PATTERNS OF CONFLICT IN HARDY'S MAJOR FICTION

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department
of English

We accept this thesis as conforming to the
required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
April, 1967
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Date April, 1967
ABSTRACT

The Return of the Native, The Mayor of Casterbridge, Tess of the d'Urbervilles, and Jude the Obscure, the four novels often referred to as Hardy's 'major' fiction, display an extraordinarily unified vision of life. This thesis is an attempt to analyze the thematic material common to these four novels through an examination of the poetic techniques—imagery and symbolism—which Hardy uses to enhance and amplify his explicit comments.

Patterns of contrast and conflict are basic to the structure of each of these four novels. The conflict which comprises the major theme of the works is developed on both external and internal levels. Externally, the conflict occurs between two worlds which Hardy establishes in the Wessex novels: the stable, traditional world of the peasant, and the uneasy, ever-changing world of modern, urban society. There are two groups of flat, non-developing characters in the novels, one for each of the two separate worlds which Hardy creates. They typify the values of the two worlds, functioning as choric groups speaking from opposed points of view. Most characters in the novels can be linked to one or the other of these two types by criteria such as their attitude toward religion, education, or the mechanization of life, and, more especially, their reactions to alcohol and musical rhythm, both of which act in these novels as touchstones to release the subconscious.

Internally, the conflict occurs in major characters who, because of their mixed backgrounds, feel allegiance to the values of both these worlds. The leading character in each of these four novels is cleft by a deep inner schism: he has a conscious ambition or quest, usually of an idealistic nature; at the same time he feels the dark pull of the subconscious. Instinctual needs rise from the subconscious to betray his conscious purposes. The conflict is the universal one between spirit and flesh.
Hardy's vision is both consistent and developing. In the four novels discussed, the same conflict between man's conscious striving after the ideal and his deep, subconscious needs prevails. But Hardy's understanding of the nature of this split in the human psyche grows, and his mode of rendering it evolves from a poetic, seemingly unconscious presentation toward increasingly explicit statement of the problem. As his perception develops, the key characters acquire more and more self-knowledge, progressing from the naivety which characterizes Clym Yeobright even at the end of *The Return of the Native* to the mature and penetrating appreciation of the human dilemma which Jude finally achieves.

*Jude the Obscure* represents a natural culmination of Hardy's novel-writing career, for it contains a full and explicit statement of the problem which Hardy has been exploring in these novels. He could scarcely have said more without becoming didactic. Of all the characters in these four novels Jude Fawley is the most significant thematically, for he achieves the greatest breadth of vision, the fullest understanding of the inner conflict in man which is the central theme of Hardy's fiction.
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Chapter 1 — The Essential Conflict

In April, 1862, when not quite twenty-two years of age, Hardy left his family's home in Dorset and started for London. The Great Exhibition of that year was about to be opened. Hardy's only previous contact with London had been in 1848 or 1849, when he had passed through with his mother on the way to visit relatives in Hertfordshire. ¹ His childhood and youth had been passed "in a lonely and silent spot between woodland and heathland ...the seven-roomed rambling house that stands easternmost of the few scattered dwellings called Higher Bockhampton, in the parish of Stinsford, Dorset."² It would seem, therefore, that in his own life Hardy experienced the violent juxtaposition of traditional, rural English life, and the modern, industrial conditions of London, then in its mid-Victorian zenith.

The extreme contrast between the real rural obscurity in which Hardy spent his childhood and London in full-hive activity, coming at this still impressionable age, may help to explain why, in most of Hardy's novels, there are two quite separate human worlds, the ancient peasant world of Wessex, and -- usually in the background, though prominent in a few novels -- the more sophisticated urban society of nineteenth-century England. Both worlds had their appeal for Hardy, and although most of his later life, after 1885, was spent at Max Gate, in Dorset, the Hardys continued to spend an extended annual sojourn in London for as long as Hardy's health permitted. Both worlds are rendered in Hardy's fiction.

In *The Return of the Native*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, and *Jude the Obscure*, four Hardy novels unified by a common theme, an important aspect of Hardy's subject is the conflict between the values associated with these two human worlds -- one urban and modern, the other rural and traditional. This conflict contributes to the thematic unity evident in these four novels. In each of the novels there is a confrontation between the two worlds and their inhabitants over issues which recur in all four works. Among the more important issues which Hardy employs to develop this contrast are education, religion, and the accelerating mechanization of life, particularly in the growth of railways and the introduction of agricultural machinery in Wessex.
The characters inhabiting the urban and rural worlds of Hardy's novels have sharply contrasting attitudes toward education. Those from the cities are learned, and value knowledge for its own sake, while the rustics are unschooled and have feelings ranging from indifference to scorn toward education. Learning is clearly one of the most important things separating the Yeobrights from their neighbours on the surrounding heath, though learning is perhaps only part of the more pervasive barrier of class consciousness, of which Mrs. Yeobright has an acute sense. That the Yeobrights are separate from the heath-folk is indicated by the first description of their house, Blooms-End, seen through the eyes of Eustacia Vye as she approaches:

the green bottom of the dale began to widen,
the furze bushes to recede yet further from
the path on each side, till they were diminished
to an isolated one here and there by the increasing fertility of the soil. Beyond the irregular carpet of grass was a row of white palings, which marked the verge of the heath in this latitude. They showed upon the dusky scene that they bordered as distinctly as white lace on velvet.\(^3\)

The neat white fence in juxtaposition with the wild irregularity of the heath seems distinct and anomalous. Like their house, the Yeobrights are close to the heath, yet distinct and separate too. The relationship of the folk to the heath seems to constitute their entire identity, but Clym's identity is many-sided. Though he has been raised on the heath, his education has separated him from its simplicity.

Speaking of education, Olly, the besom-maker, says:

How people do strive after it and get it! The class of folk that couldn't use to make a round 0 to save their bones from the pit can write their names now without a sputter of the pen, oftentimes without a single blot: what do I say?—why, almost without a desk to lean their stomachs and elbows upon. (24)

The peasant attitude to life is pragmatic to an extreme. The traditional crafts and skills they live by are the best learning for Wessex. At Talbothays, he who can milk the hard cow dry, skim the cream skillfully, or solve the problem of a tang in the butter is admired as knowledgeable. Farfrae secures the admiration of Casterbridge folk because he is able to
turn his knowledge to very practical use in restoring the 'grown' wheat. Though well schooled, Angel Clare recognizes that he lacks the great fund of natural knowledge necessary to run a farm. This is why he is at Talbothay's. The attitude of Jude Fawley toward learning -- as one part of his larger search for a mystical ideal, or for truth, basically, despite his youthful dreams of wealth and grandeur -- would be incomprehensible to the Wessex folk, just as Clym Yeobright's desire to lead them to the light is beyond their understanding. "'He'll never carry it out in the world,' said Fairway. 'In a few weeks he'll learn to see things otherwise.'" (202) Hardy notes that, "In passing from the bucolic to the intellectual life the intermediate stages are usually two at least, frequently many more." (203) Clym's intellectual evolution rests on that of his mother, placing a gap of at least one generation between him and the heath-folk.

The attitudes of the two groups toward religion differ just as radically as their opinions about education. The Christian church is associated with the educated classes, whereas pagan and superstitious practices alone seem meaningful to the peasants. In The Return of the Native only the dim-witted Christian, an object of scorn among the other Wessex characters, represents the fearful 'thou shalt not' Christian ethic among the peasants. At the pagan Fifth of November celebrations, the rites intensify to a demonic crescendo, but Christian stands aside disapprovingly:

Rainbarrow was a whirling of dark shapes amid a boiling confusion of sparks, which leapt around the dancers as high as their waists. The chief noises were women's shrill cries, men's laughter, Susan's stays and pattens, Olly Dowden's 'heu-heu-heu!' and the strumming of the wind upon the furze-bushes, which formed a kind of tune to the demonic measure they trod. Christian alone stood aloof, uneasily rocking himself as he murmured, 'They ought not to do it -- how the vlankers do fly! 'tis tempting the Wicked one, 'tis.' (33)

His voice is largely ignored. Their irreverence toward the Christian church is expressed by Grandfer Cantle when he says, "'Tis said that the last brew at the Woman is very pretty drinking. And, neighbours, if we should be a little late in the finishing, why, tomorrow's Sunday, and we can sleep it off!" (29)
The description of the village church at Marygreen given in the first chapter of *Jude the Obscure* indicates that, while the church may once have meant something to the folk, it no longer does because it has changed or evolved until it seems disconnected from the changeless, traditional order of things by which they live:

the original church, hump-backed, wood-turreted, and quaintly hipped, had been taken down, and either cracked up into heaps of road-metal in the lane, or utilized as pig-sty walls, garden-seats, guard-stones to fences, and rockeries in the flower-beds of the neighbourhood. In place of it a tall new building of modern Gothic design, unfamiliar to English eyes, had been erected on a new piece of ground by a certain obliterator of historic records who had run down from London and back in a day. The site whereon so long had stood the ancient temple to the Christian divinities was not even recorded on the green and level grass-plot that had immemorially been the churchyard, the obliterated graves being commemorated by eighteen-penny cast-iron crosses warranted to last five years.

The church has severed itself from the rural traditions of Wessex, and appears anomalous. In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, too, the Christian ethic is depicted as something which intrudes into the countryside as a striking incongruity. Tess, returning home after her seduction, sees painted on a stile the text:

\[ \text{THY, DAMNATION, SLUMBERETH, NOT. 2 Pet. ii. 3.} \]

Against the peaceful landscape, the pale, decaying tints of the copses, the blue air of the horizon, and the lichenized stile-boards, these staring vermilion words shone forth. They seemed to shout themselves out and make the atmosphere ring. (101)

The railways act as another symbol of contrast in these four novels. The creeping tentacles of railroad probing into the countryside are symbolic of the slow but certain encroachment of modern values upon the ancient, unchanged rural order. The railway is one of the signals of the death of this old life. Its speed and efficiency typify the new, mechanical rhythm which will superecede the traditional, seasonal harmonies of rural life. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the action of which is supposedly set "before the nineteenth century had reached one-third of its span," the encroachment has begun: "The railway had stretched out an arm towards Casterbridge at this time, but had not reached it by several miles as yet; so that the intervening distance, as well as the remainder
of the journey, was to be traversed by road in the old fashion."(305)

Later, in Tess of the d'Urbervilles, Tess and Angel carry the milk by cart from Talbothays to the railway station, which is imaged by Hardy in highly significant terms:

They crept along towards a point in the expense of shade just at hand at which a feeble light was beginning to assert its presence, a spot where, by day, a fitful white streak of steam at intervals upon the dark green background denoted intermittent moments of contact between their secluded world and modern life. Modern life stretched out its steam feeler to this point three or four times a day, touched the native existences, and quickly withdrew its feeler again, as if what it touched had been uncongenial. (239)

By the time of Jude the Obscure, set in the closing years of the nineteenth century, Hardy's characters travel by railway as a matter of course. Its presence is taken for granted, and the long, toilsome peregrinations which Hardy dwells on in novels set earlier in the century are gone. The pace of life has speeded up, and change is rapidly usurping the traditional way of life in Wessex. In this last novel only an occasional town, such as Shaston, has not been linked to urban centres by rail.

The antipathy between city and country, modernity and traditionalism, can also be seen in the introduction of new, more mechanical methods in agriculture. In The Return of the Native, Diggory Venn still practices the trade of reddleman, but Hardy speaks of it as almost extinct. In The Mayor of Casterbridge, Henchard is the representative of traditional rural life. A hay-trusser by trade, he scorns Farfrae's attempt to introduce the horse-drill (a mechanical sower) to the Casterbridge area. Their differing attitudes to the drill typify the overall contrast between the two men. Farfrae is enthusiastic about the machine because of his modern preoccupation with efficiency: "It will revolutionize sowing heerabout! No more sowers flinging their seed about broadcast, so that some falls by the wayside and some among thorns, and all that. Each grain will go straight to its intended place, and nowhere else whatever!" (194) Henchard impulsively dismisses the machine as ridiculous: "The thing—why 'tis impossible it should act. 'Twas brought here by one of our machinists on the recommendation of a jumped-up jackanapes of a fellow..."(193) Henchard has the dogged aversion to change characteristic of Wessex folk.
There is also a contrast between old and new agricultural methods in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. The first harvest described occurs when Tess has returned to Marlott and borne her child, Sorrow. There is a curious mixture of beauty and brutality in the harvest scene. Though the mechanical reaper makes "a ticking like the lovemaking of the grasshopper,"(110) it drives the animals of the field into the centre, trapping them in an ever-smaller patch of standing corn—a "horrible narrowness"—until they are clubbed to death by the harvesters. Tess binding sheaves is seen as the corn goddess Demeter, "pushing her left gloved hand under the bundle to meet the right on the other side, holding the corn in an embrace like that of a lover." Part of Tess' arm is bare and "as the day wears on its feminine smoothness becomes scarified by the stubble, and bleeds."(112) The picture has natural beauty, with the true mixed joy and pain of harvest. As Edith Hamilton notes, Demeter "knew pain as well as joy," for "What happens to the corn plants ... when the grain is harvested ... and the black frost sets in, killing the fresh green life of the fields?"(9)

In contrast to this traditional harvest is the later one at Flintcomb-Ash Farm, which is dominated by the steam threshing-machine: "the red tyrant that the women had come to serve—a timber-framed construction, with straps and wheels appertaining—the threshing-machine which, whilst it was going, kept up a despotic demand upon the endurance of their muscles and nerves."(414) The traditional human rhythm of the harvest has been displaced by a mechanical rhythm which makes the harvest a punishing ordeal. There is a suggestion that working the land has always been a hard task at Flintcomb-Ash, however, for the land there is ugly and barren, and the farmer a harsh taskmaster, similar to Farmer Troutham in *Jude the Obscure*, rapacious in his attitude to the land and his workers. Farming was ceasing to be an activity which bound people in a close and stable relationship with nature and one another. It was becoming a business, with farmer and worker alike interested in the financial gains which efficiency brings. The close relations between the workers at Talbothays, the fond, paternal attitude of Mr. Crick toward his helpers, and the unanimous concern of the whole farm when the butter is found to have a strange taste -- all these are missing from Flintcomb-Ash. The farm laborers have become migratory, moving too fast
to form any local allegiances to places or people. Hardy mourns the change.

Most of the characters in these four novels — particularly the minor figures — belong clearly to one or the other of the two worlds which Hardy renders in his fiction. Most of these minor characters undergo little or no development; they seem typical, rather than real individuals. Of two basic types, they could perhaps be termed sophisticates and rustics. One could criticize these two character types as being flat and unreal, and categorize them as artistic failures. It is also possible, however, that this typical, choric effect is just what Hardy wished to achieve with many of his minor characters. The reader of these four novels falls under a cumulative effect: because clusters of related traits accumulate around these two sets of figures, the two types become symbolic of two different aspects of the human psyche. In representing these two areas of the psyche in contrasting character types, Hardy externalizes and gives dramatic force to an internal psychological conflict which is of central importance in these novels.

