought it home with me on the lid of my school-satchel, water trickled from it on to the window sill. This adoration struck me more cruelly and no less fantastical than a fever. On seeing him, I would turn pale, only to flush deeply immediately afterwards for this very pallor. If he spoke to me my wits deserted me and amidst the general laughter I would hear myself answering something that was not to the point, but what exactly—I could never hear. I knew that he guessed everything but had not once come to my aid. This meant that he did not pity me, and this was just that unanswerable indivisible feeling for which I thirsted. This feeling alone, the more fiery it was, the more it protected me from the desolation which his incommunicable music inspired.

In the same way, their novels show the emotion of Pasternak and the restraint of Hardy. Compare Pasternak's transcendental emotion with Hardy's ironic detachment in these two funeral scenes:

What with sorrow, standing for many hours on end, lack of sleep, the deep-toned singing and the dazzling candles by night and day as well as the cold he had caught, Yura was filled with a sleepy, ecstatic, gentle befuddlement of grief and exaltation.

When his mother had died ten years earlier he had been a child. He could still remember his tears of inconsolable grief and terror. In those days his self was not important to him....What mattered then was everything outside and round him. From every side, the external world pressed in on him, dense, undeniable, tangible as a forest, and the reason why he was so shaken by his mother's death was that, at her side, he had lost himself in the forest, and now suddenly found her gone and himself alone in it....That inaccessible lofty heaven bowed its head quite low, right down to the hem of his nurse's skirt when she was telling him about the things of God; it was close and inaccessible like the tops of hazel bushes in the gully when you pulled down their branches and picked their nuts....Now it was quite different....Now he was
afraid of nothing, neither of life nor of death: everything in the world, each thing in it, was named in his dictionary. He felt he was on an equal footing with the universe.\footnote{5}

So the baby was carried in a small deal box, under an ancient woman's shawl, to the churchyard that night, and buried by lantern-light, at the cost of a shilling and a pint of beer to the sexton, in that shabby corner of God's allotment where He lets the nettles grow, and where all unbaptized infants, notorious drunkards, suicides, and others of the conjecturally damned are laid. In spite of the untoward surroundings, however, Tess bravely made a little cross of two laths and a piece of string, and having bound it with flowers, she stuck it up at the head of the grave one evening when she could enter the churchyard without being seen, putting at the foot also a bunch of the same flowers in a little jar of water to keep them alive. What matter was it that on the outside of the jar the eye of mere observation noted the words "Keelwell's Marmalade"? The eye of maternal affection did not see them in its vision of higher things.\footnote{6}

While Pasternak enters the adolescent mind and relives the emotions of a funeral, Hardy avoids emotion of a direct kind, striving instead for understatement and irony. This is a fundamental difference in their artistic visions. It comes in part from their individual and national traits, but, equally important, it arises out of their contrasting upbringings. After growing up in a richly cultural circle, Pasternak was able to speak with confidence and authority; but Hardy, the self-made man, often betrays insecurity and even an inferiority complex in his writing. Hardy suffered more than most from adverse reviews, especially from such condescending ones as the review of *Far From the Madding Crowd* by Henry James. He continually worked to hide his rural diction behind a more sophisticated literary style.

So there is often an undercurrent of bitterness and anger in Hardy's writing; and this disposition is at the root of his philosophical outlook. For, despite his own statements to the contrary, Hardy must be defined as a pessimistic novelist. The major novels after *Far From the Madding Crowd* are tragedies, and they offer increasingly less hope with each novel. *Far From the Madding Crowd* itself is almost a tragedy and its happy ending is most out
of place with the overall tone of the novel. In contrast, the positive and hopeful ending of Doctor Zhivago, in the sorrowful circumstances of Soviet Russia, underlines Pasternak's refusal to be pessimistic. Though Hardy believed in Evolutionary Meliorism, there is little to support this belief in his novels. Doctor Zhivago is a much better example of faith in the progress of the human race.

Finally, in this accumulation of differences, there is a partial contrast in the way these two poets came to novel-writing. Pasternak's novel emanated from the need to confront the ills of Soviet Russia. For the first twenty-seven years of his life, before the Revolution, he had lived in even greater comfort than Hardy. But the contrast of post-Revolutionary Russia, where "Stalin sought to convert all creative thinkers into 'engineers of the human soul,'" undoubtedly had a profound effect on his whole personality. The denial of free speech, the disappearance of some of his fellow writers, the occasional danger to his own life—all this at first led Pasternak to a scheme of avoidance in which he made his living translating old classics like the works of Goethe and Shakespeare. Only late in his life did the effects of Stalinism elicit in him a social and humanistic responsibility to portray the evils of his country in a novel. It is a classic case of the poet answering the call to defend his people; and this necessitated a change from lyric poetry to the prose novel:

I believe that it is no longer possible for lyric poetry to express the immensity of our experience. Life has grown too cumbersome, too complicated. We have acquired values that are best expressed in prose.

Fragmentary, personal poems are hardly suited to meditations on such obscure, new, and solemn events. Only prose and philosophy can attempt to deal with them.

Pasternak thus came to his novel with a sense of mission, and his religious awakening at this time was more than coincidental.
Hardy's move to novel-writing, as the first chapter has shown, was motivated partly by much more mundane considerations. Unable to get his verse published, he decided he would have a better chance with a novel. The change from poet to novelist was one of artistic regression for Hardy; his condescending attitude to the novel can be seen in the following rather untruthful account of this change: "For the relief of my necessities, as the Prayer Book puts it, I began writing novels, and made a sort of trade of it." The implication here of financial necessity can hardly be credited since Hardy was by this time a successful architect. Rather we must see him as wanting to get into print, partly from his ambition to be a writer, and partly because of experiences in London which left him with strong political views. This second, political motivation towards novel-writing has an affinity with Pasternak's and brings us to the similarities between the two writers.

Overriding these differences in culture, personality, upbringing, ambition, rhetoric and Weltanschauung are two very important similarities. First, both were novelists who were primarily of poetic temperament. Thus their perspective on life, and their expression of it, differs considerably from what is found in the conventional novel established in the nineteenth century. Second, Hardy and Pasternak share an unusual compassion for individual man in society. The writer is, of course, traditionally the conscience of society, but with these two the concern is much more pronounced than usual. This combination of a strong poetic and aesthetic sensibility together with an urgent concern for the individual in society leads to many similarities in their novels despite the underlying differences.

A helpful common influence here is Shakespeare. Pasternak often acknowledged his debt to him, having translated many of the tragedies into Russian. Hamlet is an essential element in the character of Pasternak's protagonist
Yury, as the first poem at the end of the narrative indicates. And the image of Romeo and Juliet as star-crossed lovers is related directly to the aspects of fate and love in *Doctor Zhivago*. Pasternak especially appreciated Stuart Hampshire's "unawaited, uncommon, and nevertheless true and sharp insight on Shakespeare's influence:"

The use of the wild dialogue of the characters of the under-plot, the short scenes that somehow, as in *Antony and Cleopatra*, suggest the great events across great distances, and, above all, in the suggestion of signs of the supernatural in the natural order. Pasternak's Russia can contain witches and metaphysical fools alongside images of ideal love escaping from corruption, in which the personalities and idiosyncrasies of the lovers and of the villain play no part. There is something Shakespearean, which I cannot now state clearly, in the sudden blending of the imagery and the philosophical reflections, in the affinities found between thought and natural appearances.

Many of Hampshire's points could be applied to Hardy just as well: the use of the dialogue of minor characters, the short scenes that fit economically into the total structure, the witches in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *The Return of the Native* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the rustic fools like Joseph Poorgrass, the ideal but often transitory love in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *Two on a Tower* and *Jude the Obscure*, and finally the "blending" of nature imagery and philosophy. The extent of Hardy's absorption in Shakespeare can be measured by the frequent use of quotations in his novels. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, for example, has at least seventeen Shakespeare quotations. And Hardy was particularly aware of the affinity his Wessex had with *King Lear*.

Hardy himself has noted another quality in Shakespeare that is shared by our two writers:

His distinction as a minister to the theatre is infinitesimal beside his distinction as a poet, man of letters, and seer of life, and that his expression of himself was cast in the form of words for actors and not in the form of books to be read was an accident of his social circumstances that he himself
despised. I would, besides, hazard the guess that he, of all poets of high rank whose works have taken a stage direction, will some day cease altogether to be acted, and be simply studied.  

Hardy and Pasternak were, like Shakespeare, poets; and they came to be novelists, as he became a playwright, through "an accident of social circumstances." And crucially, Pasternak and Hardy were lyric poets. This fact, despite Shelley's claim that "the distinction between poets and prose writers is a vulgar error," means that their novels have special qualities. First, both writers held a disdainfully poetic attitude to the traditional plausibility of events in the novel. Second, both writers use nature extensively as a means of expressing their ideas metaphorically. Third, their passive protagonists project a predominantly subjective point of view in their novels. In short, the novels of Hardy and Pasternak must be read as lyrical novels; failure to do this will result in limited appreciation, as conventional criticism, based on nineteenth century conceptions of the novel, has often shown.

The term "lyrical novel" is a useful one with which to approach Hardy and Pasternak. A good general definition is given by Ralph Friedman: "Lyrical novels are determined not by any preordained form but by poetic manipulation of narrative types which writers have found ready-made or have constructed within an existing tradition of the novel." But Friedman perhaps narrows his definition too much when he says that the lyrical novel uses the novel form to approach the function of a poem. He stresses, as does Georg Lukács in The Theory of the Novel, the subjectivity of the lyrical novel, and he sees its hero as generally being passive. Further, the lyrical novel "transcends the causal and temporal movement of narrative" as symbolic and metaphoric patterns assume precedence. And, like the lyric poem, the lyrical novel objectifies experience rather than man and his world; in the words of
Lukacs, it offers "not the totality of life but the artist's relationship with that totality." The individual aspects of the novels of Hardy and Pasternak, which have a common denominator in their being specifically related to poetic creation, will now be discussed in more detail.

One of the most controversial aspects of their novels is the use of fate and coincidence as structural technique. Critics have generally dismissed Hardy's use of improbable coincidence and fate, seeing it as an indication of his narrative weakness: "Le hasard est le plus grand romancier du monde," as Balzac said. Other critics, with more ingenuity and with more respect for Hardy, have seen the use of coincidence as an expression of his fatalistic philosophy. But an additional and more satisfactory answer can be found elsewhere. Being a lyricist by inclination, Hardy had limited interest in everyday realism in his writing. His gestures to reality in plot were largely perfunctory. The epigraph to his first published novel confirms his immediate awareness by stating that the romance-writer has to do more "than mere compliance with the simplicity of reality." Lack of verisimilitude in plot is especially noticeable in Hardy's later novels where plot was constructed more towards poetic expression—expression of, among other matters, the political feelings he had always had. The validity of approaching these later novels through a comparison with Doctor Zhivago is supported by the fact that Pasternak was also attacked for his use of coincidence and fate.

From the conventional standpoint, Pasternak would seem to have just the same impatience with the formal demands of the novel inherited from the nineteenth century. Such an attitude led some critics to underestimate Doctor Zhivago:

...it is clearly the author's first novel. Some transitions are clumsy and tenuous, the handling of the dialogue slovenly.
The reader occasionally loses track of who is talking to whom. The beginning of the book overwhelms one with too many undeveloped characters, in too many brief scenes; the end is shadowy, schematic, perhaps even unfinished. It is clear that the author is contemptuous of what other novelists consider correctness, and is so impatient to speak about what to him are the important things that he jumps over all trivial matter. When he wants to move to a new dialogue or scene, he does so in a few bold, brief sentences, ignoring continuity, point of view, and probability.