The perception of two typical figures — real figures, Plato would term them — one the basis of the Wessex folk met in the novels and the other the model of the modern characters, leads to curiosity about the facets of human nature Hardy is attempting to explore through them. In these four novels Hardy repeatedly employs two touchstones to reveal which of these two basic types different characters may resemble. These touchstones are alcohol, and rhythm in music and the dance; both of these act upon the emotional, non-rational part of human nature: when people are under their influence, the intellect is subordinate to the passions. In all four of these novels, the peasants have a strong predilection toward both liquor and music, while the modern characters either have a disdain for them, as Angel's parents do toward liquor, or a seeming indifference, as in the case of Clym. The susceptibility or non-susceptibility of Hardy's characters to liquor or music is an important indicator of their basic character type. Those who respond to these indicators readily and naturally are those who are no strangers to their own sensual natures, while those who reject them are the people who have sacrificed the flesh for the sake of the development of the spirit, or
In *The Return of the Native* there is much discussion among the peasants of the "brew" at the Quiet Woman. When Mrs. Yeobright is found ill on the heath, brandy is the remedy resorted to by the heath dwellers. And Olly Dowden persists until Wildeve keeps the promise he had made to send her sick husband a bottle of wine on the occasion of his marriage to Thomasin. Yet, though Wildeve is the owner of the Quiet Woman, we never see him drinking, for he is essentially an urban character, of a type similar to Alec d'Urberville.

Similarly, music is associated chiefly with the rural folk in *The Return of the Native*. The dance which occurs among the "denizens of the heath"(69) at the Fifth of November fire-lighting is a significant expression of their relationship to the heath. The demonic stamping in the embers of the fire expresses both their subconscious sense of harmony with the earth, and their promethean defiance of its vast and indifferent power. Christian no sooner says that the satanic rites will tempt the evil one when the reedleman appears, as though rising out of the heath. Fairway says, "I thought, whatever fiery mommet is this come to trouble us?...I half thought "twas the devil."(34) It is as though the dance has summoned some response from a supernatural world closely associated with the heath.

When Eustacia and Wildeve slip away to a "gipsying" at East Egdon, which occurs in a chapter entitled "She Goes Out to do Battle against Depression," it is like a journey into the subconscious, into their desire for one another, which has largely been repressed despite the unhappiness of both their marriages. As they dance together, it is as though they enter into another dimension:

How near she was to Wildeve! it was terrible to think of. She could feel his breathing, and he, of course, could feel hers....The enchantment of the dance surprised her. A clear line of difference divided like a tangible fence her experience within this maze of motion from her experience without it. Her beginning to dance had been like a change of atmosphere; outside,
she had been steeped in arctic frigidity by comparison with the tropical sensations here. (310)

Later, Hardy becomes even more explicit about what is happening when he says, "The dance had come like an irresistible attack upon whatever sense of social order there was in their minds, to drive them back into old paths which were now doubly irregular." (311) The dance has in fact acted as a catalyst to release their repressed sensuality, hitherto banished into their subconscious because of the necessity of adhering to the social order.

In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, interest in the effects of alcohol and music centres largely in Henchard. Liquor releases emotions and impulses which are repressed in Henchard at other times, and produces behavior which he would never allow himself when sober. The transition from rationality to irrationality which alcohol causes in Henchard is described in detailed steps in the very first chapter, as he passes through a progression of emotions in the furmity-maker's tent: the first drinks of rum (which is smuggled rum, produced from under Mrs. Goodenough's counter, where it is kept hidden) produce a mood of 'serenity' and 'joviality'; then Henchard becomes 'argumentative', 'overbearing', even 'brilliantly quarrelsome'; finally, he arrives at a "contemplative bitterness that was well-nigh resentful." (7)

Henchard is not his usual self, then, when he sells his wife; the next morning the events of the drunken evening seem like a dream, and only the reality of Newson's money and Susan's wedding ring in his pocket convinces him otherwise. Henchard's oath, sworn on the altar of asceticism in a Christian church, not to touch liquor for twenty-one years, is really a vow that he will not allow his subconscious to master him. The conscious self which conquers and begins to reign at this point -- the ego, in Freudian terms -- cannot accept a Bacchanalian life devoted to gratification of impulse. And Henchard struggles with himself heroically for a long time before he breaks down, and his other nature reasserts itself. 11 During this period, his behavior often shows that, "though under a long reign of self-control he had become Mayor and churchwarden and what not, there was still the same unruly volcanic stuff beneath the rind of Michael Henchard as when he had sold his wife as Weydon Fair." (129) Finally, one Sunday, "The flush upon his face proclaimed
that the vow of twenty-one years had lapsed, and the era of recklessness begun anew."

In contrast to Henchard, Farfrae and the other sophisticated characters in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* seem entirely indifferent to alcohol. The folk of Casterbridge, on the other hand, imbibe regularly, and, with the exception of the sinister debauchery at Peter's Finger, in Mixen Lane, are content, on Sundays, to limit themselves to "half-a-pint of liquor"(266) after church. Their sensual natures have never been repressed, and therefore there is no split in their character. Drinking is not a moral issue. Light and dark are to them still one so they do not regret the dark acts they do. This is illustrated in the contrast in attitude toward the skimmity ride between the officials of Casterbridge and those involved in it.

Music, too, has a powerful effect on Henchard's nature. When he arranges a meeting with Farfrae in the loft of the corn-stores thirty to forty feet above ground level, intending to fight with him till the death of one or the other, Farfrae arrives singing one of his Scottish songs. Henchard is rendered powerless by Farfrae's song as if by a charm, for "Nothing moved Henchard like an old melody."(312) He remembers how, in the early stages of his acquaintance with Farfrae, the younger man "so commanded his heart that [he] could play upon him as on an instrument."(316) Later, when Henchard feels completely isolated and outcast, he has a deep need for this charmlike influence which music can exert over him:

If he could have summoned music to his aid his existence might even now have been borne; for with Henchard music was of regal power. The merest trumpet or organ tone was enough to move him, and high harmonies transubstantiated him. But hard fate had ordained that he should be unable to call up this Divine spirit in his need.(341)

Lacking music, Henchard, like the goldfinch ("the poor little songster") which is symbolic of him, is "starved to death."(379)

Music, then, can call forth the benevolence and generosity which are essential ingredients of Henchard's character. But it can also release those impulses of a less noble kind which form part of
Henchard's character and which plague him all his life to produce his tragic but inevitable death. In a brilliant scene at the Three Mariners Inn, the effects of both music and liquor are seen operating simultaneously upon Henchard's rash nature. Blasphemously drunk one Sunday, and consumed by jealousy over the marriage of Farfrae and Lucetta, he forces the church choir to sing "Psalm the Hundred-and-Ninth, to the tune of Wiltshire: verses ten to fifteen."(268) The choir is loathe to sing the series of prophetic curses in these verses, but cannot resist the "volcanic fires"(the imagery suggests something forcing its way up from heated depths, forcing its way through a cold surface crust) of Henchard's character at this point. Afterwards, when Farfrae and Lucetta are seen coming from church, Henchard says, "There's the man we've been singing about."(269) Since music can summon both benevolent and hostile emotions from Henchard's subconscious, it acts, like liquor, as a definite power to influence his behavior. Both act directly upon the rash impulsiveness which lies at the root of his nature.

In contrast to Henchard, Farfrae seems totally indifferent to alcoholic beverages, resembling Clym Yeobright in this respect. He is seldom shown drinking and when, immediately after being hired by Henchard one morning, he is invited in for some "home-brewed," Farfrae replies, "It is too airly in the morning for that."(73) Similarly, though Farfrae is highly skilled musically (being able to sing and dance to perfection), he seems essentially unmoved by music. On his first evening in Casterbridge, Farfrae joins the townsfolk in the "general sitting-room" of the Three Mariners Inn and begins to sing Scottish songs "in a melody and accent of peculiar charm."(58) His simple listeners are inspired by the thought of a place wonderful enough to inspire such a performance, but Christopher Coney raises a key point when he asks, "What did ye come from yer own country for, young maister, if ye be so wounded about it?"(60) Coney and the others equate Farfrae and his singing with the deep emotion which it stimulates in them, not perceiving that with Farfrae, in whom the rational element is completely dominant, music is an expression, not of deep feeling, but of skill. At his wedding to Elizabeth-Jane, Hardy depicts Farfrae "giving strong expression to a song of his dear native country that he loved so well as never to have revisited it."(373)
Elizabeth-Jane has both the balance and control of Farfrae and the emotional capacity of Henchard, for though, like the folk of Casterbridge, she is 'enraptured' by Farfrae's singing, music never causes her to act against her rational judgment.

Music is introduced in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* almost immediately, for when the novel opens Tess is engaged in a somewhat vestigial May-Day celebration, which culminates in open-air dancing. To the other villagers of Marlott, the dance is sensual self-expression, but to Tess, still in a state of virginal innocence, it is merely amusement:

> she enjoyed treading a measure purely for its own sake; little divining when she saw 'the soft torments, the bitter sweets, the pleasing pains, and the agreeable distresses' of those girls who had been wooed and won, what she herself was capable of in that kind. The struggles and wrangles of the lads for her hand in a jig were an amusement to her—no more; and when they became fierce she rebuked them.

Tess holds herself aloof from the pagan, sensual pleasure which the others find in the May-Day dancing. Angel's two brothers, happening on the scene, hold aloof even more frigidly; when Angel suggests that they join in the dancing, one replies,

> "No--no; nonsense!...Dancing in public with a troop of country hoydens--suppose we should be seen! Come along, or it will be dark before we get to Stourcastle, and there's no place we can sleep nearer than that; besides, we must get through another Chapter of *A Counterblast to Agnosticism* before we turn in.

This aloofness in Tess is seen even more distinctly in her behavior on the September evening on which the Trantridge cottagers go to celebrate in Chaseborough. Again Hardy uses the effects of music and alcohol in conjunction to indicate a passionate release of subconscious energy. Tess' fellow workers have been drinking and are enjoying "a private little jig at the house of a hay-trusser and peat-dealer who had transactions with their farm" when she finds them. Again Tess holds back, and refuses to enter the storage barn where the others are dancing madly, even though outside lingers Alec d'Urberville with "the red coal of his cigar."
As with Eustacia and Wildeve, the music and dancing again seem to metamorphize those who engage in it:

she beheld indistinct forms racing up and down to the figure of the dance, the silence of their footfalls arising from their being overshoe in "scroff"—that is to say, the powdery residuum from the storage of peat and other products, the stirring of which by their turbulent feet created the nebulosity that involved the scene. Through this floating, fusty, 'debris' of peat and hay, mixed with the perspirations and warmth of the dancers, and forming together a sort of vegeto-human pollen, the muted fiddles feebly pushed their notes, in marked contrast to the spirit with which the measure was trodden out....Of the rushing couples there could barely be discerned more than the high lights—the indistinctness shaping them to satyrs clasping nymphs—a multiplicity of Pans whirling a multiplicity of Syrinxes; Lotis attempting to elude Priapus, and always failing.(77)

Hardy here carefully indicates that the dancing is a function of the most natural kind. The behavior of the dancers becomes promiscuous, and selection of partners is made on a purely sexual basis. Once the pairing on this basis has been completed the dancers are transported from ordinary concrete reality into another dimension: "It was then that the ecstasy and the dream began, in which emotion was the matter of the universe, and matter but an adventitious intrusion likely to hinder you from spinning where you wanted to spin."(79)

There is something essentially innocent about this abandonment, for a young man who asks Tess to join the dancing with him is described as having a "straw hat so far back upon his head that the brim encircled it like the nimbus of a saint."(78) Later, while the peasants are returning to Trantridge, each seems to have a halo in the moonlight, and their erratic motions seemed an inherent part of the irradiation, and the fumes of their breathing a component of the night's mist; the spirit of the scene, and of the moonlight, and of Nature, seemed harmoniously to mingle with the spirit of wine.(84)

Here, enhanced, made more magnificent, is the same vision achieved earlier while they were dancing in a mist of "vegeto-human pollen"—a vision of these folk as an integral part of Nature or the universe.
It is this deep, unconscious unity or harmony with the universe which Tess seems to reject in holding herself aloof from the music and the wine. These are symbolic of the traditional way of life and her rejection of them represents a larger rejection of this entire rural, peasant world. Tess' refusal to participate in this natural abandon of the folk leads her into another dance of a more sinister kind, for as she rides along with Alec they are arm-in-arm, and among the verbs used to describe the horse's motion are 'ambled' and 'sidled.' Instead of the golden, glowing mist which characterized the peasant dance there are "webs of vapour which ...formed veils between the trees"(89) in the Chase. Tess' rejection of the innocent peasant sensuality indicates a split in her nature. Unlike the peasants, who express their whole nature in this abandoned dancing, Tess is divided between the sinister, somehow evil dance with Alec in the Chase, and the spiritualized music of Angel Clare's harp. Both attract her. This division between the sinister and the ideal is sharply given in the passage at Talbothays when Tess creeps through a weed-filled outskirt of a garden stealthily as a cat ...gathering cuckoo-spittle on her skirts, cracking snails that were under-foot, staining her hands with thistle-milk and slug-slime, and rubbing off upon her naked arms sticky blights which, though snow-white on the apple-tree trunks, made madder stains on her skin; thus she drew quite near to Clare, still unobserved of him.(158)

The contrast between the ethereal harp-music and the staining weeds is analogous to the contrast between Angel and Alec, each of whom appeals to a different element in Tess. When Tess and Angel in their last wandering reach Stonehenge, "A very temple of the Winds," (501) a new and strange kind of music is heard: "The wind, playing upon the edifice, produced a booming tune, like the note of some gigantic one-stringed harp." (501) Somehow Tess has transcended the division in herself, achieving a union of the natural and spiritual, represented here by the wind and the harp-like music it produces. Stonehenge is a temple, but a pagan one. The union between the natural and the spiritual which it symbolizes for Hardy is analogous to the union between the physical and the spiritual, the Dionysiac and Apollonian tendencies in Tess and Angel, which Hardy suggests they briefly achieve before Tess' death.
Young Jude, the naive, sincere country boy, has a strong feeling for music. One of the facts which reinforces his desire to go to Christminster is a carter's statement to him that, "As for music, there's beautiful music everywhere in Christminster."(23) Music is associated by Jude with the ideal, rather than the sensual. Hardy indicates that Jude is naive and confused about the effect music has on him, by revealing the reality behind a popular hymn of the period, 'The Foot of the Cross.' Convinced that the writer of such a hymn must be a great "man of soul,"(233) Jude goes to visit him, only to find that he is "one of the most commonplace men"(243) he has ever met. What is significant about this hymn is not any vision of the ideal expressed by it, but rather the effect it has in releasing the subconscious of Jude and Sue. A few weeks after meeting the hymnwriter, Jude plays the tune while waiting alone for Sue in her schoolroom. Sue arrives and plays it more expertly. Despite the fact that the hymn has been destroyed for Jude as a symbol of the ideal, and though Sue's sympathies at this point are pagan rather than Christian, it moves them very strongly — but in a strange way, which they cannot understand:

She played on, and suddenly turned round;
and by an unpremeditated instinct each clasped
the other's hand again.
She uttered a forced little laugh as she
relinquished his quickly. 'How funny!' she said.
'I wonder what we both did that for?'
I suppose because we are both alike, as I
said before.'
'Not in our thoughts! Perhaps a little in
our feelings.'
'And they rule thoughts...! (243)

Their behavior for the rest of this scene indicates that a turning point has been reached in their relationship; Sue becomes restless and "flushed," aware of reciprocation of "feelings" between Jude and herself. Her marriage to Phillotson begins to fall apart. Acting to release their subconscious desires, the music of this hymn has served the same function for Jude and Sue as did the dancing for Eustacia and Wildeve, though it forebodes in a different way.