But more perceptive critics like Folejewski were aware that Pasternak knew what he was doing:

The apparent formlessness of *Doctor Zhivago*, which from the point of view of novelistic technique could be regarded as a handicap, turns out to be almost an artistic virtue. It is in effect a device for the author to show us the vicissitudes of individual human fate...the artistic impact and suggestiveness of the novel is far greater than in works where the author arranges and rearranges, remodels, re-shapes human thoughts and emotions so that they form a constructive pattern.

In other words, structure in *Doctor Zhivago* cannot be judged according to the formal demands of the nineteenth century novel.

Pasternak was well aware of the adverse criticism that his novel received for the avoidance of conventional techniques. In his interview with Ralph Matlaw he makes an amusing reference to such criticism:

I have frequently been asked about the coincidences in the book, particularly by young people of fifteen or sixteen, from whom I get many letters. Of course I made the coincidences on purpose, that is life, just as I purposely did not fully characterize the people in the book. For I wanted to get away from the idea of causality. The innovation of the book lies precisely in this conception of reality.

The most thorough explanations of the role of coincidence or fate in his conception of reality appear in letters to Jacqueline de Proyart and Stephen Spender. First he explains that the greatest novels are those which create their own individual world, their own reality:

When we take the great novel of the last century in its essence, extolled and idolised, for instance, by Henry James. When we examine the greatest, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Dickens,
Flaubert. When from the fabric of a *Madame Bovary*, we gradually, one after another, subtract characters, their development, situations, occurrences, the plot, the subject, the content... The second-rate diverting literature will leave no remainder after such a subtraction. But the name creation (or, for example, *David Copperfield*) lets remain the cardinal: the characterisation of reality as such; almost as of a philosophic category; as a member or link of our minds' universe; as life’s perpetual companion and surroundings.²⁶

Pasternak then defines his own "characterisation of reality" as a "philosophic category:"

> J'avais toujours eu la sensation, le goût de l'unité de tout ce qui est, de l'ensemble de ce qui vit et qui se meut, et se passe et se présente, de l'être, de la vie entière. J'aimais l'aspect de mouvements de toute sorte, les phénomènes de force, d'action, j'aimais à saisir ce monde agile de la turbulente universelle et de le rendre. Mais l'image de la réalité qui consistait de tous ces mouvements et les renfermait, ce "tout" qu'on nomme "monde" ou "univers" ce n'était pas un cadre immobile pour moi, une donnée ferme. Toute cette réalité (le tout du monde) était à son tour animée d'agitation de toute autre sorte que les mouvements visibles organiques ou matériels. Je ne peux déterminer ce sentiment que par comparaison. Comme si un tableau de peinture, une toile peinte pleine de tumulte et de commotion (La Ronde de nuit de Rembrandt, par exemple) avait été arrachée et emportée par le vent, par un mouvement extérieur aux mouvements peints et connus sur le tableau, par un mouvement inconnu. Comme si cette bourrasque gonflait la toile, la faisait voler, fuir éternellement et échapper en partie essentielle à la connaissance.²⁷

And in one of the letters to Spender, Pasternak finally explains his use of coincidence and fate in *Doctor Zhivago*:

> ...there is an effort in the novel to represent the whole sequence of facts and beings and happenings like some moving entireness, like a developing, passing by, rolling and rushing inspiration, as if reality itself had freedom and choice and was composing itself out of numberless variants and versions.²⁸

This "moving entireness" effectively describes the structure of *Doctor Zhivago*. Indeed, a satisfactory reading of the novel cannot be achieved without an understanding of this structural technique.

Almost as soon as the novel starts there is a coincidence so implausible, and so easily avoidable had it so been wished, that Pasternak is clearly announcing the symbolic intention of the novel. Yury’s father decides to
make a suicide jump from a train at exactly the spot from across the river where his son Yury is staying with relations. At the very moment when his father is killing himself, Yury is having a religious experience which ends in a fainting fit, and the coincidence is strengthened by the fact that when Yury regains consciousness he remembers that he has not prayed for his father for a long time. Further, on board the train at the time of the suicide are Komarovsky, Misha Gordon and Tiverzina; and staying in the country with Yury are Nicky Dudorov and Nikolay Vedenyapin. Thus in one of the first scenes of the novel Pasternak congregates a large cross-section of his characters. Such coincidental occurrences can be found throughout the novel. They form, as Gleb Struve claims, "part of a deliberate structural pattern."

The overall metaphoric structure—the "moving entireness"—of Doctor Zhivago has been studied by the Rowlands. For the purpose of this thesis it is only necessary to demonstrate a few of the major structures. The basic one is the selection of the three "wives" of Yury. Tonya, Lara and Marina represent the three classes of Russia, and the sequence of Yury's affiliation with them follows the order in which these classes dominated Russia: the upper class, the bourgeoisie and the working class. Another important structure is centred around Lara, who quite clearly symbolises Russia. The Rowlands write: "Pasternak has represented the forces struggling to mold Russia's destiny by parables of four men who, in different ways, love Larisa Guichard. These rivals have manifest socio-economic and political implications..." Two older men play roles in Lara's early life. Komarovsky uses Lara ruthlessly to his own ends just as he uses Russian society. Kologrivov, as a father figure to Lara, represents those wealthy men in pre-Revolutionary Russia who were not exploiters and who worked actively for reform. A third man, Pasha Antipov portrays the young proletarian idealist who helps achieve the Revolution only to find it turn sour on him. On a crucial night, Decem-
ber 27th, 1911, "Lara's actions afford a parable of Russia making disastrous choices at a fateful crossroads in her history." Lara has left the protection of Kologrivov and has set out with the aim of shooting Komarovsky. On her way she visits Pasha to confess the sins behind her relationship with Komarovsky. And while she is doing this, the fourth man in her life, Yury, drives past Pasha's house and sees the candle burning in the very room where Lara is confessing. Later in the evening Yury sees her attempt to kill Komarovsky. Yury's relationship with Lara is the climax of the book, exemplifying a transcendent ideal which no political or social action can erase. And although Komarovsky is able to take her away from Yury, and although Yury must finally take another "wife," the transcendent quality of the love between Yury and Lara remains. And even after the failure of the great ideals of the reformer Kologrivov, of the revolutionary Antipov, and of the poet Zhivago, there is still hope for Russia. Komarovsky is driven from the country, and Lara's daughter by Yury, Tanya, is found by Dudorov and Gordon. The true spirit of Russia lives on both in Tanya and in the poems Yury wrote under the inspiration of Lara, and the novel closes on a hopeful note.

Thus the characters in Doctor Zhivago must be seen metaphorically. Each one represents or portrays certain social or political values. The pattern of events between the characters therefore expresses Pasternak's view of the events surrounding the Russian Revolution. And at the very centre of this pattern is the autobiographical doctor who is a brilliant diagnostician but who cannot cure.

Such symbolic structuring of a novel, which relegates plausibility, characterisation and plot to secondary importance, would not have appealed to nineteenth century tastes in the novel. Hardy, however, would have been more receptive than most towards such technique; he was in fact working towards similar ends himself. The following two extracts show how Hardy was dis-
satisfied with some of the traditional and commercial demands of the novel:

Art is a disproportioning—(i.e. distorting, throwing out of proportion)—of realities, to show more clearly the features that matter in those realities, which, if merely copied or reported inventorially, might possibly be observed, but would more probably be overlooked. Hence "realism" is not art.35

The real, if unavowed, purpose of fiction is to give pleasure by gratifying the love of the uncommon in human experience, mental or corporeal....

The writer's problem is, how to strike the balance between the uncommon and the ordinary so as on the one hand to give interest, on the other to give reality.

In working out this problem, human nature must never be made abnormal, which is introducing incredibility. The uncommonness must be in the events, not in the characters; and the writer's art lies in shaping that uncommonness while disguising its unlikelihood, if it be unlikely.36

Many critics have appreciated how carefully the events in Hardy's major novels are structured. Jean Brooks has noted the careful construction in The Mayor of Casterbridge: "The movement of the plot, divided clearly into a prologue and six acts, or the stanzaic steps of a ballad, is one of reversal that recalls Greek tragedy." More significantly for this discussion, Millgate sees in The Return of the Native a new "search for expressionistic and broadly symbolic effects."38

But probably the most important appreciation of the structure of Hardy's novels came from Marcel Proust. This fact brings out another connection between Hardy and Pasternak; for where Proust admired Hardy, Pasternak called Proust the greatest of all living authors in 1921. In La Prisonnière (1923), which Hardy could have read since it is known he read the earlier volumes, Proust talks of "cette géométrie du tailleur de pierre" in the Wessex Novels:

...je revins aux tailleurs de pierre de Thomas Hardy. Vous vous rappelez assez dans Jude l'obscur, avez-vous vu dans la Bien-Aimée, les blocs de pierres que le père extrait de l'île venant par bateau s'entasser dans l'atelier du fils où elles deviennent statues; dans les Yeux bleus, le parallélisme des tombes, et aussi la ligne parallèle du bateau, et les wagons
contigus où sont les deux amoureux, et la morte; le paral-
lélisme entre la Bien-Aimée où l'homme aime trois femmes,
les Yeux bleus où la femme aime trois hommes, etc., et en-
fin tous ces romans superposables les uns aux autres, comme
les maisons verticalement entassées en hauteur sur le sol
pierreux de l'île.40

Hillis Miller, who himself quotes this celebrated passage, agrees that Hardy's
novels "almost always have an elegant balance of artificial design."

_Jude the Obscure_ has had the most critical attention for its structure.
An anonymous friend of Hardy was the first to remark on its form and Hardy
replied: "It required an artist to see that the plot is almost geometrically
constructed." In another letter Hardy describes the novel's structure
saying that "the involutions of the four lives must necessarily be a sort of
quadrille." Norman Holland's essay, "Jude the Obscure: Hardy's Symbolic
Indictment of Christianity," finds that Hardy's imagery "falls into com-
plexes and clusters," and sees "the strongest evidence in favour of the
symbolic interpretation is that, through it, so much of the imagery falls
into a pattern." Fernand Lagarde has made the most exhaustive study of
the structure of _Jude the Obscure_. He notes how equal in length the six
parts are despite the varying number of chapters. He then continues:

Chaque partie commence généralement par une notation de
temps et par une description qui servira de décor à l'action
pendant une période de la vie du héros. Chaque chapitre,
qui n'atteint jamais une dimension exagérée, isole un fait,
décrit un moment de l'action ou dépeint un état d'âme.46

Lagarde is able to find many other structural patterns. He sees the first
three parts of the novel as being "un échec social" for Jude, and the latter
three being his "échec sentimental." And each part is seen to begin with
a change in the life of Jude. Further symmetry is evident in the fact that
Arabella returns from abroad in the middle chapter of the book; and Lagarde
follows this symmetry by showing that the crucial event of each part occurs
in the middle chapter. He concludes: "La structure est organique et sert à
montrer que tous les moments de la tragédie sont en réaction mutuelle, que nulle péripétie n'est isolée." As Robert Heilman puts it: "the basic method is contrast." Thus Proust, Hillis Miller, Holland, Lagarde and Heilman have all supported and elaborated Hardy's own indication that Jude the Obscure is "almost geometrically constructed."

The second aspect of the poetic sensibility that characterises the novels of Hardy and Pasternak is a preoccupation with nature. The dominant metaphoric vehicle of expression in their lyric poetry was, of course, nature; trees, rain, snow, birds, hills, lakes and streams inspired them to their greatest poems. This is not unusual for a poet; but it must be stressed that their extensive use of nature in their novels was exceptional.

In Doctor Zhivago Pasternak uses nature as a contrast to the city. The city is the place of revolution, of mass culture, of the perversion of natural and individual life. The country, especially Varykino, is a haven from this alien life, where man can still be his own master:

What happiness it is to work from dawn to dusk for your family and yourself, to build a roof over their heads, to till the soil to feed them, to create your own world, like Robinson Crusoe, in imitation of the Creator of the universe, and to bring forth your life, as if you were your own mother, again and again. But Pasternak realised that such attitudes are outmoded in the twentieth century:

Where, in such a life, is pastoral simplicity in art to come from? When it is attempted, its pseudo-artlessness is a literary fraud, not inspired by the countryside but taken from academic bookshelves. The living language of our time is urban.

Yet Pasternak still uses nature throughout the novel. As Yevtushenko perceptively put it, Pasternak was "a man torn between city and country."

Pasternak believed that metaphors should not be invented but discovered in nature. Thus, for example, "The rowanberries are the bounty of nature,
including love." Yury sees the rowan tree as a foster mother breast-feeding birds in Winter and, in a later scene, it becomes a personification of Lara. The rowan tree finally manifests itself as a symbol for the procreative powers of life, for what inspires Yury and for what, in time, will return Russia to a fullness of life which the Revolution denied.

Description of nature also enables Pasternak to comment upon the destruction of life that arose out of the Revolution. In the following scene which comes after the Revolution, Yury is returning to Moscow from Varykino:

Shaggy village mongrels, turned savage, followed him at a respectful distance, exchanging glances as if to decide on the best moment to fall on him and tear him in pieces. They fed on carrion, did not disdain mice and eyed Yury from the distance, moving after him confidently as though waiting for something. For some reason they never went into a wood, and whenever he came near one they gradually fell back, turned tail and vanished.

The woods and the fields offered a complete contrast in those days. Deserted by man, the fields looked orphaned as if his absence had put them under a curse, but the forest, well rid of him, flourished proudly in freedom as though released from captivity.

He felt as if he saw the fields in the fever of a dangerous illness and the woods in the relief of convalescence, as if God dwelt in the woods and Satan were lurking in the fields.

Such nature description serves Pasternak not only as an artistic mode of expression, not only as a touchstone or contrast to the ravages of war and revolution, but also as a method of indirect political criticism. In the same scene, amongst the neglected farmlands, Yury tries to find food: "In the abandoned fields the ripe grain spilled and trickled on the ground." And having to eat the grain raw, "he stuffed it into his mouth and ground it with difficulty between his teeth." The political significance of this small detail is that the Bolsheviks had won election on the promise of bread.

For most readers Hardy's name is synonymous with nature; his long nature descriptions are the hallmark of his novels. Like Pasternak, he seems to
find his inspiration through images of nature and betrays a preference for the rural rather than the urban. But Hardy's novels, unlike Doctor Zhivago, often use a centralized location for a complete work. This setting personifies the mood of the novel and gives a powerful sense of unity. Perhaps Hardy's greatest achievement in this respect is the setting of Egdon Heath for The Return of the Native.

Egdon Heath is such a powerful setting that it might often be regarded as the main protagonist of the novel. Its characteristics embody the philosophy that Hardy had formulated through his reading of Darwin, Hartmann and Schopenhauer. It is a rewarding experience to visit the actual area that Hardy named Egdon Heath, and to follow the creativity of his mind as he adapted this bleak area into a symbol of determinism. As in his poetry—"Nature's Questioning," for example—nature seems almost to speak to him; its characteristics echo the abstract philosophizing of Hardy.

The essential quality of Egdon Heath, or of other nature settings used by Hardy, is a complex of meaning. As Terry Eagleton says: "Material objects...can become bearers of meaning: not merely signposts to a reality beyond themselves, but symbols which compress and articulate a complex world.... The objective world is a kind of language demanding sympathetic interpretation." He then goes on to quote from The Return of the Native: "To dwell on the heath without studying its meanings was like wedding a foreigner without learning his tongue." Hardy here seems to be reminding the reader that Egdon Heath has many "meanings." Thus when Bert Hornback says, "The main significance of this time-extending setting is in what it says about the characters who do the principal acting," he shows a tendency towards underestimating many of the other "meanings" that the heath offers. Nature then, in Hardy's mature novels especially, is used to portray all the complexities of the novel's subject. As the title of Eagleton's fine essay implies,
nature for Hardy is language.

The third and final basic similarity between Hardy and Pasternak is in their use of a passive protagonist who retreats to an inner subjective world. In this respect Jude and Yury are very similar; Tess, and to a lesser extent, Winterbourne and Oak can also be seen in this way. This characteristic has reverberations of both the classical hero buffeted by the gods, and the existential hero who finds meaning in life subjectively. But although the two writers create worlds shaped by fate, and characters driven from public life, these parallels should not be carried too far. Rather than emanating from a classical or existential influence, these traits are the result of poetic sensibility. The passive subjective outlook is that of the lyric poet, and fate is a common poetic structuring of life.

And since their heroes have some qualities of the poet, there is an unusual closeness between these two poet-novelists and their heroes. The autobiographical qualities in Doctor Zhivago are, of course, widely accepted. Hardy's case is more complex but is brilliantly summarized by Hillis Miller. He finds that in his last novels Hardy brings

the narrator and the protagonist closer and closer together until the disjunction between them necessary to his kind of fiction is no longer possible. Then his exploration of reality by means of words could best be carried on through the somewhat different temporal and interpersonal structure characteristic of his lyric poetry.

The most important aspect of this poeticising of the novel is that, in moving towards autobiography, these two writers are able to objectify experience. This is crucial for the exploration of their main complaint against modern society—the treatment of the individual. Through the "lyrical novel" Hardy and Pasternak are able to express their deep feelings of compassion for the predicament of their fellow men. This compassion, which we have already noted was shared with Shakespeare, is directed particularly towards the
individual in a changing society where there is greater human suffering through the conflict between old and new. Like Shakespeare, they do not speak from an established point of view; rather, they speak from their own experience and conscience, from their "sentiment of being" which Lionel Trilling sees to be the basis for an opinion of social or political life. And the subjective perspective, presenting the events of the novel from the protagonist's point of view, enables the author to portray this individual experience of life. In this way, the actual realities of daily life take precedence over abstract social and political values. Doctor Zhivago and the major novels of Hardy thus become what Joseph Campbell calls "creative mythology:"

Creative mythology, in Shakespeare's sense, of the mirror "to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure," springs not, like theology, from the dicta of authority, but from the insights, sentiments, thought, and vision of an adequate individual, loyal to his own experience of value. Thus it corrects the authority holding to the shells of forms produced and left behind by lives once lived. Renewing the act of experience itself, it restores to existence the quality of adventure, at once shattering and reintegrating the fixed, already known, in the sacrificial creative fire of the becoming thing that is no thing at all but life, not as it will be or as it should be, as it was or as it never will be, but as it is, in depth, in process, here and now, inside and out.64

The latter part of this definition is particularly apposite to Doctor Zhivago where Pasternak continually emphasises that "man is born to live, not to prepare for life."

Reshaping life: People who can say that have never understood a thing about life—they have never felt its breath, its heart—however much they have seen or done. They look on it as a lump of raw material which needs to be processed by them, to be ennobled by their touch. But life is never a material, a substance to be moulded. If you want to know, life is the principle of self-renewal, it is constantly renewing and remaking and changing and transfiguring itself, it is infinitely beyond your or my inept theories about it.66
Both Hardy and Pasternak see man in modern society as "a pygmy before the monstrous machine of the future." Yury, Tess and Jude are wasteland wanderers whose lives are disrupted by political and social events beyond their control. They become kenotic sufferers as their personalities clash with values and changes in society. Above all, it is the denial of free expression of personality which concerns these two writers.

This respect for individuality demands what Raymond Williams calls "fidelity to personal experience." Williams sees Doctor Zhivago as structured round "the conception of life as sacrifice, which in the end gives meaning to both the individual and the social histories." This reading of the novel is confirmed in the first pages of the novel where Pasternak purposely gives prominence to a very important speech by Nikolai Vedenyapin:

...everything necessary has been given us in the Gospels.... Firstly, the love of one's neighbour—the supreme form of living energy. Once it fills the heart of man it has to over-flow and spend itself. And secondly, the two concepts which are the main part of the make-up of modern man—without them he is inconceivable—the ideas of free personality and of life regarded as sacrifice.

Hardy expressed very similar ideas on free personality in a letter to a journal: "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." This concept of free personality is perhaps the main impetus behind Hardy's conflict with the class structure and economic system of England. Most of his novels are concerned, to varying degrees, with man's suffering in society.

The Hand of Ethelberta is really the first novel to deal extensively with free expression of personality in defiance of society. But where the comic heroine, Ethelberta, is successful, Tess, Jude and Giles suffer and die as a result of their struggles with socio-political restrictions. They become sacrificial heroes in Hardy's plea for more individual freedom.
In the same way, the outcome of Doctor Zhivago is the defeat of the hero and the loss of personality. The Soviet Regime and Victorian society batter their protagonists to the point of resignation. But although both writers have been criticized for their weak heroes, they still maintain an ultimately optimistic outlook: Pasternak in his faith in the vitality and creativity of human life, and Hardy, at least theoretically, in his concept of evolutionary meliorism. Pasternak foresaw the criticism that was to be made against his weak hero, and he confronted Yury through Mikulitsyn with the very charges that the Soviets were to make: "You have an atrophied social sense, just like an illiterate peasant woman or an inveterate bourgeois." Christ, whose life is often referred to by both writers, epitomizes, with his victory in defeat and with his life as sacrifice, the typical Pasternak or Hardy hero. Jude, Clym and Yury are all associated with Christ; Hardy and Pasternak are, in fact, strongly attracted to the general attitude of the New Testament. One reason for this may well be that their stance against political repression was very similar to Christ's against Roman repression. Pasternak even makes an analogy between Rome and the Soviet regime. He prepares the reader for this association early in the novel when Nikolai Vedenyapin makes his famous claim that "History as we know it now began with Christ." Nikolai contrasts the "upsurge of spirit" in the gospels with the spirit of the classical world: "There you had blood and beastliness and cruelty and pock-marked Caligulas untouched by the suspicion that any man who enslaves others is inevitably second-rate." Sima later elaborates on this view of Roman repression of the individual under which "the duty, imposed by armed force," was "to live unanimously as a people, as a whole nation." On this theme the Rowlands conclude: "In war and revolution—as Nikolay Vedenyapin predicted—Russia is undergoing a death and rebirth into Rome."
It is thus an almost religious compassion for individual man that brings Hardy and Pasternak to political topics. Hardy's 1907 definition of "religious" is, of course, necessary here: "Religious... is to be used... in its modern sense entirely, as being expressive of nobler feelings towards humanity and emotional goodness and greatness." It is the denial of such values by society that leads them to see individual man as a tragic hero. And in the final analysis, it is abstract political, social or religious theorizing which is the fundamental cause of such tragedy. With Doctor Zhivago this is taken for granted, but with Hardy's later novels critics have generally avoided the political aspect and have stressed his gloomy philosophical outlook. The last chapter of this thesis will endeavour to redress this situation.

Since Hardy and Pasternak were at odds with their respective societies, and were intent on expressing their dissatisfaction, they accordingly faced a common problem of censorship. Again, of course, a comparison between the ruthless censorship under Stalin and the commercially motivated censorship of serialised novels in Victorian Britain might appear worthless. But in both cases the novelist wished to express what would clearly offend—matters about which they felt strongly from a humane and moral viewpoint. They were thus obliged to find a means of expressing their controversial opinions in a way that might escape the literal-minded censor, but that could still communicate with the more discerning readers. For Hardy it became obvious that his vitriolic satire was too offensive; and after The Hand of Ethelberta he began to move towards the lyrical novel. Pasternak, too, decided on the lyrical novel when he saw that censorship was relaxing after the death of Stalin in 1953.

The lyrical novel as we have seen, poeticises the conventional novel into symbolic rather than narrative patterns. Further it objectifies expe-
rience rather than man and his world. Thus explicit political comment can be "disguised" in the lyrical novel, not only by showing just the subjective experience of political repression rather than attacking its ideology or system directly, but also by camouflaging ideas within a symbolic framework. In other words, the writer can express his political attitudes by using esoteric techniques of poetry which will not be fully understood by the censor. His text thus becomes, in the broadest sense of the word, a secret code.