Liquor is most closely associated in this last novel with the figure of Arabella, who is at the same time the only representative of
the rural world, aside from Widow Edlin, of any importance. Hardy makes
the connection almost too obvious in having Arabella become barmaid. Jude
tends to drink when his aspirations are frustrated, and then his behavior
under the influence of alcohol is similar to that of Henchard. When dis­
couraged about his fate as a student and his "hopeless relations with Sue,"
(141) he enters an "obscure and low-ceiled tavern," becomes drunk, and
blasphemously recites the Creed in Latin on a dare from the 'habitues'
of the place. Also, it is by getting Jude inebriated that Arabella is
married to him for the second time.

The patterns of conflict which form the basis of these four
Hardy novels operate on both external and internal levels. The external
conflict consists in the contrast between the values of the two groups
habiting the two separate worlds of these novels. We see in the novels
both two societies, two ways of life, struggling against one another, and
also typical representatives of the two societies, such as Farfrae and
Henchard, in conflict with each other. Much more important than this
external contrast and conflict, however, is the internal split exhibited
in many of the most important characters, who have been in contact with
both rural and urban worlds, as Hardy had, and therefore have the values
of both worlds in their natures. This inner split has already been sug­
gested in some of the chief characters in discussing their ambivalent
reactions toward alcohol and musical rhythm. It is in these split char­
acters that the major theme of the novels centres.

Having come in contact with modern life, these central figures
accept it as something with which they must cope. To ignore modern,
urban life, with its conscious values, would be to attempt to escape an
essential aspect of reality. Perhaps Clym attempts to do this in return­
ing to the heath, but his nature has been changed and split by his educa­
tion, and his attempt to achieve a resolution by bringing what he regards
as his new moral wisdom to the people of the heath fails completely. The
most significant people of these four novels are those whose intellects
have expanded to the point where they can no longer rest satisfied in the
traditional world in which they had their earliest and deepest roots, yet
whose attempts to cope rationally with the newer world meet with frust­
ration and even disaster. The essential conflict in these novels is the
same when considered either externally or internally, for the values of
the two worlds which Hardy creates in the novels are all found in opposition in his major characters. The gap between traditional and modern, between rural and urban, is the gap between emotion and intellect, the irrational and the rational, the subconscious and the conscious self, or, as Hardy finally stated it in the Preface to *Jude the Obscure*, "between flesh and spirit."(vi)¹² The "deadly war" which Hardy acknowledges in this Preface between the two is the basis of the action in each of these four novels.
Chapter 2 — The Return of the Native

The important characters in these four novels have a great deal in common with one another, and a similar pattern is repeated in each of the four novels. In each one, the chief character is of obscure rural origin, but has been split into a double allegiance to his past and to an ambition or ideal which puts him in conflict with the inertia and changelessness of his traditional environment. Early in the action of each novel, the leading character becomes isolated in a solitary quest. Clym, Henchard, Tess, and Jude can not achieve complete harmony with either the earth or modern society. Each is trying to assert himself, to break with his past in some significant respect, and to fulfil himself in a unique pattern determined by his own nature. As Hardy said, "You may regard a throng of people as containing a certain small minority who have sensitive souls; these, and the aspects of these, being what is worth observing. So you divide them into the mentally unquickened, mechanical, soulless; and the living, throbbing, suffering, vital. In other words into souls and machines, ether and clay."¹

The significant characters in these novels are those who suffer. The other characters are very much in the background. Resembling one or the other of the two types discussed in the previous chapter, the minor characters seem to function as two choric groups commenting from contrasting points of view and so helping to delineate the conflict in the novels. Because the minor characters tend to be typical, and because they are not directly involved in the conflict in which the novels centre, the focus of the novels centres almost entirely in these key figures — that is, in those who embody the entire conflict rather than one side only.

The significant characters in the novels are all figures of change. Psychical evolution² has occurred in the personality of each, and they have become too self-conscious to remain entranced by the seasonal harmonies of the earth. Though they have moved out of the rhythm of Wessex life and have "reached a degree of intelligence which
Nature never contemplated when framing her laws, and for which she consequently has provided no adequate satisfactions, the chief characters in these four novels seem unable to find their places in modern society. As isolated figures of change, they seem vulnerable to attack by many forces, for in disrupting a harmony they create a tension. In Hardy's view, there is a hostility to change in the universe which makes it a painful process. Speaking of change he said, "It is the on-going—i.e. the 'becoming'—of the world that produces its sadness. If the world stood still at a felicitous moment there would be no sadness in it. The sun and the moon standing still on Ajalon was not a catastrophe for Israel, but a type of Paradise."

However, like Wallace Stevens in "Sunday Morning," Hardy perceives that the burden imposed by time and change is one which must be accepted if life is to have any meaning. In these four novels, though the peasants may at times seem enviable because they have succeeded in evading time, they are finally judged less worthy than those who attempt to deal with the continuous expansion of the human consciousness which results from time's passing. The leading characters of these four novels, with the possible exception of Clym Yeobright, are committed to the inevitability of time's passing, with its accompanying change and resulting tension between old and new. One of the reasons why Clym is the least impressive of Hardy's heroes—the heroic energy of the novel being syphoned off to Eustacia—is that he cannot decide what his attitude to time will be. He seems both to want to stand still in illusion or oblivion, furze-cutting on the heath with robot motions, and to accept the challenge posed by the expansion of the modern consciousness. The conflict paralyzes him.

The traditional rural life satisfies the sensual needs of the flesh; the modern, urban life appeals to the restlessness of the intellect. The novels suggest that a man can live in reasonable contentment in either world if he knows how to deal with it. Both the peasants and the Clare family seem to deal with life adequately in their different ways. But the most significant characters in the novels are split by their
allegiance to both worlds. They are still pulled by the sensual, primitive forces which move the Wessex folk, yet they have become too conscious of themselves as individuals with unique needs to remain quiescent in the dark grasp of forces felt but never known. Too much has been made of the seeming passivity of Hardy's characters. As they begin life they are decidedly otherwise. It is only after failing in their quest—the quest for what Yeats termed "unity of being"—that they lapse into passivity.

Despite their attempts to exert their wills, their determination to strive rationally and consciously toward a defined objective, Hardy's key characters are betrayed by powerful, subconscious, irrational forces within their own beings. Unlike the members of the Clare family, for example, Tess has been unable to subjugate completely the darker needs of her nature. Having had her earliest roots in the peasant life of Wessex, Tess—like Clym, Henchard, and Jude—feels the dark pull of rural traditions, the seasonal harmonies, the earth itself.

Because of his naivety and lack of self-knowledge, Clym Yeobright appears to be a maze of contradictions. In later novels the protagonists become increasingly aware of the conflict within themselves, but Clym seems not to realize that there are warring forces in him. Eleanor McCann attributes Clym's naivety to Hardy's failure "to achieve conscious knowledge of his hero's basic motivation." She notes that "Hardy expatiates upon his hero's philosophical credo, but Clym Yeobright's psychic life remains disturbingly vague." As the novel proceeds, Clym steadily deteriorates under the pressure of conflict which he can do nothing to resolve because he does not understand it. Clym as first described has a touch of beauty, but it is doomed:

The beauty here visible would in no long time be ruthlessly overrun by its parasite, thought, which might just as well have fed upon a plainer exterior where there was nothing it would harm. Had Heaven preserved Yeobright from a wearing habit of meditation, people would have said, 'A handsome man.' Had his brain unfolded under sharper contours they would have said, 'A thoughtful man.' But an inner strenuousness was preying upon an outer symmetry, and they rated his look as singular. (161-62)
Though at first "the deity that lies ignominiously chained within an ephemeral human carcase shone out of him like a ray," so that Eustacia "was troubled at Yeobright's presence," Clym rapidly attains the blind and aged appearance we note at the end of the novel:

The speaker was bareheaded, and the breeze at each waft gently lifted and lowered his hair, somewhat too thin for a man of his years, these still numbering less than thirty-three. He wore a shade over his eyes, and his face was pensive and lined.

(484)

This rapid physical decay is inherent in the "inner strenuousness" which Hardy points out in Clym at the very first.

Clym's education has sent him on the Platonic quest for the ultimate or real truth, lying beyond the phenomenal world with which the Wessex peasants are still completely satisfied. Thomas Mann notes the effect which this quest has had on educated men since Plato:

Because of this discriminating distinction between the phenomenon and the idea, between the empiric and the intellectual, between the world of truth and the world of appearance, between the temporal and the eternal, the life of Plato was a very great event in the history of the human spirit...

Everyone feels that something profoundly moral attaches to this elevation of the ideal as the only actual, above the ephemeralness and multiplicity of the phenomenal, this DEVALUATION of the senses to the advantage of the eternal.... For in a way the transitory phenomenon, and the sensual attaching to it, are thereby put into a state of sin: he alone finds truth and salvation who turns his face to the eternal.

Hardy stated the quest of the artist as follows: "There is, of course, underlying the fantasy followed by the visionary artist the truth that all men are pursuing a shadow, the Unattainable." Hardy's view of modern man as a phenomenal creature who is nevertheless committed to a quest for something immaterial and beyond his reach is central to an understanding of his vision in these four novels.
Clym perceives the provisional nature of human existence, whether rural or urban, and feels a compulsion to quest after something more. The dark, unconscious sensuality of the peasant and the highly conscious, somewhat fetishistic sensuality of the Parisians (and Eustacia) are both inadequate to satisfy him. Speaking to Sam and Fairway about his reasons for returning to Egdon, Clym says,

I found that I was trying to be like people who had hardly anything in common with myself. I was endeavoring to put off one sort of life for another sort of life, which was not better than the life I had known before. It was simply different. (201)

Clym is the visionary, the mystic for whom physical or material satisfactions are inadequate, for whom sensual pleasures are frustrating agents in a search for fulfilment of a more spiritual kind.

Clym went to the city initially not for material gain, but because he envisioned people there as being more engrossed than Wessex folk in the pursuit of the ideals he had come into contact with through his education. When disillusioned in this belief, he returns home. Clym's return to the heath appears to be an irrational act, motivated by the rebellion of the subconscious against his attempts to achieve an existence in some ideal sphere such as Reverend Clare inhabits in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. Mrs. Yeobright perceives the irrationality of Clym's return; unable to understand his indifference to worldly success, she chastizes him for his dreaminess and lack of practicality. But though the instinctual is reasserting its claim over Clym in bringing him home to the heath, he remains fatally ignorant of this in his conscious self, naively continuing his attempt to assert ideal values on the heath. The conflict between conscious and subconscious, the ideal and the sensual, remains unresolved.

Clym's decision to marry Eustacia reveals the ambivalence in his nature even more than his return to Egdon. The marriage is a much clearer indication of the split in his psyche because, while the return to the heath can be made plausibly congruent with his aspirations - "I've come home because, all things considered, I can be a trifle less useless here than anywhere else" (201) - it is obvious
to everyone but Clym that the marriage conflicts entirely with his ideals. As Eleanor McCann states, "Clym, so intent on inner wisdom, thinks of Eustacia as a maturing philosopher like himself, whereas Eustacia is so blind to philosophy that she doesn't even recognize it in Clym. Both are eager to delude themselves and slow to be disillusioned."^10

On the evening Clym proposes to Eustacia, they are on the heath watching an eclipse of the moon. The moon is both the most corporeal of the heavenly bodies and the most ethereal body which men have felt to be closely associated with the earth, the stars and other planets seeming remote in comparison. Its equivocal position is similar to the ambivalence between heavenly and earthly, the ideal and the sensual, in Clym's nature. In this scene the moon becomes symbolic of Clym's aspirations toward the ideal, while Eustacia is identified with the eclipse. Clym is associated with the moon at the outset. Waiting for Eustacia, he lies "upon the barrow, his face towards the moon, which depicted a small image of herself in each of his eyes." (229-30) Contemplating the moon he escapes from his physical surroundings and the dilemma which the conflict between Eustacia and Clym's mother has produced, and performs an imaginary journey to an ideal world:

More than ever he longed to be in some world where personal ambition was not the only recognizable form of progress - such, perhaps, as might have been the case at some time or other in the silvery globe then shining upon him. His eye travelled over the length and breadth of that distant country...till he almost felt himself to be voyaging bodily through its wild scenes. (230)

This illusory voyage allows Clym to escape briefly from the conflict and stress of reality.

Eustacia's arrival coincides with the first trace of the eclipse on the moon's surface. As they talk, the eclipse, which is described as a stain or shadow, gradually engulfs the light. The conflict between Eustacia and Clym's ideal dreams is made symbolically clear, but Clym seems unable to perceive the antipathy between them, for he mistakenly identifies Eustacia with his aspirations. Just
as he had studied the moon's lineaments while dreaming of escape from the real world, he looks at Eustacia, identifying her with his dream: "I love you to oppressiveness - I, who have never felt more than a pleasant passing fancy for any woman I have ever seen. Let me look right into your moonlit face, and dwell on every line and curve in it!" (23l) The coincidence of the eclipse and Clym's proposal of marriage indicates that he will never realize his ideal visions. Unknowing, he has allowed his desire for light to be betrayed by himself, by his passion for Eustacia, about the nature of which he willingly deludes himself.

Just as Clym is unable to reconcile what he learned as a student with his character as formed when a boy on the heath, he is also incapable of resolving the open conflict which breaks out over him between Mrs. Yeobright and Eustacia. He is drawn to both women, though they are quite opposite in nature. Each lacks balance: Mrs. Yeobright lives by rational, conscious principles which govern her behavior for the most part, while Eustacia has a passionate, sensual nature which she is unable to control. For Thomasin, who seems to have a balance in her character of both feeling and control, Clym feels but little. He is drawn to the other two figures because, like them, he lacks proportion:

Was Yeobright's mind well-proportioned? No. A well-proportioned mind is one which shows no particular bias; one of which we may safely say that it will never cause its owner to be confined as a madman, tortured as a heretic, or crucified as a blasphemer. Also, on the other hand, that it will never cause him to be applauded as a prophet, revered as a priest, or exalted as a king. Its usual blessings are happiness and mediocrity.... It never would have allowed Yeobright to do such a ridiculous thing as throw up his business to benefit his fellow creatures. (205)

This pattern of imbalance, balance, imbalance among the three women is repeated with Clym, Diggory Venn, and Wildeve, revealing that the novel is strongly 'architectonic' in structure. Like his mother, Clym tends to be quite fervorless, while Wildeve, like Eustacia, has "the curse of inflammability" (71) upon him, a passionate nature which he cannot control. Venn resembles Thomasin. Though he loves her, he
is able to deny his emotion to work for her happiness.