This is precisely what Pasternak does in Doctor Zhivago. As Edmund Wilson says, "there is something in it of Finnegans Wake and something of the cabbalistic Zohar, which discovers a whole system of hidden meanings in the text of the Hebrew Bible." Characters, and symbolic objects and phenomena represent or embody larger concepts which are often of political significance. For example, characters are related to real life figures through the technique of anagrams. So, for western readers, the explication of the novel does not depend solely on poetic technique; it is also essential to have a comprehensive knowledge of Russian culture in order to track down all the "hidden meanings." The most thorough explication of the novel has thus been done by two specialists in Russian literature, Paul and Mary Rowland, who have unearthed a wealth of esoteric material from below the surface of the book.

One important technique in Doctor Zhivago is the use of characters as metaphors. Their names often lead the reader to their associations. The name Zhivago means "living" and the title of the novel to a Russian would be "Doctor Living" or "Doctor Life." Yury, through his name, thus embodies the central value of the novel—life. By name Pasternak also makes metaphoric associations between Yury's mother and the Russian church, and between his foster-mother and Imperial Russia. The novel opens with the funeral scene
of Yury's mother:

...the funeral of Marya Nikolayevna Zhivago is a parable revealing a melancholy fact, namely, that when the twentieth century opened, the Russian Church was a body without spirit. The neglected wife whose inherited weakness, combined with her husband's ill-treatment, doomed her to waste away with consumption and heart trouble, is a vivid image of the National Church after five centuries of "protection" by the "pious" Russian tsars.83

And when Yury is a medical student, his foster mother also dies. The metaphoric association of her death with that of Mother Russia has many interesting implications. The most significant aspect of her death is that it was indirectly caused by her servant Markel; for Markel, as has been stated, is a close anagram of Karl Marx. She is fatally injured when she tries to help Markel reconstruct an antique wardrobe. She causes the whole structure to collapse, gets bruised and develops a pulmonary weakness. Symbolically, this wardrobe becomes an image of Russia being reconstructed after the abolition of serfdom. Anna refers to it in a confused way: "She nicknamed it the tomb of Askold; she meant the horse of Prince Oleg, which caused its master's death."85 The Rowlands explicate this:

Anna's nickname for the lethal wardrobe, "Askold's tomb," alludes to the killing of Kiev's first corulers, Askold and Dir, by their successor, Prince Oleg. What Anna meant—that the wardrobe was "the horse of Prince Oleg, which caused its master's death"—recalls a legend of the nemesis that overtook Oleg: the fatal bite by a serpent that darted out of the skull of his dead horse. Thus a prophecy was fulfilled: the prince's "servant" (his steed) would become the instrument of his doom.86

The implication would seem to be that the abolition of serfdom, in leading to the formation of the proletariat, was the root cause, with the guidance of Marx, of the death of Imperial Russia. As the structure of Russian society broke down in 1917 and caused the end of the Tsarist regime, so the wardrobe collapsed and mortally wounded Anna. And just as the former serfs or servants take over Russia, so does Anna's servant Markel take over the family residence.
Accordingly, much of *Doctor Zhivago* is to be read as metaphor, and much of it has political implication. The method of explication can be demonstrated with an early scene in the novel where a strike takes place on the railway. In an incident that has little to do with the narrative, Pasternak shows a way in which political action is motivated. In less than four pages he is able to say a great deal about the crucial jump from revolutionary thought to revolutionary action.

Tiverzin is a railway worker with radical opinions. The reader first encounters him as he is prematurely leaving a strike meeting with Antipov senior:

"Let's walk faster," said Tiverzin. "I'm not worried about the police getting on to us but the moment those ditherers in their hole in the ground have finished they'll come out and catch up with us. I can't bear the sight of them. What's the point of having a committee if you drag things out like this?—You play with fire and then you duck for shelter. You're a fine one yourself—siding with that lot."^{87}

Antipov is hardly listening to these words of Tiverzin, for he is much more concerned about a family illness. And when Tiverzin threatens to start a strike on his own initiative, he again takes no notice.

But after Antipov leaves, Tiverzin has two experiences which finally drive him to start the strike although his original threat had not been very serious. First, he sees the aristocratic wife of the railway manager waiting in her carriage:

Fuflygin[a] sat admiring the silver beads of sleet glittering in the light of the office lamp; her unblinking dreamy gaze was fixed on a point above the heads of the workers in a manner suggesting that it would, in case of need, go through them as if they were only sleet or mist.^{88}

Tiverzin's recognition of her expression shocks him, and he walks on without acknowledging her. Then immediately after this he finds a drunken old foreman beating his apprentice. Tiverzin's intervention is only met with insult and he loses his temper. He is only restrained from violence by other workers
and leaves in disgust, going immediately to sound the boiler-room whistle for a strike:

This base world of lies and fraud, in which an over-fed madam had the impertinence to stare right through a crowd of working men and where a drink-sodden victim of this society found pleasure in taking it out of his own kind, this world was now more hateful to him than it had ever been before. He hurried on as though his pace could hasten the time when everything on earth would be as reasonable and harmonious as it was now inside his feverish head. He knew that all their strivings in the last few days, the troubles on the line, the speeches at meetings, the decision to strike—not yet carried out but at least not cancelled—were small separate stages on the great road lying ahead of them.89

Pasternak has chosen Tiverzin's experiences with great care. The wife of the railway manager clearly represents the portion of the ruling class of Russia who had little concern for the welfare of those beneath them. And his recognition of her attitude is finally the twentieth century revolutionary's understanding of what has to be removed from Russia. And Tiverzin sees the cruelty of the foreman as a result of the frustration caused by the repressive society which the ruling classes have created. At first we see Tiverzin as a compassionate man protecting the oppressed. But in order to do this he has to resort to violence. On the larger political scale, in his humane desire to protect the oppressed of Russia, Tiverzin again resorts to violence. His almost insane anger in the bullying scene is duplicated in the revolutionary context as he and Strelnikov become universally feared. Later in the novel, Lara describes them both as "more frightening than wolves these days." This paradox of the humane man resorting to violence of an extreme kind has been explained by Albert Camus in his L'Homme révolté:

...the movement of rebellion is founded simultaneously on the categorical rejection of an intrusion that is considered intolerable and on the confused conviction of an absolute right which, in the rebel's mind, is more precisely the impression that he "has the right to..." Rebellion cannot exist without the feeling that, somewhere and somehow, one is right. It is in this way that the rebel slave says yes and no simultaneously.91
The method of analysis in the last two pages can also be effectively applied to the mature novels of Hardy. And since this thesis has already established Hardy's attitude towards society, the reading can again be political. As with Pasternak, the objects and events in this scene from *The Woodlanders* have metaphorical significance. The confrontation on the road between Giles and Mrs Charmond may seem to be a fateful meeting that leads to the eventual downfall of Giles; but a more rewarding interpretation would see the confrontation as a clash between the rich bourgeois and the working man:

A load of timber was to be sent away before dawn that morning....The trunks were chained down to a heavy timber carriage with enormous red wheels, and four of the most powerful of Melbury's horses were harnessed in front to draw them. In order to warn the oncoming traffic on the narrow lanes of the timber carriage's approach, the horses wore bells:

There were sixteen to the team, carried on a frame above each animal's shoulders, and tuned to scale, so as to form two octaves, running from the highest note on the right or off-side of the leader to the lowest on the left or near-side of the shaft-horse. Melbury was among the last to retain horse-bells in that neighbourhood.

As the timber carriage goes on its way, "the sixteen bells chiming harmoniously over all," the image of rural harmony and industry, it meets the carriage of Mrs Charmond who is off to Italy as she can't stand the English Winter. It is an implausible coincidence, no doubt, but if the scene is given a positive reading instead of a summary dismissal, it is clear that Hardy is providing a succinct summary of the class conflict in Victorian society:

'You can turn if you unhitch your string-horses,' said the coachman.

'It is much easier for you to turn than for us,' said Winterbourne. 'We've five ton of timber on these wheels if we've an once.'

'But I've another carriage with luggage at my back.' Winterbourne admitted the strength of the argument.

'But even with that,' he said, 'You can back better than we.
And you ought to, for you could hear our bells half a mile off."

'And you could see our lights.'

'We couldn't because of the fog.'

'Well, our time's precious,' said the coachman haughtily.

'You are only going to some trumpery little village or other in the neighbourhood, while we are going straight to Italy.'

An enthusiastic Marxist critic might well regard the outcome of this incident as a prophetic image of the emergence of the proletariat:

In fine, nothing could move him, and the carriages were compelled to back till they reached one of the sidings or turn-outs constructed in the bank for the purpose. Then the team came on ponderously, and the clanging of its sixteen bells as it passed the discomfited carriages tilted up against the bank, lent a particularly triumphant tone to the team's progress.

It is unlikely that Hardy had any conscious intentions of prophecy in this passage. Rather he was endeavouring to describe the social situation; later, Winterbourne paid dearly for his triumph on the road. This scene served, through contrast, towards his broader aim of portraying the richness and harmony of the rural way of life in Wessex.

Hardy, of course, does not attempt the extreme metaphorical complexity achieved by Pasternak. His need for hidden meaning was not as great. Further the techniques of the novel in the 1890's had not progressed far enough for him to have attempted such a method. We can see Hardy rather as an innovator whose ideas were extended by later generations of writers like Pasternak.

Hardy's surface plots are much more integrated than those of Doctor Zhivago, but it is important to remember that he was still often criticised for his regular use of coincidences.

Thus in comparison with Hardy's novels, Doctor Zhivago is a veritable labyrinth of metaphoric meanings. And in order to accommodate such complexity, the surface narrative is inevitably disjointed and many of the characters are left as loose ends in the total structure of the novel. So the traditional critic is often offended at finding characters acting merely as mouthpieces.
for certain points of view. The talk between Vosboinikov and Vedenyapin, for example, has no narrative value in the novel; it is used to establish the basic tension in the novel between Leninism-Marxism and Christianity. The true structure of Doctor Zhivago, as has been argued, is metaphoric; and critics, who attack the novel for its coincidences, its flat characterisation or its loose ends, are not reading the work in the way Pasternak intended it to be read.

Yet despite this difference between Hardy's "shaping that uncommonness" and Pasternak's "moving entireness," their novels are still based on the same general concepts. They both wrote lyrical novels. It is their poetic sensibilities that form their novels and a special method of interpretation is therefore required. Both novelists also identify closely with their protagonists. And these "autobiographical" protagonists are predominantly passive; their experiences of life are the contents of the novels. Thus narrative is secondary to "the rendering of objects, sensations, even ideas, with immediacy." Narrative progression gives way to lyrical progression. And as in much lyrical poetry, nature plays an important role, becoming almost a language in itself.

So, with Hardy's political interest established in the first chapter, and with the technique of his later, major novels established through a comparison with a political yet lyrical novelist, this thesis will now move to a political reading of Tess of the D'Urbervilles.
Footnotes


2 F.E. Hardy, p. 49.

3 Ibid., pp. 24-25.


6 T. Hardy, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, ch. XIV.


11 See especially "Winter Night."


15 See 1892 Preface to T. Hardy, The Return of the Native, Orel, p. 13.

16 F.E. Hardy, p. 341.


22. See title page of T. Hardy, *Desperate Remedies*.


33 Rowland, p. 66.

34 Ibid., p. 72.

35 F.E. Hardy, p. 229.

36 Ibid., p. 150.


38 Millgate, p. 130.


41 Hillis Miller, p. 207.

42 F.E. Hardy, p. 271.

43 Ibid., p. 273.

44 Norman Holland, Jr., "Jude the Obscure: Hardy's Symbolic Indictment of Christianity," Nineteenth Century Fiction, 9 (June 1954), p. 50.


46 Fernand Lagarde, "À propos de la construction de Jude the Obscure," Caliban, 3 (Jan. 1966), p. 188.

47 Ibid., p. 191.

48 Ibid., p. 192.

49 Heilman, Introduction to Jude the Obscure, p. 1.

50 Pasternak, Doctor Zhivago, p. 249.

Yevgeny Yevtushenko, "Interview," *Playboy*, December 1972, p. 204.

See Rowlands, p. 7.


Ibid., p. 415.


Ibid.


See Guerard, p. 29.


Hillis Miller, p. x.


Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago*, p. 266.

Ibid., pp. 303-304.

Ibid., p. 166.

69 Ibid.

70 Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago*, p. 17.

71 F.E. Hardy, p. 258.


73 Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago*, p. 303.

74 Ibid., p. 17.

75 Ibid.

76 Ibid., p. 368.

77 Rowland, p. 87.

78 F.E. Hardy, p. 332.

79 Note Hardy's awareness of the need to express controversial ideas in a covert way appears in the letter accompanying his first novel, *The Poor Man and The Lady*. See Nowell-Smith, pp. 129-30.

80 Edmund Wilson, "Legend and Symbol in *Doctor Zhivago*," *Nation*, 25 April 1959, p. 5.

81 Strelnikov is a close anagram of Leon Trotsky, and Markel of Karl Marx.

82 Rowland, pp. 17 and 19.

83 Ibid., p. 19.

84 Her name, Anna Ivanovna, recalls Empress Anna (1730-1740) and the first Tsar, Ivan.
85  

86  
Rowland, p. 17.

87  
Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago*, p. 33.

88  
Ibid., p. 34.

89  
Ibid., p. 36, except "this society" replaces the words "those ways" of translators Hayward and Harari. I am grateful to Professor A. Busza for pointing out this improvement in translation.

90  
Ibid., p. 365.

91  

92  
T. Hardy, *The Woodlanders* (London, 1912), ch. XIII.

93  
Ibid.

94  
Ibid.

95  
Ibid.

96  
Ibid.

97  
Friedman, p. 9.
Chapter III

Tess of the D'Urbervilles: A Political Reading

Despite Rutland's insights on the political aspects of Hardy's early career in 1938, it was not until the 1950's that the debate on the political elements of Hardy's novels really began. In 1951 Arnold Kettle, in his chapter on Tess of the D'Urbervilles in An Introduction to the English Novel, claimed that "the subject of Tess of the D'Urbervilles is stated clearly by Hardy to be the fate of a 'pure woman'; in fact it is the destruction of the English peasantry." And in 1954 Douglas Brown described the political pattern of "the five great novels of Hardy" in his book Thomas Hardy:

The story unfolds slowly, and the theme of urban invasion declares itself more clearly as the country, its labour, its people and its past consolidate their presence...it is a clash between agricultural and urban modes of life...This pattern records Hardy's dismay at the predicament of the agricultural community in the south of England during the last part of the nineteenth century and at the precarious hold of the agricultural way of life.

But the majority of subsequent Hardy criticism has not looked favourably upon such arguments for the importance of the political content of the Wessex Novels. The general consensus, like Guerard, saw the approach as being little more than "dramatically useful".
as background for Hardy's main concerns. This prevailing attitude, influenced no doubt by the textual priorities of New Criticism, can be summarised by Guerard's authoritative statement: "Hardy was not the historian of Dorset but the novelist and poet of Wessex." Even Irving Howe, probably the most politically conscious of Hardy critics, finds that the political approach "does not bring us to the vital heart" of Hardy's novels.

In view of such unsympathetic reaction to a political interpretation of Hardy, it is not altogether surprising that both Kettle and Brown have recanted their positions. Kettle, in a 1966 address, said: "What I wrote now seems to me a bit one-sided and insufficiently close to Hardy's deepest intention and impact..." Likewise Brown, in a monograph on *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, admits the limitations of the theme of urban invasion: "I used to identify Farfrae as the Invader, but I can no longer read *The Mayor of Casterbridge* in that way. Farfrae comes from outside, but he joins; he is for the agricultural community, not a disrupter."

But despite their failure to achieve acceptance of their ideas on the political aspect of the Wessex Novels, Kettle and Brown did correct an imbalance in Hardy criticism. Where the political had previously been ignored, it was now at least considered along with other more fashionable approaches. This new attention, however, soon brought to light a problem that had actually been suggested by contemporary reviewers:
...the reader who has any general acquaintance with the civilisation of the Wiltshire or Dorsetshire labourer, with his average wages, and his average intelligence, will be disposed to say at once that a more incredible picture than that of the group of farm labourers as a whole which Mr. Hardy has given us can hardly be conceived...

The country folk in the story have not heard of strikes, or of Mr. Arch; they have, to all appearance, plenty to eat, and warm clothes to wear...

The English Boeotian has never been so idealized before.... Under his hand Boetians became Athenians in acuteness, Germans in capacity for philosophic speculation, and Parisians in polish.

There is an unmistakable incongruity between the historical records of Dorset peasant suffering during the period of the Wessex Novels and the depiction by Hardy himself of rustic characters who rarely suffer severe hardships. Such an avoidance of the real facts would hardly indicate the attitude of a politically motivated writer, and it questioned the validity of the arguments of Kettle and Brown for Hardy's concern about the peasant and the old rural way of life.

In 1958, William Hyde's "Hardy's View of Realism: A Key to the Rustic Characters" made an eloquent answer to this apparent inconsistency of detail in Hardy's novels. He argued, like Guerard, that Hardy was not a "social propagandist," nor a "photographer of social minutiae," but an artist of "imaginative reason." But his article does not come to terms with the question of Hardy's political commitment which this thesis has established. It is not enough to shield Hardy behind an aesthetic ideal.

The real answer to the question of Hardy's failure to portray his rustics according to their actual situation has already been discussed in the first chapter. Hardy was not writing about peasant life; his main concern was for those born just above peasant stock who were trying to rise higher in the
social and economic scale. The major misconception about Hardy has always been that he is a novelist of the Wessex peasant. Writers discussing and supporting this misconception will usually find the need to refer to his essay "The Dorsetshire Labourer" and his famous letter to Rider Haggard, for there is not a great amount of material on the subject to be drawn from the novels. The argument that Hardy set his novels in the past, and thus avoided describing the hardships which he himself must have often seen, is no defence for Hardy either. All his novels, with the exception of the historical The Trumpet-Major and the idyllic Under the Greenwood Tree, are set after 1840 when rural suffering in Dorset became more pronounced. One must accept the fact that Hardy's novels ignored the peasant suffering that was a part of their real life setting.

Brown and Kettle were therefore on the wrong track. Brown overemphasised the urban threat to rural life and Kettle misjudged Hardy's attitude toward the peasant. A later critic, Merryn Williams, makes the same mistake by concentrating her approach "fairly heavily on modern histories of agriculture." Although she capably dismisses two critical fallacies—that the theme is the destruction either of the aristocracy or of the peasantry—Merryn Williams puts too much emphasis on the rural aspect of Tess of the D'Urbervilles; like many others she does not, for example, take account of the large proportion of the novel devoted to Angel.

Raymond Williams, who comes from a social situation very similar to Hardy's, is perhaps the most perceptive critic of the general attitude in the Wessex Novels. Williams sees Hardy concerned with "the problem of the relation between customary and educated life; between customary and educated feeling and thought." Time and time again the Hardy protagonist is educated above his or her family, and the tension between old and new, between customary and educated, becomes the catalyst of the story. This common theme in
the Wessex Novels is of course consistent with Hardy's own experience of becoming educated above his social station. Williams also makes an important step in dismissing the term "peasant" from discussion of Hardy, although Hardy does use the word himself. Williams points out that "the actual country people were landowners, tenant farmers, dealers, craftsmen and labourers." His discussion is marred, however, by his failure to take into account the radical element of the later novels. He makes no mention of the feeling of outrage that pervades *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*. There is nothing in Williams' argument to suggest that Hardy was anything more than "the incomparable chronicler of his Wessex."

An improved view of Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* sees the novel fitting neatly into Julian Moynahan's conception of the development of pastoralism towards counter-culture during the nineteenth century. Moynahan finds:

...a really profound culture of pastoralism, entailing a whole view of English life and of life generally that is expressed in some novels about people living away from the large towns, written in the course of the nineteenth century, that are among the principal glories of the English literary tradition. As the century goes on this whole and wholesome view becomes increasingly difficult to sustain.

The difficulty emanated from developments in Victorian England which came about as the bourgeois class began to establish itself as an influential element of society. The emerging urbanisation and industrialisation, the increasingly mercenary quality of life, the competitiveness of the plutocratic class system, and religious dogma and prudery all contribute to the arrival of a new type of novelist,

whose attachment to the primary values associated with "the permanent tradition of the country" causes him to conceive his task as a sort of rescue operation of these values, and whose poignant sense of cleavage between the insensate aims of society and the permanent truths of life and nature lead him to compose pastoral fictions the themes and values of which run deliberately counter to the projects and values of society at large.
Tess of the D'Urbervilles clearly comes at the end of this development:

Was once lost always lost really true of chastity? she would ask herself. She might prove it false if she could veil bygones. The recuperative power which pervaded organic nature was surely not denied to maidenhood alone (XV).

It is, in fact, the maiden like Tess that is often used as a touchstone for this change in society. As Moynahan points out, the greater the cultural gap between pastoral life and modern society, the greater the idealisation of the maiden will be. Thus the earlier maiden like Gwendolyn Harleth who embodies the values of English culture is not idealised:

Could there be a slenderer, more insignificant thread in human history than this consciousness of a girl, busy with her small inferences of the way in which she could make her life pleasant?--In a time too, when ideas were with fresh vigour making armies of themselves, and the universal kinship was declaring itself fiercely...a time when the soul of man was waking to pulses which had for centuries been beating in him unheard, until their full sum made a new life of terror and of joy.

What in the midst of that mighty drama are girls and their blind vision? They are the Yea or Nay of that good for which men are enduring and fighting. In these delicate vessels is born onward through the ages the treasure of human affections.23

This description of a somewhat selfish pastoral innocence contrasts those made in the last part of the nineteenth century when the "delicate vessel" is adapted to something more primitive and carnal. Tess in this way replaces Gwendolen Harleth: "...women whose chief companions are the forms and forces of outdoor Nature retain in their souls far more of the Pagan fantasy of their remote forefathers than of the systematised religion taught their race at later date"(XVI).

Since the heroine of the late nineteenth century novel becomes an embodiment of counter-culture, she also becomes the victim of society, its scapegoat. This is basically the attitude of Naturalism which Moynahan surprisingly does not discuss:
Naturalism characteristically deals in heroines: perhaps specifically heroines rather than female heroes. There is a long line stretching from Emma Bovary to Esther Waters and Crane's Maggie which would include examples as diverse as the Goncourts' Woman of Paris and Hardy's Tess. In this perspective, heroines are not so much saving consciousnesses as consecrated victims, passive sufferers of brutal process....Through their portraits of women, novelists in this period seem to focus a double sense of human nature as the passive victim and the active embodiment of compulsive, carnal forces.  

These dual features of passivity and carnality are responsible for Tess becoming a "maiden nor more" for society, while she remains idealised for Hardy, "a pure woman" —just as another fallen woman, Lara, is "the purest being in the world" for Pasternak. And like Pasternak, Hardy is able to exploit this counter-cultural potential of his heroine in using her as a vehicle for his political grudges against Victorian society: the class structure, religious suppression, exploitation of the lower classes, the decline of a reasonably humane rural society in the face of capitalist development, and the bias against women.