The conflict in Clym's nature originates in his family background. His father had been of rural origin, a small farmer, whereas his mother "was a curate's daughter, who had once dreamt of doing better things." (35) The name of Mrs. Yeobright's house, Blooms-End, its location on the verge of Egdon Heath, and the contrast between the delicate domestic plants which she carefully cultivates there and the wild vegetation of the heath indicate that, although she lives in contiguity with the heath, she is entirely separate from it. This impression is corroborated by what Hardy says about her relationship to the heath folk:

At moments she seemed to be regarding issues from a Nebo denied to others around. She had something of an estranged mien: the solitude exhaled from the heath was concentrated in this face that had risen from it. The air with which she looked at the heathmen betokened a certain unconcern at their presence, or at what might be their opinions of her for walking in that lonely spot at such an hour, thus indirectly implying that in some respect or other they were not up to her level. (35)

She is ambitious for Clym in the conventional sense, wanting him to succeed financially, and is proud of his position as manager of a diamond firm in Paris. Disappointed in him for returning to the heath, she rationalizes her lack of ideals:

It is right that there should be schoolmasters, and missionaries, and all such men.... But it is right, too, that I should try to lift you out of this life into something richer, and that you should not come back again, and be as if I had not tried at all. (210)

Eventually Clym is able to reconcile his mother to his plan to become a teacher. "Indeed, how could it be otherwise when he was a part of her - when their discourses were as if carried on between the right and the left hands of the same body?" (223)

But Mrs. Yeobright proves immovable on the question of Eustacia, perceiving with what Hardy terms her "singular insight into life" (223) that Eustacia will draw Clym's energies off into new directions which will be fatal to the conscious bent of his whole nature, as she
sees it. Clym has so far been attempting to live rationally, to reach certain goals which, like Jude's vision of Christminster, lie glowing with light before him. Eustacia threatens all this, but to his mother's dismay, Clym seems not to realize this:

Is it best for you to injure your prospects for such a voluptuous, idle woman as that? Don't you see that by the very fact of your choosing her you prove that you do not know what is best for you? You give up your whole thought - you set your whole soul - to please a woman. (240)

His mother's adamant feelings place Clym in a position of stress: "Three antagonistic growths had to be kept alive: his mother's trust in him, his plan for becoming a teacher, and Eustacia's happiness." (237) Clym's inability to do so reflects the basic disunity of his nature, for each of these "growths" represents a primary need of his nature.

What Mrs. Yeobright fails to remember is that, although she has attempted to give Clym's life conscious, rational direction by maintaining a cultured atmosphere at Blooms-End, sending him to school, and exhorting him to ambitious goals, he has also been deeply influenced by the heath. Whereas Mrs. Yeobright seems more or less indifferent to it, Clym feels a close affinity for the heath: "To my mind it is most exhilarating, and strengthening, and soothing. I would rather live on these hills than anywhere else in the world." (220) His close association with the heath during his formative years has had a lasting effect on his personality:

He walked along towards home without attending to paths. If any one knew the heath well it was Clym. He was permeated with its scenes, with its substance, and with its odours. He might be said to be its product. His eyes had first opened there- on; with its appearance all the first images of his memory were mingled; his estimate of life had been coloured by it ... (205)

Clym's attachment to the heath is emotional and irrational, even sensual, for he loves its sights, sounds, and odours. Though ostensibly one who seeks the light, and who wishes to impose his ideal values upon Egdon, he takes satisfaction in the primitive, wild
Hardy's phrasing, "could not help indulging," indicates conflict between Clym's conscious and subconscious, rational and irrational attitudes toward Egdon. Despite the fact that he comes to bring change and reform, Clym takes sensual pleasure in the dark strength of the heath.

There seems to be a relation between Clym's feelings for the heath and Eustacia. We first view Eustacia through the eyes of Diggory Venn, who sees her in the dim light of evening, standing atop Rainbarrow, the highest promontory on the heath:

This bossy projection of earth above its natural level occupied the loftiest ground of the loneliest height that the heath contained. Although from the vale it appeared but as a wart on an Atlantean brow, its actual bulk was great. It formed the pole and axis of this heathery world.

As the resting man looked at the barrow he became aware that its summit, hitherto the highest object in the whole prospect round, was surmounted by something higher. It rose from the semi-circular mound like a spike from a helmet...It seemed a sort of last man among them, musing for a moment before dropping into eternal night with the rest of his race.(13)

Initially, Eustacia seems a congruent part of the scene; by her position as she waits passionately for Wildeve on this highest point of the heath, she appears to epitomize the dark, brooding power embodied in the whole landscape:

There the form stood, motionless as the hill beneath. Above the plain rose the hill, above the hill rose the barrow, and above the barrow rose the figure. Above the figure was nothing that could be mapped elsewhere than on a celestial globe.

Such a perfect, delicate, and necessary finish did the figure give to the dark pile of hills that it seemed to be the only obvious justification of their outline. Without it, there was the dome without the lantern; with it the architectural demands of the mass were satisfied. The scene was strangely homogeneous, in that the vale, the upland, the barrow,
and the figure above it amounted only to unity. Looking at this or that member of the group was not observing a complete thing, but a fraction of a thing. The form was so much like an organic part of the entire motionless structure that to see it move would have impressed the mind as a strange phenomenon. (13)

Hardy soon indicates that, despite the apparent affinity between Eustacia and the heath, there is conflict between them as well. Though it seems impossible that the immobility of the scene should be disturbed, as the reddleman watches,

The figure perceptibly gave up its fixity, shifted a step or two, and turned round. As if alarmed, it descended on the right side of the barrow, with the glide of a water-drop down a bud, and then vanished. The movement had been sufficient to show more clearly the characteristics of the figure, and that it was a woman's. (14)

It is as if, in violating the perfect tranquillity of the heath, Eustacia pits herself against its dark and brooding power.

Eustacia's presence atop Rainbarrow is replaced by that of the heath folk, who come to perform their Fifth of November rites there. Hardy underlines the opposition between Eustacia and the heath suggested by her departure by indicating that she is completely separate from the folk: "The only intelligible meaning in this sky-backed pantomime of silhouettes was that the woman had no relation to the forms who had taken her place, was sedulously avoiding these, and had come thither for another object than theirs." (14) Had Hardy stopped here, the relation between Eustacia and the heath would seem to be a simple one of conflict, with Eustacia having a will separate from that of the heath, which sets her in opposition to it. The earlier impression of affinity between Eustacia and the heath would be an illusion. But Hardy goes on to add that "The imagination of the observer clung by preference to that vanished, solitary figure, as to something more interesting, more important, more likely to have a history worth knowing than these new-comers, and unconsciously regarded them as intruders." (14) By implication, Eustacia seems in some sense to belong. This suggestion, reinforcing the initial view of Eustacia as an organic part of the landscape, indicates a strong bond between them. Therefore, Eustacia's self-assertion, in breaking the mood of the heath by her movement off Rainbarrow, indic-
ates not only an opposition between herself and the heath, but also a conflict between elements within herself.

The ambivalence in Eustacia's relation to the heath which Hardy suggests in this first view of her is reinforced by another description of her later on the same evening. When the Fifth of November rites are done and the satanic fire-dancers have gone, Eustacia returns to Rainbarrow. Hardy proceeds to evoke all the November sounds of the heath. When Eustacia gives vent to her feelings, her sighing seems an integral part of the symphony:

Suddenly, on the barrow, there mingled with all this wild rhetoric of night a sound which modulated so naturally into the rest that its beginning and ending were hardly to be distinguished. The bluffs, and the bushes, and the heather-bells had broken silence; at last, so did the woman; and her articulation was but as another phrase of the same discourse as theirs. Thrown out on the winds it became twined in with them, and with them it flew away. (61)

Like the earlier visual image, this auditory image seems to confirm Eustacia's oneness with the heath. However, Hardy once again goes on to suggest that, if there is an affinity between Eustacia and the heath, it is a bond involving only part of Eustacia's personality:

What she uttered was a lengthened sighing, apparently at something in her mind which had led to her presence here. There was a spasmodic abandonment about it as if, in allowing herself to utter the sound, the woman's brain had authorized what it could not regulate. One point was evident in this; that she had been existing in a suppressed state, and not in one of languor, or stagnation. (62)

What is in accord with the heath is something released from the subconscious at this point, something which is ordinarily repressed. There are strong suggestions of conflict in this incident, not only within Eustacia, between her mind and her passions, her conscious and subconscious, but also between Eustacia and the heath. Though Eustacia's sighing appears to be a congruent part of the heath setting, the sigh indicates her frustration and unhappiness, caused largely by the loneliness which the heath imposes on her.
There is both affinity and enmity between Eustacia and the heath. The confusion which this duality produces about the relation between them is symbolic of the confusion which exists within Eustacia. She is a complex and powerful character, suggesting some of the characteristics of the type which Hardy is later to develop more fully in Sue Bridehead. Deeply divided, Eustacia has both a determined, conscious aim, to fulfil her nature in the brilliant social life of Paris, and passionate, subconscious needs, which link her to the brooding grandeur of the heath. Consciously, Eustacia rebels against the heath in promethean fashion; subconsciously she is fascinated by its dark strength, feeling an accord between it and the dark needs within herself.

Both of these early scenes which indicate Eustacia's ambivalent relation to the heath occur on Rainbarrow. This prehistoric mound has a complex symbolic value in the novel. Symbolic of the heath itself because of its height and position, it acquires a richer and narrower significance from the association which its name suggests with the pool imagery which is so extensive in the novel. Eustacia is repeatedly identified with the pool which lies just outside the stockade surrounding Captain Vye's home, which Hardy links in turn to Rainbarrow: "It was to the full as lonely a place as Rainbarrow, though at rather a lower level." High above, nearby, "the blurred contour of Rainbarrow obstructed the sky."(67) It is beside her pool that Eustacia lights her Fifth of November fire to summon her lover, Wildeve, and to Rainbarrow that she goes to look for his coming. Wildeve's appearance is marked by a sound like a frog jumping into the water, and it is described as though he is a creature Eustacia has summoned from the depths of the pond:

Eustacia stepped upon the bank,
'Yes?' she said, and held her breath.
Thereupon the contour of a man became dimly visible against the low-reaching sky over the valley, beyond the outer margin of the pool. He came round it and leapt upon the bank beside her.... She let her joyous eyes rest upon him without speaking, as upon some wondrous thing she had created out of chaos.(69)
The pool represents things deep, hidden, and forbidden. The depth of the pool is the darkness of the subconscious, where passion and instinct have full play, and the light of reason is dimmed. Wildeve, having the same passionate nature as Eustacia, also has a pool at the back of his house, which is described as similar to Eustacia's at Mistover Knap: the stream at Wildeve's is shown "idly spinning whirlpools in its creep between the rows of dry feather-headed reeds which formed a stockade along each bank," (46) whereas Eustacia's pond is "a large pool, bearded all round by heather and rushes." (64) This parallel pool symbolism indicates the deep bond of passion between these two. The suggestion of a connection between Eustacia's feeling for Wildeve and the pond imagery occurs when an ember from her fire - which is the very embodiment of her passion for him - drops "with a hiss into the pool." (64)

Just before meeting Clym, Eustacia has a strange dream involving pool imagery. Highly sensual with bright colors, music, and touches of phallic description, the dream moves from an exotic initial setting to the heath:

She was dancing to wondrous music, and her partner was the man in silver armour who had accompanied her through the previous fantastic changes, the visor of his helmet being closed. The mazes of the dance were ecstatic. Soft whispering came into her ear from under the radiant helmet, and she felt like a woman in Paradise. Suddenly these two wheeled out from the mass of dancers, dived into one of the pools of the heath, and came out somewhere beneath into an iridescent hollow, arched with rainbows. 'It must be here,' said the voice by her side, and blushingly looking up she saw him removing his casque to kiss her. At that moment there was a cracking noise, and his figure fell into fragments like a pack of cards. (138)

It is the woman in Eustacia who is drawn fascinated to the pools on the heath, subconsciously attracted by the symbolic suggestion of their dark, sensual depths. The masculine, promethean element of her personality rebels against acquiescence to something symbolic of such a passive fulfilment.

In contrast to Wildeve and Eustacia, both of whom are closely identified with pool imagery throughout the novel, Clym seems naive
about the symbolic implications of Eustacia's pool. When the water-drawing equipment of Captain Vye's well is broken, Clym and Eustacia discuss the possibility of drinking from the pool:

'Well, as a matter of fact there are no impurities in the water of these pools at this time of the year. It has only just rained into them.'

She shook her head. 'I am managing to exist in a wilderness, but I cannot drink from a pond,' she said. (217)

Like her attitude to the entire heath, Eustacia's feelings about pools are ambivalent. She is fascinated by them and yet frightened and repelled as well, for she perceives them as symbolic of the powerful depths of her own nature over which she has no control, and which threaten to overwhelm her. To Clym, on the other hand, the heath and pool are a merely picturesque reality. As Eustacia says, Clym is very young where passion is concerned:

'Ah, you don't know. You have seen more than I, and have been into cities and among people that I have only heard of, and have lived more years than I; but yet I am older at this than you. I loved another man once, and now I love you.' (232)

Clym, in the full flush of idealism, cannot bear to hear such disturbing, cynical comments - doesn't want to hear them, whether or not they happen to be true. He is eager to persist in his illusory state.

The pool at Captain Vye's figures significantly in a scene during the spring before Eustacia and Clym are married. The pool is described in fecund terms, symbolic of the eternal procreativeness of the heath:

The pool outside the bank by Eustacia's dwelling which seemed as dead and desolate as ever to an observer who moved and made noises in his observation, would gradually disclose a state of great animation when silently watched awhile. A timid animal world had come to live for the season. Little tadpoles and efts began to bubble up through the water, and to race along beneath it; toads made noises like very young ducks, and advanced to the margin in twos and threes ... (225)

Clym, however, is blind to this fertility in the pool. One evening in March,
Yeobright descended into the Blooms-End valley from beside that very pool, where he had been standing with another person quite silently and quite long enough to hear all this puny stir of resurrection in nature; yet he had not heard it. His walk was rapid as he came down, and he went with a springy tread. Before entering upon his mother's premises he stopped and breathed. The light which shone forth on him from the window revealed that his face was flushed and his eye bright. (225)

Clym's conversation with his mother when he enters the house reveals that he has been aroused, not by the fecundity of spring or the sensuality of Eustacia, but by an illusory and ideal vision of Eustacia as his schoolmistress wife. The pronounced split in his nature has produced a blindness, a willingness to delude himself, which his mother perceives clearly:

'You are blinded, Clym,' she said warmly. 'It was a bad day for you when you first set eyes on her. And your scheme is merely a castle in the air built on purpose to justify this folly which has seized you, and to salve your conscience on the irrational situation you are in.' (227)

Mrs. Yeobright would have Clym discipline his sensual nature, but the dark needs of his being continue to assert themselves.

When Clym attempts to help Eustacia draw water from the well because she cannot bring herself to drink from the pool, a revealing incident occurs. While lowering the bucket, Clym realizes that he must secure the end lest the bucket, rope and all, slip from his grasp. Eustacia offers to hold the rope at the well while he does so:

'I can hold it,' said Eustacia; and he placed the rope in her hands, going then to search for the end.

'I suppose I may let it slip down?' she inquired.

'I would advise you not to let it go far,' said Clym. 'It will get much heavier, you will find.'

However, Eustacia had begun to pay out. While he was tying she cried, 'I cannot stop it!' Clym ran to her side, and found he could only check the rope by twisting the loose part round the upright post, when it stopped with a jerk. 'Has it hurt you?'
'Yes,' she replied. 'Very much?'
'No; I think not.' She opened her hands. One of them was bleeding; the rope had dragged off the skin. (219)

Using a laconic but powerful symbolic technique, Hardy has recapitulated the entire contrast between them. Largely due to his mother's influence, Clym has partially succeeded in repressing and controlling his sensual, instinctual nature, and he is therefore not aware of it as a threat to his conscious, rational aims. Eustacia, on the other hand, is aware of her passions and completely lacking in control over them. She is aware of their victimization of her, but powerless to resist it.

The dark pool imagery comes to a climax toward the end of the novel in the death scene of Eustacia and Wildeve. As though the elements are conspiring against them because of the curse Susan Nunsuch has just laid upon Eustacia with a beeswax doll, "it began to rain and blow hard as the evening advanced." (426) All through the novel Eustacia's fear of pools and the fascination she feels for them have foreshadowed her end. At the outset she had been seen standing on Rainbarrow, a sacrificial site, and as she once more stands there just before plunging on to meet Wildeve, "she sighed bitterly and ceased to stand erect, gradually crouching down under the umbrella as if she were drawn into the barrow by a hand from beneath." (421)

Though it is not made clear whether Eustacia dies by accident or suicide, it appears she is trying to escape from the heath when she is drowned, for her death occurs in a ten-hatch weir located at the very edge of the heath, where she was to have met Wildeve. The ambiguity suggests both that she destroyed herself, and that she was caught back by dark forces which had been bent on her destruction from the outset. On this night, Shadwater Weir is extraordinarily turbulent. The forces which Eustacia has been attempting to resist since the beginning of the novel, largely the subconscious as symbolized by the pool imagery, reach a crescendo of power, the framework of the hatches being "shaken to its foundations by the velocity of the current." (441) Wildeve and Clym arrive together, but it is Wildeve who behaves instinctively and compulsively when a body is heard falling into the water:
'0, my darling!' exclaimed Wildeve in an agonized voice; and, without showing sufficient presence of mind even to throw off his great-cost, he leaped into the boiling cauldron. (441)

The reference to the pool as a "boiling cauldron" suggests that somehow, in death, Eustacia and Wildeve have achieved a union between fire and water, light and dark, which they were unable to find in life. The torture for them is over.

For Clym it continues. He behaves more rationally than Wildeve in waiting to set his lantern to shed light on the pool, and going around to wade in from the shallow end. Clym's rational approach to rescue is as ineffectual as Wildeve's impulsive leap, but it does save his life. The quotation Hardy employs in The Mayor of Casterbridge, "Character is fate,"12 could be applied equally well to the fates of these three. The centripetal force which draws Eustacia to the very vortex of the weir, "to its central depth" (445) where her body is found, has been acting on her from the outset. Clym is not drowned because he waits to act consciously rather than instinctively. The flickering lamp of consciousness he shines on the pool is ineffectual to save Eustacia or to prevent himself from succumbing to the darkness of the water. Rescued by Diggory Venn, he lives on as the shell of a man, an object of neither scorn nor praise to the folk, but rather of gentle tolerance. He receives the favor shown to a cripple or blind person.

The deaths of Eustacia and Wildeve appear to be a mutual, though unpremeditated suicide - perhaps regarded by Hardy as the ultimate act of passion. Although Hardy appears to see passion as potentially self-destructive if it is not restrained, it is the people who display passionate, unrestrained feelings whom Hardy seems to view as most heroic. Eustacia feared to drink from the pool because, like Kurtz in Conrad's Heart of Darkness, she was very aware of the horror and chaos which surrender to the subconscious can lead to. Like Kurtz, however, her lack of inner restraints and her indifference to social convention eventually cause her to go the whole way. Her death in the black depths of the pool has the same meaning as Kurtz's death in the
darkness of the jungle: both are destroyed by their inability to control the primitive, instinctual forces within their own natures.

In contrast to Eustacia, Mrs. Yeobright is killed in the heat of the sun on a bright, blistering August afternoon. Though she has attempted to live in a conscious, rational light, the sun's rays prove fatal to her. Having excluded the darkness, symbolized in the novel by the heath and the pools, and so disturbing a natural balance, Mrs. Yeobright is stricken by the intensifying of light which results from the imbalance. In this parched desert which she has made of her life by denying the springs of the subconscious, her great need is for water, but after sending Johnny Nunsuch to Oker's Pool for some, she finds she cannot drink it. It has been warmed by the sun, becoming symbolic of the sensual life she has denied too long, and nauseates her. Shortly after, she sees a bird flying, a creature still one with the sources of life, delighting in both sun and water:

a heron arose ... and flew on with his face towards the sun. He had come dripping wet from some pool in the valleys, and as he flew the edges and lining of his wings, his thighs, and his breast were so caught by the bright sunbeams that he appeared as if formed of burnished silver. Up in the zenith where he was seemed a free and happy place, away from all contact with the earthly ball to which she was pinioned; and she wished that she could arise uncrushed from its surface and fly as he flew then. (343)

Like Thomasin, who is also shown in harmony with both sun and water, the heron seems to have an ideal relationship with the elements of the universe, fire and water being representative of the sensual, natural forces behind all life. These forces relentlessly pursue all those who do not make peace with them, which both Mrs. Yeobright and Eustacia failed to do. The peasants still exist in this primitive harmony between light and dark, fire and water, for they still light their fire on Rainbarrow.

Though all the conflicting forces in *The Return of the Native* are embodied in Clym's character, he remains relatively uninteresting as a character. The conflict between conscious and subconscious, reason
and passion, spirit and flesh which is at the root of his character is presented far more vividly in the contrast between the two women in his life who represent these conflicting values. The dramatic interest in the novel is centred less in the conflict within Clym than in his relationships to Eustacia and Mrs. Yeobright, and in the women themselves. In later novels there is more interest in the inner struggle in the protagonists than here in *The Return of the Native*. For there is little struggle in Clym, who is the most passive and vacillating of Hardy's heroes. His physical blindness is symptomatic of his lack of vision about himself and his predicament, which in turn renders him of less interest than people like Tess or Jude, with their greater self-knowledge. The conflicting forces Hardy presents in this novel seem to revolve around Clym, rather than working through him, twirling him like a marionette. Both his wife and his mother show far more force of character.

At all times, Eustacia threatens to take over the central position in the novel. At many points she succeeds. We sense an opposition between Hardy's initial plans for the novel, which made Clym the structural centre, and Hardy's emotional involvement with Eustacia, one of his most heroic creations. Successive rewritings of the novel gave Eustacia an increasingly dominant position in it. Even more than Sue Bridehead, in *Jude the Obscure*, Eustacia breaks out of the structural role which Hardy had predetermined for her, to become a complicated character in her own right. The lack of a central focus in *The Return of the Native* may weaken the novel by distracting interest from Clym as the most obvious embodiment of the conflicting forces Hardy is exploring, yet certainly Hardy's canon would be a poorer one without Eustacia's presence.
Chapter 3 -- The Mayor of Casterbridge

The character of Michael Henchard has far more inherent interest than that of Clym Yeobright - that is to say, it is more heroic. Henchard has drive and energy which the earlier character lacks; where Clym drifts and vacillates, Henchard acts, whether wisely or rashly. Albert J. Guerard speaks of Henchard as Hardy's finest character:

Henchard, who is Hardy's Lord Jim, stands at the very summit of his creator's achievement; his only tragic hero and one of the greatest tragic heroes in all fiction. He takes his place at once with certain towering and possessed figures of Melville, Hawthorne, and Dostoevsky: a man of character obsessed by guilt and so committed to his own destruction.1

In place of Clym's naivety, Henchard has a limited kind of self-knowledge; only a dim apprehension at first, it has grown part-way toward clear perception by the end of the novel. Against his awareness of the dark and bestial roots of his nature, Henchard pits his pride - his belief that he can do battle with the instinctual tendency of his nature which had revealed itself in the wife-selling episode.

Henchard's character, like Clym's, has become split so that the conscious and subconscious are in opposition. In The Return of the Native, Hardy traced the origins of the conflict in Clym's personality to his family background and education, which separated him from his character as formed from spending a childhood in close association with the heath. The explanation given in The Mayor of Casterbridge for the split which grows between Henchard and his simple rural background is Henchard's ambition. Though having only a nominal education, Henchard has an extraordinarily determined desire to succeed. At the outset of the novel, Hardy depicts Henchard at a frustrated impasse, unable to find work at his traditional trade of hay-trussing, and feeling burdened by the responsibility of a wife and child. At this point something happens which is to recur several times in the novel: Henchard's subconscious takes over, in this case with the help of liquor, and causes him to commit the dark act in Mrs. Goodenough's furmity tent, thus removing what Henchard perceives at that time to be the chief obstacle between himself
and his desire. Though the object of his desire later changes - he "attempts to replace ambition by love" (367) - the behavior pattern remains essentially the same. When he is frustrated, and it appears that the objective he desires is beyond his grasp, instead of renouncing it as Elizabeth-Jane would, the instinctual energy of his nature rises from the subconscious to assert itself.

Thus conscious and subconscious, reason and instinct, alternate in controlling Henchard's behavior, perhaps indicating conflict between them. This alternation between reason and instinct is one of the chief forces determining the narrative trajectory in the novel. Hardy becomes quite explicit about this opposition between the conscious and subconscious direction of human experience toward the end of The Mayor of Casterbridge: referring to Henchard's passing impulse that he should tell Farfrae about Elizabeth-Jane's illegitimacy in order to prevent their marriage, Hardy notes, "There is an outer chamber of the brain in which thoughts unowned, unsolicited, and of noxious kind, are sometimes allowed to wander for a moment prior to being sent off whence they came." (354) Shortly after, Henchard refers to these intrusions of the subconscious as "visitations of the devil." Throughout the novel, the instinctual, compulsive behavior of characters is often imaged in demonic terms.

Henchard's ambition compels him to compete on a level at which he is ill-equipped to succeed. An important theme running through the novel is the idea of change, resulting in a greater and greater need for knowledge, precision, and discipline to compete successfully in business and public life. Henchard prospers, not because he has the mental power to do so, but because of his physical energy and great determination. Energy and determination, however, flag with age. Part of Henchard's predicament is that he is tired after coping heroically and successfully with the demands of business and public life for twenty-one years, despite his lack of the skills increasingly necessary to do so. This is why he is so anxious to have Donald Farfrae join him. As his energy wanes, his inherent unsuitability for the roles he has been playing becomes more and more apparent. Fatigue lessens his conscious control over the
darker, repressed needs of his nature.

Henchard has made an error in judgment about the "grown" wheat when we see him first in Casterbridge, a miscalculation which jeopardizes both his material prosperity and his social position. When Farfrae enters his employ, Henchard immediately surrenders the chief part of the effort involved in running the business to the younger man:

Donald and Mr. Henchard were inseparables. When walking together Henchard would lay his arm familiarly on his manager's shoulder, as if Farfrae were a younger brother, bearing so heavily that his slight figure bent under the weight....Donald's brightness of intellect maintained in the corn-factor the admiration it had won at the first hour of their meeting. The poor opinion, and but ill-concealed, that he entertained of the slim Farfrae's physical girth, strength, and dash was more than counterbalanced by the immense respect he had for his brains.(103-04)

By implication, Henchard's physical strength is contrasted with Farfrae's less obvious but perhaps more efficacious mental energy. The contrast is effectively symbolized in the novel by associating Henchard with the bull and Farfrae with the mechanical sower. The two symbols suggest that Henchard's energy is powerful but brutal - potentially destructive, whereas Farfrae's ability is of a more disciplined, efficient, and mechanical kind.

It is this contrast and the conflict resulting from it which precipitates Henchard's fall from the conventional world of business and public office to the unconventional and disreputable world with which he becomes associated before the end of the novel. For there are two different levels of human life in The Mayor of Casterbridge, which are so mutually distinct that they do constitute two separate worlds. The first world is the overworld of what might be called the "establishment" of Casterbridge. Its locus is High Street, the most imposing thoroughfare of the town, on which are located "the chief hotel in Casterbridge - namely, the King's Arms," (35) and the other important public buildings of the town, such as the Court House. It is in front of the King's Arms that the Royal visitor is received when he passes through Casterbridge. The established social order is defined by objects and
events symbolic of its wealth and authority. Among the chief of these are the Royal visit, the Court House, the King's Arms, the market place, the office of Mayor with its "official gold chain with great square links, like that round the Royal unicorn," (306) and "the Corporation in their robes." (306)

The modus vivendi of the overworld is reason and intellect, especially as typified by the law, and these qualities must be uppermost in anyone who would succeed in business or public life. Convention and law are conscious, supposedly rational constructs of man, designed to ward off the chaos and even bestiality which the subconscious, unrestrained, can produce. They are props against the free assertion of the self, particularly the subconscious self. Those who break the law - whether the uncodified social law or the codified criminal law - are cast out, for any dark act constitutes a rebellion of dark forces inimical to the established order. Henchard's dark acts repeatedly bring him into conflict with the precepts of this overworld, and eventually cause his banishment from it, bringing him into association with another, more sinister world.

The locus of the second world in Casterbridge - the underworld, the haunt of the disestablished - is Mixen Lane, in which is located "The inn called Peter's Finger ...the church of Mixen Lane." (295) The congregation here, however, differs radically from that in the conventional church in Casterbridge:

ex-poachers and ex-gamekeepers, whom squires had persecuted without a cause, sat elbowing each other - men who in past times had met in fights under the moon, till lapse of sentences on the one part, and loss of favour and expulsion from service on the other, brought them here together to a common level, where they sat calmly discussing old times. (296)

In Peter's Finger they feel at ease. The atmosphere of the establishment is sympathetic to their dark natures and devious enterprises:

waifs and strays of all sorts loitered about here. The landlady was a virtuous woman who years ago had been unjustly sent to gaol as an accessory to something or other after the fact. She underwent her twelvemonth, and had worn a martyr's countenance
ever since, except at times of meeting the constable who apprehended her, when she winked her eye. (296)

The Mixen Lane area is low-lying, stretching out "like a spit into the moist and misty lowland." (293) The sensual life, inhibited by conventional restraints in Casterbridge itself, is enjoyed without check in Mixen Lane, particularly in the prostitution which flourishes in the area. In general, "after dark ... was the business time here." (294) Though this section of Casterbridge, this underworld, seems virtually a distinct entity, Hardy indicates that both are part of a single growth. Mixen Lane is described as a "mildewed leaf in the sturdy and flourishing Casterbridge plant." (294)

Because of the contrast in the descriptions of Casterbridge proper and Mixen Lane, and because of the different kinds of behaviour attributed to the inhabitants of the two areas, the two places become respectively symbolic of the rational level of human nature and the dark level of the instincts and passions. In exploring the relations between Mixen Lane and the rest of Casterbridge, Hardy is exploring, either deliberately or unconsciously, the nature of the boundary between the rational and irrational levels of the human psyche. Hardy's preoccupation with defining the nature of consciousness, its qualities and its boundaries, is illustrated by his description of Elizabeth-Jane's experiences while sitting with her sick mother night after night. Poised between wakefulness and sleep, Elizabeth's perceptions become distorted and strange:

the silence in Casterbridge ... was broken in Elizabeth's ear only by the time-piece in the bedroom ticking frantically against the clock on the stairs; ticking harder and harder till it seemed to clang like a gong; and all this while the subtle-souled girl asking herself why she was born, why sitting in a room, and blinking at the candle; why things around her had taken the shape they wore in preference to every other possible shape. Why they stared at her so helplessly, as if waiting for the touch of some wand that should release them from terrestrial constraint; what that chaos called consciousness, which spun in her at this moment like a top, tended to, and began in.
Her eyes fell together; she was awake, yet she was asleep.(135-136)

The symbolic point of crossing between the two levels of life in Casterbridge is the Three Mariners Inn, which is located lower down on High Street than the King's Arms, and which one would pass in walking from the King's Arms to Peter's Finger. Ostensibly respectable, it is in fact repeatedly depicted by Hardy in ambivalent terms. It lacks the unquestionable respectability of the King's Arms, yet is clearly on a level above that of Peter's Finger. The equivocal nature of the Three Mariners Inn is given explicitly by Hardy in his description of Peter's Finger: "The company at the Three Mariners were persons of quality in comparison with the company which gathered here; though it must be admitted that the lowest fringe of the Mariner's party touched the crest of Peter's at points."(296) When the waiter from the King's Arms suggests the Three Mariners to Farfrae as a place to stay, he does so with an air of condescension:

'And can ye tell me of a respectable hotel that's a little more moderate than this?'