Tess's situation in society as a woman embodies the essence of the plight of the individual in Victorian society. And she makes a more powerful protagonist for Hardy precisely because her suffering at the hands of society is compounded by the fact that she is a woman. But the subject of women in society should not be underestimated in this novel just because it is also exploited symbolically. It is a matter that had lurked in the background of many of Hardy's early novels. Tess is, in this way, the summation of many female characters that preceded her. Several early heroines had suggested the social vulnerability of women. Cytherea's helplessness, for example, arose out of her being without a father or a husband. But the direct progenitors of Tess are Fanny Robin and Marty South. They portray sexual and social vulnerability respectively. And Fanny's beauty and Marty's purity are combined for the character of Tess.
To stress this social vulnerability, there is another trait in Tess that harks back to earlier characters of Hardy. The matriarchal, dominating spirit of Eustacia and Ethelberta and, to a lesser extent, of Bathsheba, Paula, Vivette, Felice and Lucetta, is also characteristic of Tess. Alec says she acts like a Princess (XII), and apart from her being frequently associated with goddesses, it is clear that from an early age Tess was really the head of the Durbeyfield household. In the novel, this innate superiority of Tess is subjugated by society, thereby heightening the effect of the perversion of individual life that Hardy is portraying.

Before *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* Hardy had not generally confronted his female characters with the harsher realities of public life. Cytherea and Bathsheba do face some degree of social reality but it is only with Ethelberta that a Hardy heroine takes on society without social advantages. *The Hand of Ethelberta*, however, is a comedy. A more serious portrayal of the predicament of woman in society can be discerned in *The Woodlanders*, the novel preceding *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*:

He knew that a woman once given to a man for life took, as a rule, her lot as it came, and made the best of it, without external interference; but for the first time he asked himself why this so generally should be done.29

Such are the thoughts of Grace's father as she turns to him for help in dealing with her philandering husband. Divorce, however, is not obtainable because her husband has not done "enough harm" and Grace has to bear her cross with "dignified sorrow" and still be "subject to his beck and call." The problem of marriage, the conflict between a natural and a legal husband, is further investigated in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

The predicament of woman in these two novels is well summarized by the emasculation symbol of Marty's loss of hair. As dairyman Crick says: "But unluckily the poor woman gets the worst o' it"(XXIX). The tragedy of Tess
has been attributed to many things, but perhaps the best summary of her fate is by F.R. Southerington: "Heredity, economic forces, Time, Chance, and Consequence shape Tess's career and bring about her downfall. Only social convention causes it." With the prejudices of social conventions being most disadvantageous to women, a female protagonist would seem to be the logical choice for a novel about individual freedom in society.

The lyrical novel enables Hardy to use his female protagonist to great effect. With Tess as a predominantly passive protagonist, the vicissitudes of life can act upon her as she is torn between her powerful natural appetites and the incompatible demands of society. The novel shows her subjective reactions to those vicissitudes. Life, as it affects the individual, can thus be experienced by the readers themselves, and their empathy and compassion for Tess give weight to Hardy's arguments on the individual's predicament in society.

The essential points in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Hardy's primary motives for writing the work, can best be ascertained by an exploration of the novel's structure. The poet, with greater loyalty to aesthetic form than to narrative and the coherent formulation of ideas, will generally structure his novel around his primary preoccupations. "A novel is an impression, not an argument," repeated Hardy in a preface to this novel. The importance of structure for the understanding of *Doctor Zhivago* has already been discussed, and the appreciation of the structure of *Jude the Obscure* by so many eminent critics has also been demonstrated. An investigation into the structure of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* will again provide the essence of Hardy's motives or "impressions."

Tess's tragic story is controlled by two images, the circle and the cross. These two geometric images, which were probably the first symbols that man developed, structure symbolically the central themes of the novel.
Since the essential femaleness and fecundity of Tess is stressed time and time again by Hardy to contrast the life-denying qualities of Victorian society, the circle is particularly apt because from primordial times it has been symbolic of the womb, "the Great Round" as Erich Neumann calls it in his major study of woman in myth. The circle motif supports other more direct references, like those associating her with Artemis and Demeter, to build Tess into a representation of the Great Earth Mother. Marion Brady has shown how well Tess fits this archetype which has been so effectively delineated by Neumann. Tess's quality of feminine potency is clearly apparent to Angel who sees her as "a visionary essence of womanhood—a whole sex condensed into one typical form"(XX).

The circle and the cross unify into one important image near the end of the book where the torments of Tess's life finally prove too much for her. At this point in the story she has given in to Alec and is living with him at Sandbourne. Suddenly Angel reappears to ask forgiveness, but it is too late in Tess's eyes since she has given herself to Alec. "I waited and waited for you," she tells him pathetically(LV). It is soon after this that the landlady hears some unusual sounds as Tess murders Alec upstairs: "All that she could at first distinguish of them was one syllable, continually repeated in a low note of moaning, as if it came from a soul bound to some Ixionian wheel"(LVI). Ixion's wheel—the human body in the shape of a cross bound on a revolving wheel—is a pertinent image since Ixion's punishment was also involved with infidelity and murder; and coming as it does at the climax of the story, it is suitably placed for the novel's central image.

The cross within the wheel also appears as the Maltese cross on a reaping machine(XIV), and its description as "having been dipped into liquid fire"(XIV) supports association with Ixion's fiery wheel. The cross traditionally symbolises the fundamental dualism of the spiritual (the vertical
line) and the flesh (the horizontal line). This universal conflict is personified in Tess's life by the characters of Angel and Alec. The destructive emphasis that Victorian society put on this dualism is central to Hardy's argument: "...the coarse animalism of Alec and the sterile intellectualism of Angel—alike inhumane, life-denying, destructive of the individual...."

The tension of this dualism is acted out in the story of Tess as she moves between the extremes of Angel and Alec, between the call of the spirit and the call of the flesh; and, finding such a tension increasingly unbearable, she instigates her own destruction.

The various circle and wheel images, which Hardy employs throughout Tess of the D'Urbervilles, support this concept of unbearable tension in the cross. They illustrate the power of the life force and its often disruptive effect on human life in modern society. "Life is movement" in Tess of the D'Urbervilles, as Tony Tanner says, and all the circular moving images like Ixion's wheel—the seasons, the mailcart wheels, the maypole, the milk churn, the Maltese cross of the reaping machine, and the wheels of Alec's dogcart—all these suggest the life force, or "Nature" as Hardy often called it. In Hardy's cosmic vision, this life force shows no consideration for man or woman. As Brady says, "like the spinning of Ixion's wheel, the humming wagon-wheels mirror the rotation of the Earth on its axis, a movement completely oblivious to human needs or aspirations." Tess will not "believe that the great Power who moves the world would alter His plans on [her] account"(XLVI).

As a symbol of the life force, the wheels of Alec's dogcart, which hum "like a top"(VIII) as he and Tess descend the hill (in symbolic reference to the Fall), comment upon the ensuing seduction as an event controlled by the life force—Tess's physical beauty attracting Alec—which cannot be avoided and which copies the behavioural pattern of every generation back to Adam and Eve. This incident of the dogcart introduces yet another concept in the
Images of motion, for although the wheels are humming efficiently the cart is "rocking right and left, its axis acquiring a slightly oblique set in relation to the line of progress....Sometimes a wheel was off the ground" (VIII). Tess has to grasp Alec's waist to avoid being thrown out. The smooth motion of the wheels, the life force, is juxtaposed with the rocking of the cart and Tess; this latter phenomenon is the disruptive effect of the life force upon human life. At Talbothays, under this effect of the life force, the milkmaids "wretched feverishly under the oppressiveness of an emotion thrust on them by cruel Nature's law—an emotion they had neither expected nor desired" (XXIII). Tess is a person who is startled by "the least irregularity of motion" (VIII). Irregular motion had, in fact, been inflicted upon her from the moment she was born: "The cradle rockers had done hard duty for so many years, under the weight of so many children...that they were worn nearly flat, in consequence of which a huge jerk accompanied each swing of the cot, flinging the baby from side to side like a weaver's shuttle" (III). At Flintcombe-Ash the threshing machine illustrates the effect of the life force even more graphically than the dogcart. Again it is a machine running efficiently and again Tess is imprisoned upon it, this time feeding corn on to a revolving drum. This job is significantly always given to a woman and there is an ironic aptness in that Tess, the corn goddess, feeds the "buzzing red glutton" (XLVIII) with corn. Again Tess undergoes disrupting motion: "She was the only woman whose place was upon the machine so as to be shaken bodily by its spinning....The incessant quivering, in which every fibre of her frame participated, had thrown her into a stupefied reverie in which her arms worked on independently of her consciousness" (XLVIII). All this imagery of human disruption at the hands of a larger force has political implications as well as philosophical. The disruptive mechanical qualities of the dogcart, cradle and thresher are also to be found in social conventions and laws:
In the ill-judged execution of the well-judged plan of things the call seldom produces the comer, the man to love rarely coincides with the hour of loving. Nature does not often say "See!" to her poor creature at a time when seeing can lead to happy doing; or reply "Here!" to a body's cry of "Where?" till the hide-and-seek has become an irksome, outworn game. We may wonder whether at the acme and summit of the human progress these anachronisms will be corrected by a finer intuition, a closer interaction of the social machinery than that which now jolts us round and along; but such completeness is not to be prophesied, or even conceived as possible. Enough that in the present case, as in millions, it was not the two halves of a perfect whole that confronted each other at the perfect moment; a missing counterpart wandered independently about the earth waiting in crass obtuseness till the late time came. Out of which maladroit delay sprang anxieties, disappointments, shocks, catastrophes, and passing-strange destinies(V).

Since it fails to take account of the fundamental human difficulties of living, "the social machinery...jolts us round and along." The need is for social changes to make "a closer interaction of the social machinery" with the obviously immutable conditions of life. But under existing social conditions Tess must experience "anxieties, disappointments, shocks, catastrophes," and such suffering gradually drives her to recoil from life in society. She does this either by willed schizophrenic separation —"I do know that our souls can be made to go outside our bodies when we are alive" (XVIII)—or by desperately hiding in a deserted house with Angel:

Whenever he suggested they should leave their shelter...she showed a strange unwillingness to move....
"All is trouble outside there; inside here content."
He peeped out also. It was quite true; within was affection, union, error forgiven; outside was the inexorable (LVII).

When Tess finally emerges from this haven to confront the "inexorable social machinery," she again encounters, at Stonehenge, a humming noise like that of Alec's dogcart. But this time the subsequent disrupting force is not the wild driving of Alec, but the penalty for his death—the hangman's noose.

Duplications of the shape of Ixion's wheel are to be found throughout the novel. The cross and the circle also shape the schema of Tess's four
journeys that she makes from the womb-like Vale of Blackmoor into the outside world of Victorian society. Leaving in Spring (usually May) and returning in the Autumn, she makes each journey in a different direction.

Robert Heilman writes:

Tess travels out of the narrow Marlott world in different directions that are all but symbolic; to the east when she visits the Stoke-d'Urbervilles; to the south when she moves to fertile Talbothays and the love of Angel; to the west when she has to take a job at Groby's "starve-acre" farm. When she finally joins Alec, she goes to an urban environment (the first in the novel) that is more southerly than any other scene. Her brief journey with Angel means a literal reversal of directions, and when the police finally surround her at Stonehenge, the action is at its most northerly point.40

Thus each of Tess's four journeys go to a different point of the compass and in toto form a cross. The first three are also circular, duplicating the circular use of the seasons, in that she returns each time to her starting point. But each journey ironically fails to accomplish what Tess confidently hoped for and what is usually expected in journeys of initiation. As Brady points out, "Tess's journeys follow the formula represented in the rites of passage—departure, initiation, return. Unlike most mythological accounts of the hero's adventures, however, Tess's journeys are self-defeating and destructive." And Brady further shows that "the cycles of experience in the novel are arranged in ever-expanding circles." This is true not only in the geographical sense but also from the point of view of Tess's experiences. These expanding circles are those of Yeats's "widening gyre" where finally "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold," and where, like Tess, "the best lack all conviction."