The waiter glanced indifferently up and down the street.

'They say the Three Mariners, just below here, is a very good place,' he languidly answered; 'but I have never stayed there myself.'(43)

The first description of the inn reveals both respectable and sinister characteristics: "The principle of the inn seemed to be to compensate for the antique awkwardness, crookedness, and obscurity of the passages, floors, and windows, by quantities of clean linen spread about everywhere...."(48) Entering the inn involves a lowering of one's dignity, for there is only a "long, narrow, dimly-lit passage"(46) which must be shared with the horses proceeding to the stables at the rear. Though toward the end of the novel, as dark forces become increasingly dominant in Henchard, he will feel quite at home in the Three Mariners, when he goes to seek Farfrae there at the outset he is conscious of a distinct slight to his high status in Casterbridge:
Henchard stood without the inn for a few instants; then lowering the dignity of his presence as much as possible by buttoning down the brown holland coat over his shirt-front, and in other ways toning himself down to his ordinary everyday appearance, he entered the inn door. (47)

The people frequenting the inn are of two distinct sorts, and this fact is acknowledged by the seating arrangement in the general sitting-room. When Farfrae first enters there, the guests in addition to the respectable master-tradesmen occupying the seats of privilege in the bow-window and its neighbourhood, included an inferior set at the unlighted end, whose seats were mere benches against the wall, and who drank from cups instead of from glasses. Among the latter [Elizabeth-Jane] noticed some of those personages who had stood outside the windows of the King's Arms. (57-58)

Shortly after, Solomon Longways is identified as "one of those gathered at the shady end of the room." (58) Though Hardy is obviously commenting here on class differences, there is another level of meaning, which comes out particularly in the contrast between the word "respectable," and the term "the shady end." The inclusion of both light and dark imagery in this scene is paralleled by the contrast between the dim passageways of the inn and the white linen in the rooms. Light and dark, respectable and sinister, meet in the Three Mariners.

However, what above all identifies the Three Mariners as the symbolic crossing point between the level of life in Casterbridge where reason dominates and that where instinct and passion rule is the fact that it is in the Three Mariners that Henchard breaks away from his twenty-one year existence in the conventional overworld of Casterbridge and gives vent to the passions which have been suppressed into his subconscious for so long. The change is announced dramatically to Elizabeth-Jane by one of the townsfolk: "Michael Henchard have busted out drinking after taking nothing for twenty-one years." (265) As for Henchard himself, "The flush upon his face proclaimed at once that the vow of twenty-one years had lapsed, and the era of recklessness begun anew." (267) It is by "drinking more
freely at the Three Mariners every evening that Henchard feeds his resentment against Farfrae caused by the degrading necessity of working for him as a hay-trusser in the yards he had owned such a short time before, and it is no doubt at the Three Mariners that "he primed himself in the morning with a glass of rum" before his uncontrolled, bull-like behavior on the occasion of the Royal visit.

It is not only in his rendering of the Three Mariners Inn that Hardy explores the relationship between the overworld and the underworld of Casterbridge. The skimmity-ride, which also involves and links these two worlds, illustrates the way in which a dark impulse can originate in human nature; generate a seemingly demonic energy; burst into action, catching the rational self off-guard; attack and then quickly retreat after shattering the stable order painstakingly erected by the conscious mind. Described as "spreading like a miasmatic fog through Mixen Lane, and thence up the back streets of Casterbridge," the skimmity-ride illustrates on a group level precisely the manner in which an impulse from the subconscious operates on Henchard.

The significance of the skimmity-ride in helping to define symbolically the relationship between the light and dark levels of human experience is increased by Hardy's discussion of the attempts of the members of the Casterbridge overworld -- in particular, the constabulary -- to track down the perpetrators of the dark deed. In confronting the denizens of Peter's Finger the constables of the town show a naivety similar to that displayed by Clym when faced with the dark knowledge of Eustacia. In attempting to investigate the dark origins of this crime, the officials receive only mocking, devious answers from the 'habitues' of Mixen Lane. When Jopp is questioned about whether he has heard any unusual noise that evening, he replies,

"Now I've noticed, come to think o'it, that the wind in the Walk trees makes a peculiar poetical-like murmur to-night, sir; more than common; so perhaps 'twas that?" Jopp suggested as he rear-
ranged his hand in his greatcoat pocket (where it ingeniously supported a pair of kitchen tongs and a cow's horn, thrust up under his waistcoat). (32h)

Hardy seems to be indicating that the source of man's irrational behavior is a dim and elusive region, not easily accessible to conscious investigation. In the face of the deviousness of instinct and passion, rational methods of dealing with them become naive and incompetent by contrast. The inaccessibility of the dark, irrational depths of the human psyche is indicated explicitly in the description of Peter's Finger:

At first sight the inn was so respectable as to be puzzling. The front door was kept shut, and the step was so clean that evidently but few persons entered over its sanded surface. But at the corner of the public-house was an alley, a mere slit, dividing it from the next building. Halfway up the alley was a narrow door, shiny and paintless from the rub of infinite hands and shoulders. This was the actual entrance to the inn.

A pedestrian would be seen abstractedly passing along Mixen Lane; and then, in a moment, he would vanish, causing the gazer to blink like Ashton at the disappearance of Ravenswood. (296)

Without knowledge of the dark origins of irrational behavior, it is difficult to investigate it rationally. When the officials, after pounding on the front door of Peter's Finger in their ignorance of the secret entry, enter the inn, they observe a deceptively tranquil scene:

In the settles of the large room, guyed to the ceiling by cords as usual for stability, an ordinary group sat drinking and smoking with statuesque quiet of demeanour. The landlady looked mildly at the invaders, saying in honest accents, 'Good evening, gentlemen; there's plenty of room. I hope there's nothing amiss!' (325)

The usual boisterousness of the guests, which necessitates the fastening of the seats to the ceiling, has been entirely quelled.

When approaching from the rear, it seems even more difficult to gain access to Peter's Finger -- in fact, the whole of Mixen Lane is hard to reach by any back approach. The Lane
lay close to the open country; not a hundred yards from a row of noble elms, and commanding a view across the moor of airy uplands and cornfields, and mansions of the great. A brook divided the moor from the tenements, and to outward view there was no way across it—not way to the houses but round about by the road. But under every householder's stairs there was kept a mysterious plank nine inches wide; which plank was a secret bridge.

If you, as one of those refugee householders, came in from business ...you stealthily crossed the moor, approached the border of the aforesaid brook, and whistled opposite the house to which you belonged. A shape thereupon made its appearance on the other side bearing the bridge on end against the sky; it was lowered; you crossed, and a hand helped you to land yourself, together with the pheasants and hares gathered from neighbouring manors.(294)

Hardy points out a seeming paradox: the two worlds of the novel are a single whole, and are contiguous to one another, and yet it is virtually impossible for anyone to penetrate the underworld of Mixen Lane. Similarly, the rational, conscious self is too naive about the irrational depths of the human psyche to penetrate there. Though reason and passion are in close contiguity in human nature, the latter puts on a deceptively innocent facade, and the chaos and grotesqueries behind can only be surmised by the rational area of the mind.

In this symbolic exploration of the relationship between the rational and the irrational elements of human nature in The Mayor of Casterbridge, Hardy is again examining the problem which he raised in the character of Clym Yeobright, who was incapable of understanding the subconscious regions of his own personality.

Henchard's first dark act — performed, like the business of Mixen Lane, at night — is an offense against the established social order of the overworld. Henchard's recognition of this is indicated by his swearing an oath on the altar of a Christian church, an institution representative of the social order against which he has sinned. His vow, made on a sunlit morning, that he "will avoid all strong liquors for the space of twenty-one years to come,"(18) is a resolution that he will live rationally and not allow the instinctual, rebellious forces of his subconscious to dominate him again.
Though Henchard keeps this vow and remains a citizen of high standing in the Casterbridge establishment, Hardy indicates from the first that Henchard is an anomaly in this world. Henchard as mayor and chief magistrate of Casterbridge makes as strikingly incongruous a spectacle as would Heathcliff, in *Wuthering Heights*, as master of Thrushcross Grange.

Henchard's fall at the end of his twenty-one year attempt to live rationally and consciously within the precepts of the established social order is the inevitable result of his inability to achieve a balance or resolution of conflict between the conscious and subconscious elements in his nature. Whereas early in the novel he stands as the leading symbol of the establishment in Casterbridge, his fall brings him into association with the sinister and grotesque underworld of Mixen Lane. Hardy cannot have Henchard become completely integrated with the demonic elements of Peter's Finger, as does happen in the case of Jopp, for Hardy's concept of Henchard is too heroic to allow that to happen. Jopp is a lesser figure who, when unable to achieve a position in the establishment, eventually becomes a complacent inhabitant of the 'hades' or underworld of the novel. Henchard, on the other hand, becomes associated with the Mixen Lane crew unwittingly. He prefers to stand alone, in tragic isolation, rather than regress to their level.

The first description of Henchard as mayor indicates that he possesses

a temperament which would have no pity for weakness, but would be ready to yield ungrudging admiration to greatness and strength. Its producer's personal goodness, if he had any, would be of a very fitful cast—an occasional almost oppressive generosity rather than a mild and constant kindness.(36-37)

These are scarcely desirable qualities for a public official. Henchard's nature has always been of a "fitful cast"; as a young man married to Susan, he drank in "bouts only, and was not a habitual drunkard."(29) Nance Mockridge, one of the frequenters of Peter's Finger, recognizes the other, more sinister Henchard hidden behind
the imposing public man. She makes the following comment on the occasion of Henchard's second marriage with Susan: "Well—there's a difference between 'em, though he do call himself a teetotaller.... She'll whish her cake dough afore she's done of him. There's a bluebeardy look about 'en; and 'twill out in time."(97) Together with Mother Cuxsom and Mrs. Goodenough, Nance forms a witch-like trio, and as a witch she seems to have the power to perceive the secrets of the subconscious. It is not, then, that Henchard changes during the course of the novel, but rather that the dark qualities in him, which are present at the outset but concealed under his iron will, finally emerge: "he was ...the same man, but that man with his sinister qualities, formerly latent, quickened into life by his buffetings."(276) It is Mrs. Goodenough who finally reveals publicly that Henchard is not a fit man to be mayor and magistrate of Casterbridge.

Hardy also uses demonic references to indicate the hidden fires of Henchard's nature. He is continually described in terms of blacks and reds — reds particularly when some impulse or passion flares up from his subconscious. There is a wealth of references to Henchard as a demonic figure; at one point, when he is fighting with Farfrae in the loft of the corn-stores, Hardy explicitly refers to Henchard as "that infuriated Prince of Darkness."(315) Hardy appears to use red, with its implication of fire and strong heat — the demonic nature, to portray a character lacking in balance; to reveal a personality in which there is a war between the conscious and the subconscious, with the latter inflamed to a threatening degree.

Lucetta snubs Jopp's request that she intercede with Farfrae to obtain him a position. Shortly after, Henchard gives Jopp Lucetta's correspondence to return to her. Jopp sits pondering and finds, looking at a candle-snuff, "that it had formed itself into a head like a red-hot cauliflower."(292) He then goes to Peter's Finger, where the plans for the skimmity-ride are laid. Like Henchard, Jopp has red, demonic depths to his nature.

The demonic aspect of Henchard's character is emphasized whenever he is about to commit a destructive act: for example, he is
described in fiery terms when he forces the church choir to curse Farfrae and Lucetta. The purpose of Hardy's use of the demonic appears to be to indicate the evil, destructive power the subconscious can wield. In contrast to Henchard and Lucetta (who is also spoken of in demonic terms), Farfrae and Elizabeth-Jane are associated with another kind of heat, that of the sun. Whereas the demonic fires of Henchard's subconscious destroy, the warm rays of the sun fructify the earth. The leader of a society such as that of Casterbridge, which depends entirely upon agriculture for its livelihood, should be in harmony with the sun, able to harness its powers for the good of the community. The connection between the sun and economic well-being in this farming town is indicated when Farfrae passes by Lucetta's residence, at a time when his fortunes are on the rise: "A yellow flood of reflected sunlight filled the room for a few minutes. It was produced by the passing of a load of newly trussed hay from the country, in a wagon marked with Farfrae's name. Beside it rode Farfrae himself on horseback." (203-04) Henchard is never seen in this golden light. As Hardy sees him, he is a creature of fire and gloom.

The reassertion of subconscious forces in Henchard's nature is depicted through two related symbolic patterns. The first is Henchard's fall from his illustrious position as leader of the bright overworld of Casterbridge to his association with the sinister half-light of Mixen Lane. Henchard becomes involved with the dark evil of Mixen Lane by going, voluntarily, to live with Jopp, who resides near there. Henchard's carelessly giving Lucetta's letters to Jopp to return to her can be interpreted as a subconscious expression of the desire to cause Lucetta and Farfrae to suffer - especially when Henchard's earlier behavior in reading her letters aloud to Farfrae is considered. At that time, his destructive, subconscious impulses came into open conflict with his conscious self. As he read the letters, he approached the conclusion as if the signature were indeed coming with the rest. But ... he stopped short. The truth was that, as may be divined, he had quite intended to effect a grand catastrophe at the end of this drama by reading out the name; he had come to the house with no other thought. But sitting here in cold blood he could not do it. Such a wrecking of hearts appalled even him. His quality was such that he could have annihilated
them both in the heat of action; but to accomplish the deed by oral poison was beyond the nerve of his enmity. (284)

In Henchard's giving the letters to Jopp, the desire of the subconscious to "annihilate" Lucetta and Farfrae is being accomplished in a more devious manner, to avoid incurring the opposition of the conscious mind. Henchard's voluntary association with Jopp is a willing association with Jopp's whole milieu, symbolic of the realm of the subconscious. The irresponsibility which reigns there is in direct contrast to the earnest sense of responsibility which characterizes members of the Casterbridge establishment, such as Farfrae and Elizabeth-Jane. As Mother Cuxsom says to Jopp when he is going to deliver Lucetta's letters to her: "We be just going down Mixen Lane way, to look into Peter's Finger afore creeping to bed.... There's a fiddle and tambourine going on there. Lord, what's all the world - do ye come along too, Jopp - 'twon't hinder ye five minutes." (293)

This indirect involvement of Henchard in the skimmity-ride is as close as Henchard ever approaches to membership in the underworld. It is only part of Henchard - the dark, satanic, subconscious part - which is responsible for the skimmity-ride and the destruction of Lucetta. Just as the officials of Casterbridge have only a dim idea of what goes on in Mixen Lane, and cannot seem to control outbursts such as the skimmity-ride, so Henchard cannot come to grips with his subconscious self. When the attempt of Henchard to correct what his subconscious has done to Lucetta fails - he cannot persuade Farfrae to return to Lucetta, and so she eventually dies, he can only condemn himself as "a wretched man," and curse himself "like a less scrupulous Job, as a vehement man will do when he loses self-respect." (330) His inability to make peace either by conquering the primitive and instinctual in his nature - as Elizabeth-Jane, Farfrae, and Newson have - or to emancipate himself from the conscious need to live by the precepts of the Casterbridge overworld - as Mrs. Cuxsom, Nance Mockridge, and Mrs. Goodenough have - is responsible for the terrible loneliness in which he dies.