There is also another motif of circles which runs counter to that of the widening circle. This is of the circle as containment and it culminates with the image of the noose around Tess's neck. Her father's death will come from a similar closing of the circle:
Joan Durbeyfield, as she spoke, curved a sodden thumb and forefinger to the shape of the letter C...."Your heart is enclosed all round there, and all round there; this space is still open....As soon as it do meet, so,"—Mrs. Durbeyfield closed her fingers into a circle complete—"off you will go like a shadder, Mr. Durbeyfield"(III).

But the most powerful portrayal of this motif comes during the reaping scene at Marlott:

The narrow lane of stubble encompassing the field grew wider with each circuit, and the standing corn was reduced to smaller area as the morning wore on. Rabbits, hares, snakes, rats, mice, retreated inwards as into a fastness, unaware of the ephemeral nature of their refuge, and of the doom that awaited them later in the day when, their covert shrinking to a more and more horrible narrowness, they were huddled together, friends and foes, till the last few hundred yards of upright wheat fell also under the teeth of the unerring reaper, and they were every one put to death by the sticks and stones of the harvesters(XIV).

Other images of birds and animals, trapped in springs or with their necks broken, are frequently related to Tess. And this passage seems particularly to foreshadow the final capture of Tess at Stonehenge where sixteen policemen surround her and close in. More generally, this circle motif of containment expresses the restrictive aspect of society which continually stifles the free expression of Tess's \textit{\textsc{\'el}an vital}.

Ixion's wheel is thus the central symbolic image of \textit{Tess of the D'Urbervilles}. The cross within the circle symbolises Tess's suffering and sacrifice to society, her dilemma between mind and body, between "social convention and doing what comes naturally," and the suppression of her innate zest for living.

What is it in society that Hardy feels is so harmful to the natural life force which Tess personifies? Basically, his complaints are still those he harboured on returning from London in 1867. On the basis of Meredith's description of his first novel's contents—"a sweeping dramatic satire of the squirearchy and nobility, London society, the vulgarity of the middle class,
modern Christianity, church-restoration, and political and domestic morals in 45
general"—apart from his total attention on rural society, Hardy's politi­
cal grievances had hardly changed. There was, however, one additional topic
which further threatened the freedom of the individual. This was the spread
of industrialism which had increased in the two decades since 1867. The
subject had first been introduced in The Mayor of Casterbridge where Hardy
makes it plain that rural society cannot turn its back on mechanised farming.
But in Tess of the D'Urbervilles, with the image of "the red tyrant that the
women had come to serve" and that "kept up a despotic demand upon the endur­
ance of their muscles and nerves"(XLVII) has a much more ominous flavour,
suggesting that Hardy had changed his attitude towards mechanisation. But in
the main, Hardy's complaints in Tess of the D'Urbervilles are still over the
class system, religion, and the lack of concern, in the upper classes and in
society as a whole, for the plight of the individual.

Several of these political aspects of Tess of the D'Urbervilles are also
expressed through the two characters who possess Tess during the novel: Alec
and Angel. On the narrative level they make a love triangle with Tess. This
structure is foreshadowed with the first appearance of Alec from a "dark
triangular door"(V). But on the symbolic level, as befits a lyrical novel,
Alec and Angel are loaded with implication and meaning. Believable characters
in themselves, they become much larger than individuals as they represent
political elements of society. Through such representation, and through their
own struggle for Tess, Hardy is able to carry out a dialectical exploration of
his political themes through the narrative.

On the symbolic level, through their possession of Tess, Angel acts as
the agent of religious exploitation and Alec as the agent of class and capi­
talist exploitation. In their love affairs, they are inclined to ignore
Tess's concerns when their own are in jeopardy; this parallels the tendency
of the religious, capitalist and class systems they represent to neglect the individual's needs and values. For the portrayal of the religious situation in society, Hardy includes in his structural pattern the previously discussed polarity between mind and body where Alec's carnality and Angel's rationality impose upon Tess the already familiar tension of the cross. This disruptive tension in Tess's experiences is aptly associated with the fundamental religious triangle of Eve, Adam and Satan, through a series of allusions to the Garden of Eden where, in Christian doctrine, the conflict between mind and body first began. Angel and Tess are compared with Adam and Eve; Alec is likened to the serpent or Satan. Alec tempts Tess on their first meeting and later says: "A jester might say this is just like Paradise. You are Eve, and I am the old Other One come to tempt you in the disguise of an inferior animal"(L). Here the eating of the strawberry replaces the apple and this accounts for "the red interior of her mouth as if it had been a snake's"(XXVII) which Angel notices but does not understand, seeing her instead as "a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature"(XVIII). Hardy completes the Genesis triangle with a description of a feeling Tess and Angel had while they were alone in the fields—"a feeling of isolation, as if they were Adam and Eve"(XX).

This religious imagery also has ironic intent since Hardy was attacking the residue of such rigid Old Testament doctrine in Victorian society. Indeed, Hardy's attack on society has its strongest thrust against religion. The intensity of Hardy's feelings on this subject can be judged by a letter he wrote to Frederick Harrison about Tess of the D'Urbervilles: "In the first draft of the story I said much more on religion as apart from theology. But I thought it might do more harm than good, and omitted the arguments, merely retaining the conclusions." This statement is also important for its separation of religion from theology. For although Hardy's own complex problems of religious faith cannot be completely de-
tached from his attacks on the Church of England, his main arguments do seem to be based on practical and social grounds rather than on theoretical and doctrinal ones. What Hardy was primarily concerned about was the effect of religion upon the everyday lives of individuals.

Tess's seduction, her re-enactment of the Fall, is the root cause of her tragedy. But she would have recovered, Hardy implies, if it had not been for the unrepentant teachings of the Church of England. Similar basic assumptions can be found in the attitude of Pasternak in Doctor Zhivago; laws and rules, written in abstract form without sufficient humane consideration, cause too much suffering to be of much value. Thus Hardy's depiction of the Clare family is full of criticism. The large proportion of the book devoted to the Clares, especially to Angel, has generally been underestimated in critical assessment. Apart from the opening scene, Angel is the only character who appears as protagonist in major scenes without Tess.

In the first part of the story, Angel is depicted most favourably. In almost every aspect he seems admirable. His strength of character is evident in his refusal to follow in his father's footsteps, as expected: "I cannot honestly be ordained her minister, as my brothers are, while she refuses to liberate the mind from an untenable redemptive theolatry"(XVIII). Further, Angel is no snob like his brothers and at Talbothays mixes "communistically" (XXII) with other farm workers. He appears genuine in his distaste for "material distinctions of rank and wealth"(XVIII) and his progressive attitude supports his claim to "intellectual liberty"(XVIII). Finally in his courtship with Tess it is hard to disagree with Hardy when he says that Angel is "a man with a conscience"(XXV).

In short, it is difficult not to associate Angel with the character of the younger Hardy himself. And this suggestion of autobiography is strengthened by Angel having had a period of living in London, where like
Hardy, he got a broader outlook on life. And there is also another reason for building the character of Angel to such an admirable status. He was also to act as a foil to the rest of his family which personifies so many of the ills of Victorian society. Such a creditable emancipation from the rigid and bigoted views of the Clare family was to be Angel's highest achievement, however short-lived.

The first mention of Angel's father comes from the fanatical sign writer. As the instigator of this fanatic, the Rev. Clare is immediately exposed for the damage he is doing. It is not surprising, therefore, that the farm hands at Talbothays call him "the earnestest man in all Wessex" and "the last of the old Low Church sort"(XVII). He is even considered extreme by his colleagues. Hardy stresses his rigid attitude: "An evangelical of the evangelicals...he had in his raw youth made up his mind once for all on the deeper questions of existence, and admitted no further reasoning on them henceforward"(XXV). The rigidity of his faith is most effectively demonstrated when Angel shows disappointment over the black pudding and mead sent as a present to the Clare family by the Cricks. Angel tells his parents that he wants to tell the Cricks that the gifts were enjoyed. Mr. Clare's reply, "You cannot, if we did not"(XXV), has an inhuman ring to it.

Not surprisingly his two other sons have developed into narrow-minded prigs. Their attitudes have been formed not only by the religious dogma of their father but also by the Universities which Hardy attacked in his last novel, Jude the Obscure, for their maintenance of class prejudice and of religious sterility and suppression:

Each brother candidly recognised that there were a few unimportant scores of millions of outsiders in civilised society, persons who were neither University men nor churchmen; but were to be tolerated rather than reckoned with and respected(XXV).
This is hardly the attitude worthy of a local curate like Felix. Another indication of the attitudes of the Clare family can be found in their priorities over Angel's prospective wife. First her religion is considered, then her class, and only finally her personal accomplishments. Hardy, however, makes it quite clear that the father was sincere, and that he and his wife could be moved to compassion. He says indirectly, therefore, that it is religion that turns the Clares into life-denying and misery-causing agents in society, and that there is even greater potential danger from the later generation of people like Angel's brothers, indeed, like Angel himself.

Angel's reaction to Tess's confession is the central crisis of the novel. It demonstrates not only the continuing power of church doctrine to influence social action, but also the essential inhumanity of this doctrine. If there is any doubt as to the feasibility of such a volte face by Angel, Gide shows that this phenomenon was widespread enough to have become known across the English Channel:

Tu me rappelles certains Anglais: plus leur pensée s'émancipe, plus ils se raccrochent à la morale; c'est au point qu'il n'y a pas plus puritain que certains de leurs libres penseurs...

Hardy, in fact, speaks of Angel in almost the same terms as Gide:

With all his attempted independence of judgement this advanced and well-meaning young man, a sample product of the last five-and-twenty years, was yet the slave to custom and conventionality when surprised back into his early teachings(XXXIX).

Custom and conventionality are here despised by Hardy in one of his more forthright statements against British society. Religion is the root cause of Angel's rejection of Tess and the power of its hold is immediately apparent to Tess:

...she was appalled by the determination revealed in the depths of this gentle being she had married—the will to subdue the grosser to the subtler emotion, the
substance to the conception, the flesh to the spirit.(XXXVI).

The injustice of Angel's rejection of Tess after her confession is heightened by the fact that he had also committed a similar crime—even a worse one since it was an act of pure lust. Angel had also kept his own crime a secret, thereby deceiving Tess, whereas she had in good faith pushed a note of confession under his door. In all this, over and above the obvious criticism of society's double standards for the sexes, Hardy is making his attack on the vestigial elements of church doctrine that still had a strong influence upon conventions and laws of Victorian society.

On the other side of Tess's triangle is Alec. Representing the carnal on one level, as has already been shown, he also exemplifies the other aspect of Victorian society that Hardy has most grievances about after religion. This might best be termed as class oppression; it is the social system whereby Hardy sees the rich exploit the poor and cause widespread misery and suffering. In his early novels Hardy had often used the landed gentry as characters but by the 1890's they were vanishing fast and a new breed was appearing. Alec comes from this new group of parvenus who began to settle in Wessex:

When old Mr. Simon Stoke, latterly deceased, had made his fortune as an honest merchant (some said moneylender) in the North, he decided to settle as a county man in the South of England...and in doing this he felt the necessity of recommencing with a name that would not too readily identify him with the smart tradesman of the past...Conning for an hour in the British Museum the pages of works devoted to extinct, half-extinct, obscured, and ruined families... he considered D'Urberville looked and sounded as well as any of them; and D'Urberville accordingly was annexed to his own name for himself and his heirs eternally(V).