The second symbolic pattern which Hardy employs to indicate the reassertion of Henchard's subconscious during the latter part of the novel
is the use of imagery combining darkness and water, similar to that used in conjunction with Eustacia in *The Return of the Native*. On the north-eastern verge of the town, past Mixen Lane and along the lower end of Casterbridge out into the misty, swampy moors, flows "the Schwarzwasser of Casterbridge." (145) Henchard is first associated with the stream just after he discovers that Elizabeth-Jane is not his daughter:

| He went out of the house, and moved sullenly onward down the pavement till he came to the bridge at the bottom of the High Street. Here he turned in upon a bypath on the river bank, skirting the north-eastern limits of the town. |
| These precincts embodied the mournful phases of Casterbridge life, as the south avenues embodied its cheerful moods. The whole way along here was sunless, even in summer time; in spring, white frosts lingered here when other places were steaming with warmth; while in winter it was the seed-field of all the aches, rheumatisms, and torturing cramps of the year. (145) |

At this point, with Henchard by the river, Hardy indicates what his fate is to be. A square shape across the river looks to Henchard "like a pedestal lacking its statue. This missing feature, without which the design remained incomplete, was, in truth, the corpse of a man; for the square mass formed the base of the gallows, the extensive buildings at the back being the county gaol." (145) Seeing this, and hearing the "tune of the roaring weir" further out in the meadows, Henchard is "impressed ...more than he had expected to be. The lugubrious harmony of the spot with his domestic situation was too perfect for him." (146)

When Henchard has been displaced by Farfrae, he goes to live in Jopp's cottage on the river bank, within earshot of the cascade of the old Priory Mill, "which had raised its terrific roar for centuries." (255) Hardy builds up the idea of the force of the water, as he did on the night of Eustacia's death. Henchard spends his days on one of the two bridges which are the haunts of all the "miserables" of Casterbridge. The stream seems to exert an almost hypnotic effect on these unfortunates, similar to the fascination which Eustacia felt for pools:

| Some had been known to stand and think so long with this fixed gaze downward that eventually they had allowed their poor carcasses to follow that gaze; and they were |
discovered the next morning out of reach of their troubles, either here or in the deep pool called Blackwater, a little higher up the river. (259)

Hardy speaks of Henchard staring long "into the racing river till the bridge seemed moving backward with him." (260) There is an implication here of a strong force acting upon Henchard, pulling him backward. It is as though the stream is symbolic of a force drawing him back to some earlier stage of things, as though he is regressing into the darkness of his original, subconscious nature.

Later, when Henchard is convinced that he is going to lose Elizabeth-Jane to Newson, he goes up after dark to a place called Ten Hatches, where Blackwater pool is located. Henchard follows a "path of solitude" in walking to this spot, his intention being to commit suicide.

While his eyes were bent on the water beneath there slowly became visible a something floating in the circular pool formed by the wash of centuries; the pool he was intending to make his death-bed. At first it was indistinct by reason of the shadow from the bank; but it emerged thence and took shape, which was that of a human body, lying stiff and stark upon the surface of the stream.

In the circular current imparted by the central flow the form was brought forward, till it passed under his eyes; and then he perceived with a sense of horror that it was HIMSELF. Not a man somewhat resembling him, but one in all respects his actual double, was floating as if dead in Ten Hatches Hole. (342)

The imagery used in this scene is startlingly similar to that in the death scene of Eustacia and Wildeve. The name "Ten Hatches" is used in both cases, as is the idea of the circular current, with its centripetal force. The sight of his effigy floating in the pool constitutes a type of epiphany for Henchard, from which he draws back in horror. It is as though the effigy is his dark, subconscious self -- the demon in him -- manifested in a separate and visible form, for the effigy represents Henchard in his illicit relationship with Lucetta. This relationship was the chief manifestation of his subconscious during the years of his residence in Casterbridge. The revulsion and fear with which Henchard draws back from the pool -- he will not approach it when he returns for the second time with Elizabeth-Jane -- is caused, like the fascination and fear Eustacia
felt for water, by an awareness at some level in himself of a symbolic significance in the scene relevant to his own life.

The power of this scene as a foreshadowing of Henchard's fate is felt through the rest of the novel, and largely determines the ominous mood of the remaining chapters. His turning away in fear from the revelation of Ten Hatches Pool does not save him for long from the fate which it foreshadows. The centripetal force which acts on the effigy in the pool continues to operate on Henchard even after he leaves Casterbridge, for he wanders in a circle which has Casterbridge as its centre. Hardy eventually defines the force operating on Henchard in specific terms as "the centripetal influence of his love for his stepdaughter."(368) Shortly after, Elizabeth-Jane again is identified with the pool imagery. Henchard thinks of her constantly in his circular wanderings around Casterbridge, except when "thought of Newson's and Farfrae's counter-influence would pass like a cold blast over a pool, and efface her image."(368) Hardy's touch is very light here, but the implication which must be drawn from his suggestions nevertheless becomes obvious by this point. Elizabeth-Jane is associated with the pool and named as the force which pulls Henchard round and round, drawing him into the centre. The last, most powerful and fatal assertion of Henchard's subconscious is his passion for his stepdaughter. Since Elizabeth-Jane has stood in the relation of daughter to him for several years, there are strong incestuous tinges to the relationship. As the real nature of Henchard's attachment to Elizabeth-Jane becomes clearer toward the end of the novel, the fluctuations which have been characteristic of his behavior to her from the outset become more understandable. The conflict in him between reason and passion, conscious and subconscious, over this last issue is deeper than over any other, for his conscious self completely rejects the incestuous passion of the subconscious for Elizabeth-Jane.³

The guilt which Henchard experiences about his feelings for Elizabeth-Jane and his treatment of her, while more extreme than the guilt which he experiences at various points earlier in the novel, is
is the same kind and for the same reason. All of Henchard's guilt feelings have been related to the three women with whom he has been associated. His earliest guilt was about the sale of his wife. Later, he was to castigate himself for his treatment of Lucetta, thinking he had compromised her reputation on Jersey. Finally, there is his consuming guilt about his passion for Elizabeth-Jane. In each case, the reparation which Henchard's guilt forces him to attempt fails. His wife is never happy, Lucetta rejects his offers, and Elizabeth-Jane refuses to forgive him. Guerard claims that "Hardy recognized, intuitively at least, that the guilty may ... punish themselves unconsciously and cause their own 'bad luck'. ... Henchard is such a man, for whom everything 'goes wrong' once he has begun to struggle with his guilt." 

The total self-abasement evident in the circumstances of Henchard's death is the culmination of a long series of self-punitive, seemingly masochistic acts caused by his guilt and frustration. Earlier, his marriage to Susan in the face of his love for Lucetta had caused him to suffer. And his behavior on the occasion of the Royal Progress through Casterbridge revealed what Guerard terms Henchard's "subconscious self-destructiveness:"

He has a "passing fancy" to join in welcoming the royal visitor, though no longer a member of the town council. But what might have appeared a last conscious effort to reassert his dignity was in fact a half-conscious effort to degrade himself before the collected townsfolk in the most humiliating way. 

Elizabeth-Jane delivers Henchard's death-wound when she explicitly withdraws her love from him at her wedding celebrations. Her rejection seems to fix in Henchard an overwhelming sense of his guilt. He passively accepts her condemnation, and removes himself to die secretly and alone. The chief clause of his will, "That Elizabeth-Jane Farfrae be not told of my death, or made to grieve on account of me," (384) is the final, most striking testimony to Henchard's guilt about his feelings for Elizabeth-Jane. The will reveals both a sense of guilt, in Henchard's desire to die alone and unnoticed, and the heroic courage to accept this fate unflinchingly. At the end,
Henchard seems almost to understand the conditions of his existence, the tragic and irremediable split in his personality between conscious intention and dark, instinctual needs. Unable either to accept or change his nature, Henchard no longer wishes to live.

The new reign in Casterbridge, initiated by Farfrae and Elizabeth-Jane, will be one in which reason pervails. The emotion and passion characteristic of Henchard's rule seem to die with him, and there is promise of a hiatus in the conflict between light and dark forces which characterized Casterbridge during Henchard's rule. The irrational and sinister elements of the town, which had flourished with Henchard in office, will have a more difficult time under the watchful eye of Farfrae. John Paterson views the tragic action of the novel as a struggle between reason and passion, and Henchard's death and Farfrae's succession as the means of re-establishing health and stability in Casterbridge:

Founding itself upon an ancient psychology, The Mayor of Casterbridge celebrates, first of all, the subordination of the passions that link man with nature to the reason that unites him with God. It is Henchard's tragedy that, like Lear and Othello, he reverses and destroys this order. For when he sells his wife to a sailor for five guineas in violation of the profoundest moral tact, it is at a moment when, under the spell of the furmity-woman, he has allowed the passions to distort and deform the reason. Indeed, the surrender to passion responsible for the original crime will, in spite of his heroic resolution to give up drinking for twenty years, repeat itself in those sudden angers and indignations that alienate Farfrae, Elizabeth, and Lucetta, among others, and eventually deprive him of the ordinary consolations of love and friendship. The precarious balance between reason and passion will be re-established only at the very end when, thoroughly scourged and chastised, all passion spent, Henchard is displaced by the Farfraes and Elizabths in whose persons the claims of reason are piously acknowledged. Of all Hardy's novels, The Mayor of Casterbridge perhaps comes closest to the tone and structure of tragedy.
Chapter 4 — Tess of the d'Urbervilles

In Tess, as in Clym Yeobright and Michael Henchard, a split has occurred which arouses conflicting forces in her nature. Though she is like her mother in some of her characteristics, she is different in others. Where Mrs. Durbeyfield is easygoing and complacent, Tess is serious and thoughtful. Rather than attempting to deal with life in conscious, rational terms, through foresight and work and progress toward a goal, Mrs. Durbeyfield is content to drift easily and mindlessly along. She seizes on the news of her husband's descent from the d'Urberville line as a means of escaping the sordid reality of the Durbeyfield cottage into a sensual world of dreams and illusions, joining him in the illicit drinking in the upstairs bedroom at Rolliver's "off-license" inn.\(^1\) Tess sees clearly the folly of her mother's self-indulgent behavior, for between them "there was a gap of two hundred years as ordinarily understood. When they were together the Jacobean and the Victorian ages were juxtaposed."\(^{24}\) Mrs. Durbeyfield is still under the sway of sensual, subconscious forces, whereas Tess strives to be rational. To Tess, "Her mother's intelligence was that of a happy child."\(^{41}\)

Later, Hardy terms Tess "Eve at her second waking."\(^{218}\) After tasting the forbidden fruit Eve had knowledge of good and evil, and the sensual, carnal needs of the flesh were judged sinful. Eve knew guilt and shame, and covered her nakedness. Whereas Joan Durbeyfield seems still to exist in a state of innocence, and does not consider whether acts are good or evil — for example, the illegal drinking at Rolliver's — Tess has reached a state which Dorothy Van Ghent describes as having a "morally individualizing consciousness."\(^2\) Having evolved to this stage, Tess feels guilt about physical needs and desires, viewing them as somehow a degradation to the spirit. When Tess enters Rolliver's to fetch her erring parents home, her mother has acumen enough to perceive the incongruity of her presence in such a place: "Even to her mother's gaze the girl's young features looked sadly out of place amid the alcoholic vapours which floated here."\(^{30}\)
Yet the presence of a younger child, Abraham, is taken for granted almost. The conscious, rational, thoughtful part of Tess stands aside disapprovingly, not only from her parents' irrational behavior at this point, but also from other people and events in the novel. She is depicted always as separate from the Wessex folk-group with which she is in close contiguity for most of her life. Even at Talbothays, where she makes friends with Izz, Retty, and Marion, the feeling is that she is different from the other workers -- distinct and more self-conscious.

Tess' relation to the folk in this novel is like that of Mrs. Yeobright to Egdon Heath and its dwellers in The Return of the Native: there are strong emotional ties between them, but the sense of self -- the individual consciousness -- has become too strong in these two women to allow them to exist entirely in the instinctual, mindless rhythms which are still the *modus vivendi* of the peasants in Wessex. Tess' inability to participate in the group rhythm (what Mrs. Van Ghent refers to as the "colonial life") is well-illustrated by her aloofness from the peasants at Trantridge, where they are imaged as an integral part of the harmonies of nature, and even of the universe. From all this Tess remains separate. Dorothy Van Ghent discusses the difference between Tess and the peasants as follows:

The folk are the earth's pseudopodia, another fauna; and because they are so deeply rooted in the elemental side of the earth -- like a sensitive animal extension of the earth itself -- they share the authority of the natural....The folk are the bridge between mere earth and moral individuality; of the earth as they are, separable conscious ego does not arise among them to weaken animal instinct and confuse response -- it is the sports, the deracinated ones, like Tess and Clare and Alec, who are morally individualized and who are therefore able to suffer isolation, alienation, and abandonment, or to make others so suffer; the folk, while they remain folk, cannot be individually isolated, alienated, or lost, for they are amoral, and their existence is colonial rather than personal.
Tess' conscious desire is not for sensual pleasure; "mentally older than her mother,"(55) her initial wish is to be a teacher at the local school. It is the death of Prince which prevents her fulfilling this ambition. This incident and Tess' reaction to it reveal the fatal ambiguity of her nature. Hardy renders symbolically through the event and Tess' response to it the conflict in his heroine between the flesh and the spirit, between conscious aim and the subconscious needs of the body — which she has refused to recognize, relegating them to darkness. Tess' decision to make the journey with Abraham and Prince to deliver the beehives is characteristic of her determination at the outset of the novel to cope with reality as rationally as she can. Before Prince's death she will have nothing to do with her parents' illusory dreams about their family. When the subject arises, Tess reverts to what was far more prominent in her own mind at the moment than thoughts of her ancestry—

'I am afraid father won't be able to take the journey with the beehives to-morrow so early.'(34)

Shortly after Hardy notes that "Every day seemed to throw upon her young shoulders more of the family burdens."(42)

The accident to Prince occurs because Tess, in attempting to follow a conscious purpose which her reason tells her is necessary to the welfare of the family, ignores and overtaxes her body. Setting out after only three hours rest, she puts Abraham to sleep, thinking "that she could take upon herself the entire conduct of the load:"

Prince required but slight attention, lacking energy for superfluous movements of any sort. With no longer a companion to distract her, Tess fell more deeply into reverie than ever, her back leaning against the hives. The mute procession past her shoulders of trees and hedges became attached to fantastic scenes outside reality.(34)

It is at this moment, when phantoms from the subconscious rise to engulf her conscious mind, loosening Tess' usual firm grip of reality, that the physical need for sleep begins to assert
itself and the tragic accident occurs. This pattern is typical of what happens repeatedly not only to Tess but also to the leading characters of the other three novels. Clym Yeobright is sleeping animal-like on the floor when his mother comes to propose healing the breach between them; Henchard and Jude both incur trouble when their conscious powers have been dimmed by alcohol. One of the basic themes in Hardy, as Mrs. Van Ghent notes in her discussion of Tess of the d'Urbervilles, is "The precariousness of moral consciousness in its brute instinctual and physical circumstances...."(4) Consciousness—that part of man which establishes a rational goal and attempts to achieve it—is a fragile commodity in most people in Hardy's novels; it is easily overthrown by the dark subconscious forces associated with the flesh.