Hardy did have some respect for the old families of the nobility; Angel seems to be speaking for him when he says: "Politically I am sceptical as to the virtue of their being old....but lyrically, dramatically, and even historically, I am tenderly attached to them"(XXVI). But to Hardy the nouveau riche
nobility were much more odious. They are "compounded of money and ambition" (XIX), and show, like Alec, even less moral responsibility than their predecessors. Yet, since Hardy's audience was likely to be composed of much of this group, his criticism of them is still guarded, even in this later novel.

Hardy thus keeps much of his criticism on the symbolic and structural levels. But Alec, as a fictional character, still stands up to close analysis; he is not the stereotype seducer that many commentators claim. He is a dynamic and life-like character, and does indeed agonise over his strong sexual drive, lamenting "women's faces have had too much power over me" (XLV). He also comes to regret the damage he has done to Tess. Nevertheless, Hardy is careful to show him as the product of the parvenu class; his first pangs of conscience over Tess's predicament elicit only offers of financial help. And in his early dealings with Tess he shows a condescension towards her which almost denies her status as a human being: "You are mighty sensitive for a cottage girl" (VIII).

The dynamism of Alec's character is evident in his partial escape from these qualities of the new industrial class. From a selfish and irresponsible seducer, he becomes, through his abortive conversion, to a somewhat more humane and sincere outlook on life. His brief religious period has little importance to the general discussion of religious attitudes in the novel. It was "the mere freak of a careless man in search of a new sensation, and temporarily impressed by his mother's death" (XLVI). But it does allow Hardy to extract some irony out of Alec being converted by Angel's father. And further, it enables Hardy to make the structure of the novel more integrated: both Angel and Alec, emancipated in different ways from religion, resort temporarily to the church.

Tess's sexual plight at the hands of Alec and Angel, and by extension her spiritual and social plight, becomes symbolic of the situation of the
unprivileged individual in Victorian society. Such an individual's attempts to make a better life for himself, Hardy implies, will be as abortive as the journeys Tess undertakes with hope and resolution. Social improvements will be denied him by conventions and laws that protect the vested interests of the middle and upper classes; human improvements in life will be denied by rigid social and religious doctrines that take little heed of individual needs. Like Tess, the underprivileged are trapped within a circle of containment, and are destined for a life of want and unhappiness. Society appears to be run, not for the general well-being of the majority, but for the maintenance of well-being for a few.

The minor characters in the novel complement the three major ones in establishing the argument that society makes life unbearable for the underprivileged majority. Tess's father, impoverished and humiliated by changes in the agricultural society, takes to drink. Not only does society set him off on the path to self-destruction, it also leaves his family destitute at his death. The system of lifeholdings, which effectively prevented the poorer classes from ever acquiring property, evokes one of Hardy's most direct criticisms of society and forms an important part of the social background of the novel:

The village had formerly contained, side by side with the agricultural labourers, an interesting and better-informed class, ranking distinctly above the former—the class to which Tess's father and mother had belonged—and including the carpenter, the smith, the shoemaker, the huckster, together with nondescript workers other than farm labourers; a set of people who owed a certain stability of aim and conduct to the fact of their being life-holders like Tess's father, or copyholders, or, occasionally, small freeholders. But as the long holdings fell in they were seldom again let to similar tenants, and were mostly pulled down, if not absolutely required by the farmer for his hands. Cottagers who were not directly employed on the land were looked upon with disfavour, and the banishment of some starved the trade of others, who were thus obliged to follow. These families, who had formed the backbone of the village life in the past, who were the depositaries of the village traditions, had to seek refuge in the large centres; the process, humorously
designated by statisticians as "the tendency of the rural population towards the large towns," being really the tendency of water to flow uphill when forced by machinery(LI).

The fact that the people who concern Hardy here are "ranking distinctly above" the farm labourer again emphasises that Hardy was not primarily concerned with the rustic or agricultural labourer. Again he argues for the people just above this lowest class, for the people of his own family background.

In the same way, the only farming people that Hardy portrays in this novel—apart from Tess's labouring female friends, whose ancestors were actually of the upper class—are people of higher standing than the labourer. Crick represents the ideal of the old type of farmer; Groby runs a new kind of farm founded on the type of exploitation that came with industrialism. Here again, with these two farmers, Hardy uses a similar binary juxtaposition to the one of Alec and Angel. Where Crick exudes warmth and sympathy for his employees, Groby, the "tyrant"(XLVI), works his to the limits of endurance. Where Crick, in his shining white clothes, works side by side with his workers, Groby is an absentee owner who appears intermittently to drive his with threats. Thus the "sturdy middle-aged"(XVII) churchgoer faces the "well-to-do boor"(XLI) in yet another structural dialectic. But the contrast here is far too heavy handed. The good is too good and the bad too bad; the dialectic is too loaded to be of much effect.

A similar juxtaposition exists between the two other purveyors of religion outside the Clare family. The sign-writer and the Parson of Marlott both serve the same God but their attitudes are quite different. Appearing in the narrative immediately before and after the birth of Tess's illegitimate child, they form a careful structural contrast of religious attitudes. Where-as the Parson is humane and finally willing to adapt the rules of his religion to circumstances, the sign-writer is rigid and "cannot split hairs"(XII). The
sign-writer's texts are thus proudly "Crushing! Killing!" and Hardy sees them as "the last grotesque phase of a creed which had served mankind well in its time"(XII). The Parson, although perhaps trained in the mode of thinking followed by the sign-writer, has experienced "ten years of endeavour to graft technical belief on actual scepticism"(XIV). Unlike the sign-writer, the Parson has had to contend with the realities of life through human interaction. He is thus able to feel the "nobler impulses"(XIV) of granting that Tess's unbaptised child has rights of Christian burial. But there was still considerable difficulty for him in coming to this: "The man and the ecclesiastic fought within him, and the victory fell to the man"(XIV). Here is a most explicit instance of Hardy seeing religion as basically opposed to man's own interests.

Throughout the narrative, Tess "oscillates" between the worlds of these dialectically opposed characters—Angel and Alec, the sign-writer and the parson, farmers Crick and Groby. They cause her to undergo severe emotional disruption, and her potentially heroic, even goddess-like character is gradually subdued. Her experiences discourage her to the extent that she often contemplates suicide in order to escape the social realities of life. But, unable to resort to such a drastic remedy, she resorts, as we have seen, to practising schizophrenic separation from life instead. Tess's society is not interested in her as an individual, as Terry Eagleton says, rather "it takes her body for sexual or economic profit." Nevertheless her defeat is not ignoble; she maintains her dignity and does fight for her individual rights to the degree she is humanly able to. Her close identification with nature, and the purity of her intentions stand in direct contrast to the "artificial" requirements that society makes on individuals.

Tess thus stands as a symbol for political freedom and individual compassion. And in this, as James Hazen has demonstrated, she has an obvious
antecedent in Sophocles's Antigone. The two heroines both oppose moral blindness and become agents for improving mankind. Bernard Levin has claimed that Antigone's "moral or political dilemma" is "perhaps the best single example in all literature." Just as high a claim can be made for the less heroic nineteenth century Tess as a vehicle of political and moral dilemmas. In their crises, both heroines "act on the basis of conscience alone, rejecting prudence;" both believe in basic laws rather than doctrines; both are self-destructive and suicidal, become in fact scapegoats whose examples cause Creon and Angel to undergo "moral transformation" after their dependence on man made laws and values. Essentially, both Sophocles and Hardy explore the perennial antagonism between the instinctual laws of nature and the political laws created by man. And like many other writers, including Pasternak, they make a plea for understanding and compassion towards man as he tries to cope with his own human nature within organised and structured society.

In making this plea, Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* covers a wide range of social phenomena. And in its exposures and condemnations of Victorian society this novel clearly has political implications. Many of the basic systems that were utilised to maintain the *status quo*, to maintain the power of the rich, are shown to cause hardship and unhappiness. The underprivileged are prevented by the lifehold system from owning property, are denied higher education necessary for professional advancement, and are obstructed by the class system in any progress towards social, material or human advantages.

Above all it is religion that is attacked in this novel. The continuing application of outmoded doctrine makes the church the leading offender in society for preventing the enjoyment of a fulfilling individual
life. Hardy saw old religious doctrine in the same way that Solzhenitsyn sees Communist ideology in the Soviet Union today:

Ideology is dead indeed, but its malignant poison floods our souls and all our life. Ideology is dead, but it still makes of all of us slaves—and what is most terrifying in our regime is not that we are subordinated to rulers with unlimited power, but that our souls are in the claws of this ideology. Ideology maims our souls, it corrupts us.  

Hardy argued, through Angel, that religion should be for "the honour and glory of man" rather than of God(XVIII). He saw his society trapped between outmoded religious ideology and the threat of industrialism, both of which would deny the human values of everyday life. He was not, as a novelist, in a strong position to influence a change in the affairs of his country. In literature, as George Steiner has written, "there are no solutions, merely attempts to make our responses more adequate and of a more precise modesty."  

As the comparison with Pasternak has shown, Hardy attacks Victorian society through a poetic celebration of the human spirit. Avoiding direct political debate or propaganda like Doctor Zhivago, Tess of the D'Urbervilles concentrates instead upon evoking sympathetic response to its protagonist's tragic experience of life in society. In this way Hardy greatly improves upon the political satire of his early novels, and he has left us one of the finest examples of that tradition of Victorian fiction that speaks for humanity against the inhumanity of social structures and systems.
Footnotes

1 All quotations from this novel will be identified within the text by chapter reference to the 1912 edition.


5 Guerard, p. 17.

6 Ibid., p. 19.

7 Howe, p. 129.


9 Brown, p. 31.


14 Ibid., pp. 54, 56 and 59.

16  F. Hardy, The Life, pp. 312-14.


19  Ibid., p. 199.

20  Ibid., p. 197.


22  Ibid.


25  The title of "Phase the Second" in Tess of the D'Urbervilles.

26  The sub-title of Tess of the D'Urbervilles.


28  Note also the attempted suicide of Retty Priddle and the alcoholism of Marian as further examples of the vulnerability of women.

29  T. Hardy, The Woodlanders, ch. XXX.

30  Ibid., ch. XXXIX.

31  Southerington, p. 133.


34 Ibid.


36 Millgate, p. 277.


38 Brady, p. 10. He also points out that Sir James Frazer has demonstrated how "the whirling, spinning, blazing wheel has been associated from prehistoric times with the life-force."

39 See Tanner, pp. 225 and 230.


41 Brady, p. 6.

42 Ibid.


44 Hillis Miller, p. 80.


46 Since writing this, I have found Ian Gregor, in his new book, *The Great Web* (London, 1974), arguing that Hardy's world of Wessex "was created in terms of dialectic, a dialectic which took a variety of forms." See pp. 47-49, where his discussion of the dialectic nature of Hardy's juxtaposition of passion and sobriety closely follows my own discussion of the cross symbolism.
47 See Dorothy Van Ghent, The English Novel: Form and Function (New York, 1953), p. 254, where Angel and Alec are seen as "extremes of human behavior."

48 For Miltonic aspects of the Adam and Eve imagery see Allan Brick, "Paradise and Consciousness in Hardy's Tess," Nineteenth Century Fiction, 17 (1962), pp. 115-34.


52 Eagleton, p. 161.


55 Hazen, p. 212.

56 Ibid., p. 218.


58 George Steiner, Tolstoy or Dostoevsky (New York, 1959), p. 318.

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The Wessex Novels, published between 1871 and 1897, were revised by Hardy for a special Wessex Edition which was published in London by Macmillan in 1912. All references are to this definitive edition, but it seems preferable here to provide the original dates of publication so that a sense of chronology is established.

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__________ . Far From the Madding Crowd. 1874.

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__________ . The Trumpet-Major. 1880.

__________ . A Laodicean. 1881.

__________ . Two on a Tower. 1882.

__________ . The Mayor of Casterbridge. 1886.

__________ . The Woodlanders. 1887.

__________ . Tess of the D'Urbervilles. 1891.

__________ . Jude the Obscure. 1895.

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