The rendering of the episode of Prince's death foreshadows the fate Tess will later suffer at Alec's hands: "In her despair Tess sprang forward and put her hand upon the hole, with the only result that she became splashed from face to skirt with the crimson drops."(35) Her assumption of blame also prefigures the great guilt she will later feel about Alec's seduction of her: "'Tis all my doing—all mine!' the girl cried, gazing at the spectacle. 'No excuse for me—none.'"(36) Tess' guilt seems in excess of the circumstances. Though she regards herself "in the light of Prince's murderess,"(38) Hardy states that "Nobody blamed Tess as she blamed herself."(37) Her self-accusation is due to her inability to accept even so natural a manifestation of the flesh as fatigue when it conflicts with her conscious purpose. Tess displays the same guilt as Clym, Henchard, and Jude do when their plans are foiled by what they consider their base needs and instincts. The guilt and self-accusation are indications of the conflict between conscious and subconscious in these protagonists. The flesh and its dark needs are an embarrassment to the conscious self.

An even stronger indicator of the conflict in Tess is the masochistic tendency of her nature. Often when action on her part would avert suffering, she remains curiously still and passive, as though, because of her guilt, she desires to experience pain. Her refusal to appeal to either Angel or his parents for a long time,
even though she is reduced to utter penury, is one example of this acquiescence. But the evidence for Tess' masochism is stronger and more direct than this. She is constantly offering herself as a sacrifice for her family. Going to Trantridge in the first place is a sacrificial act, performed because of her mistaken guilt over Prince's death. Later she sacrifices herself even more obviously to Alec at Kingsbere in order to rescue her family for desperate circumstances. Hardy makes two explicit comments about Tess' masochistic nature. When she is tormenting herself with the possibility that she might marry Angel, she retreats from him

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till...in the thicket of pollard willows at the lower side of the barton, where she could be quite unseen, here Tess flung herself down upon the rustling undergrowth of spear-grass, as upon a bed, and remained crouching in palpitating misery broken by momentary shoots of joy... (228)
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The pleasure in pain characteristic of masochism is clearly present in Hardy's description of this scene.

Later, when Alec is pursuing her at Flintcomb-Ash with demonic intensity, she rebels, striking him in fury, and then seems to beg for punishment:

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'Now punish me,' she said, turning up her eyes to him with the hopeless defiance of the sparrow's gaze before its captor twists its neck. 'Whip me, crush me; you need not mind these people under the rick!' I shall not cry out. Once victim, always victim -- that's the law!' 
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Tess appears to recognize at this point that it is her destiny—a law of her nature—to suffer. This theme of masochism reaches its climax when Tess voluntarily offers herself as a symbolic sacrifice on the altar of Stonehenge. The act occurs in Phase the Seventh, entitled "Fulfilment," as though it is only in this ultimate masochistic act that Tess can accommodate the tragic division in her nature. When she is captured she observes, "'It is as it should be....Angel, I am almost glad--yes, glad.' This happiness could not have lasted. It was too much." (505)

Because Tess' sensual needs have been repressed into the subconscious, they can find expression only by devious, indirect means. Unlike Henchard and Jude, she does not drink liquor, and so this release is denied her. Tess' subconscious usually becomes active and
dominant—as in the episode of Prince's death—as a result of sheer physical weariness, when the energy necessary to repress the forces which the conscious self has deemed evil and dark is no longer there. It is usually when Tess is in a state of extreme weariness that her conscious control and purpose waver. Riding home with Alec after her quarrel with Car Darch, the Queen of Diamonds, she is "inexpressibly weary." At one point she is "overcome by actual drowsiness. In that moment of oblivion her head sank gently against him." (86)

In the seduction scene in the mist-filled depths of the venerable Chase Tess first falls "into reverie upon the leaves" (89) and finally sound asleep:

'Tess!' said d'Urberville.

There was no answer. The obscurity was now so great that he could see absolutely nothing but a pale nebulosity at his feet, which represented the white muslin figure he had left upon the dead leaves. Everything else was blackness alike. d'Urberville stooped; and heard a gentle regular breathing. He knelt and bent lower, till her breath warmed his face, and in a moment his cheek was in contact with hers. She was sleeping soundly, and upon her eyelashes there lingered tears. (90)

Hardy is not implying in his rendering of this episode that Tess is attempting to seduce Alec, so much as that it is the weakness and fragility of the flesh which defeats conscious resolution and allows the subconscious to have its way. The implication is that there are sensual needs in Tess' nature which she has been ignoring, just as she had ignored her need of sleep before Prince's accident. These needs assert themselves when she is weary and conscious purpose is dimmed, the most striking example being her surrender to Alec in the Chase.

Though it is usually when Tess is fatigued that her subconscious needs emerge to betray her conscious plans and ideals, and to cause her grief and shame, there is an ambiguity in her appearance and an ambivalence in much of her behavior which argue a much more pervasive role for the subconscious in her life. Hardy provides a wealth of suggestion that the subconscious is continually expressing itself, though in a manner so devious that Tess is not consciously aware of what is happening—especially during the early part of the novel, before her loss of innocence. In his description
of her, Hardy indicates that there is a strongly sensual side to her nature. In his first presentation of her physical appearance, he notes that "her lower lip had a way of thrusting the middle of her top one upward, when they closed together after a word."(13) The picture is of a sensually petulant mouth. When Alec appears at Flintcomb-Ash, though Tess is supposedly determined to remain faithful to Angel, there is an ambivalence in the way Tess looks at the new convert which disturbs him:

she turned from the stile over which she had been leaning, and faced him; whereupon his eyes, falling casually upon the familiar countenance and form, remained contemplating her. The inferior man was quiet in him now; but it was surely not extracted, nor even entirely subdued.

'Don't look at me like that!' he said abruptly.

Tess, who had been quite unconscious of her action and mien, instantly withdrew the large dark gaze of her eyes, stammering with a flush, 'I beg your pardon!' And there was revived in her the wretched sentiment which had often come to her before, that in inhabiting the fleshly tabernacle with which Nature had endowed her she was somehow doing wrong.(395)

Shortly after, fearing that Tess' seductive charms will ensnare him a second time, Alec requires her to swear an oath at a spot called "Cross-in-Hand"(396) on what is supposedly a stone holy cross. The revelation that it is "a thing of illomen," put up by the relatives of a man who reportedly"sold his soul to the devil,"(398) is symbolic of Tess and Alec's inability to escape from the dark forces of their natures. The incident typifies the manner in which conscious purpose is repeatedly betrayed, in human experience, by something unknown to it and therefore over which it can have no control. Later Alec tells Tess, "You are Eve, and I am the old Other One."(445) Tess becomes convicted by a realization that there is a part of her which is committed and belongs—in fact, is "sold"—to Alec: "a consciousness that in a physical sense this man alone was her husband seemed to weigh on her more and more." (457)

At this point she appears to consciously accept the result of her earlier unconscious act.

Whereas in her relationship with Alec Tess is always holding back because of the aversion in her conscious self to his sensuality
and only responds to him indirectly, on a subconscious level, she
is consciously drawn to Angel. She perceives him as an ideal, rather
than sensual figure. As Hardy puts it,

There was hardly a touch of earth in her love
for Clare. To her sublime trustfulness he was all
that goodness should be--knew all that a guide,
philosopher, and friend should know. She thought
every line in the contour of his person the per-
fecion of masculine beauty, his soul the soul of
a saint, his intellect that of a seer. The wis-
dom of her love for him, as love sustained her
dignity; she seemed to be wearing a crown. The
compassion of his love for her, as she saw it,
made her lift up her heart to him in devotion.
He would sometimes catch her large, worshipful
eyes, that had no bottom to them, looking at him
from their depths, as if she saw something im-
mortal before her. (246)

Yet even in this relationship there is conflict and ambiguity. The
subconscious in Tess' nature is sensually attracted to Angel, and works
at cross-purposes with her conscious, ideal feelings toward him, trying to entice him physically. Consciously, she believes that she has
no right to become intimate with Angel because of her dark past, but
she cannot control her attraction for him. Tess' conduct at Talbothays,
during that hot, lush summer, is ruled by the "invincible instinct to-
wards self-delight" (127) which brought her there initially. Hardy
twice refers to her behavior during this period as "automatic."

Early in their relationship, the ambivalence in Tess' be-

havior leads Angel to exclaim, "You seem almost like a coquette, upon
my life you do--a coquette of the first urban water! They blow hot
and cold, just as you do; and it is the very last sort of thing to
expect to find in a retreat like Talbothays...."(227) Shortly after,
he refers to Tess as "Miss Flirt". Tess becomes increasingly con-
scious during their courtship of the dichotomy in her nature. Though
she is aware of dark forces operating to another purpose:

She knew that they were waiting like wolves,
just outside the circumscribing light, but she
had long spells of power to keep them in hungry
subjection there.

A spiritual forgetfulness co-existed with
an intellectual remembrance. She walked in bright-
ness but she knew that in the background those shapes
of darkness were always spread. They might be re-
ceding, or they might be approaching, one or the
other, a little every day.(249-50)

When Tess eventually does tell Angel about her dark past, the imagery describing the scene is lurid. As she talks, each of the family diamonds which Angel has just given her makes "a sinister wink like a toad's."(287) It is as though what Tess is saying has been dredged from the shadowy bottom of some pool, coming up toad-like to break surface into the light, where it appears "sinister". Thoroughly disturbed by what Tess tells him, Angel comes to speculate about whether there might not be some deep split in Tess' nature, with a different personality altogether hidden behind the seemingly virtuous exterior:

Nothing so pure, so sweet, so virginal as Tess had seemed possible all the long while that he had adored her, up to an hour ago; but

The little less, and what worlds away!

He argued erroneously when he said to himself that her heart was not indexed in the honest freshness of her face; but Tess had no advocate to set him right. Could it be possible, he continued, that eyes which as they gazed never expressed any divergence from what the tongue was telling, were yet ever seeing another world behind her ostensible one, discordant and contrasting.(301)

One reason why Tess is a much greater creation than Clym Yeobright is that she grows and develops considerably during the novel. Her initiation into sensual experience has a profound effect on her character, particularly in her increasing awareness of her own nature and her understanding of the conflicting impulses which determine her behavior. She becomes able to gauge her own strengths and weaknesses, and to know just how far she can be tried. When Angel, in "the fury of fastidiousness with which he was possessed" after hearing Tess' confession, says that they must separate, Tess replies: "I agree to the conditions, Angel; because you know best what my punishment ought to be; only--only-- don't make it more than I can bear."(323) Tess knows now that there are dark needs in her which can not be completely denied. Eventually Tess, caught in the conflict between her conscious intention to be faithful, and her sensual, subconscious needs, feels her resolution waning under the pressure and, in a mood of desperation, attempts
to write Angel:

That very night she began an appealing letter to Clare, concealing from him her hardships, and assuring him of her undying affection. Any one who had been in a position to read between the lines would have seen that at the back of her great love was some monstrous fear—almost a desperation—as to some secret contingencies which were not disclosed. But she did not finish her effusion ....

When d'Urberville arrives at Flintcomb-Ash and wants to help her financially, Tess candidly says, "But I am very well off! I am only in trouble about—not about living at all."

The final phase in Tess' growth toward self-understanding comes when she rebels against Angel's judgment of her, realizing that the blame for her deeds lies not in herself but in the very nature of things—beyond her control:

Her husband, Angel Clare himself, had, like others, dealt out hard measure to her, surely he had! She had never before admitted such a thought; but he had surely. Never in her life—she could swear it from the bottom of her soul—had she ever intended to do wrong; yet these hard judgments had come. Whatever her sins, they were not sins of intention, but of inadvertence, and why should she have been punished so persistently?

Angel, in Brazil, also comes to this realization. Too late, he asks himself "why he had not judged Tess constructively, rather than biographically, by the will rather than by the deed?"

Given the nature of the human condition, with dark, subconscious forces constantly pitted against conscious intent, lapses are not criminal or abnormal but normal and human. Those who, like the Clare family, never fall, remain pure only because they have completely extinguished the sensual fires of their beings. They do not represent a solution to the dilemma of man's split nature, but rather an evasion of the problem.

In his portrayal of Tess, then, Hardy presents a woman in a state of intense conflict; the war between the flesh and the spirit emerges in Hardy's description of both her physical appearance and her behavior, and in his account of her inner experiences, as she develops toward full understanding of the tragic opposition in her nature. Equally important in exposing the conflict in Tess
are her relations with Alec and Angel. Hardy uses the same structure here which he employed in *The Return of the Native*, where Clym was caught between his mother and Eustacia, except that in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* the sexes are reversed. Hardy uses the same pattern again in *Jude the Obscure*, and it is present in the competition between Farfrae and Henchard for the love of Elizabeth-Jane, in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, though in less obvious form. The structure of all four tragic novels is similar because the same conflicting forces are operative in each. While the conflict is essentially an internal, psychological one, between the subconscious impulses of man and his conscious aims, Hardy's technique of externalizing it in the relationships between his characters gives it interest of a more dramatic kind, and makes it central to the narrative trajectory of these four novels.

Tess does not succeed in forming a satisfactory relationship with either Alec or Angel. Alec is essentially interested only in sensual gratification, as the imagery used to describe him consistently testifies. The demonic qualities with which Hardy endows him from the outset, by associating him with the colors black and red and a perennially glowing cigar, rise to a peak of intensity toward the end of the novel, when Tess is holding him off. At one point, when Tess is tilling the family plot, he appears unmistakably as Lucifer in the fire:

*By-and-by he dug so close to her that the fire-beams were reflected as distinctly from the steel prongs of his fork as from her own. On going up to the fire to throw a pitch of dead weeds upon it, she found that he did the same on the other side. The fire flared up, and she beheld the face of d'Urberville.* (h h h-45)

The basis of the relationship between Tess and Alec is completely non-rational in nature: an intoxicating influence which his rich sensuality wields over her. When Tess first goes to the Slopes, he seems to cast a spell over her: "the two passed round to the rose trees, whence he gathered blossoms and gave her to put in her bosom. She obeyed like one in a dream." The "skeins of smoke" from his cigar act as a drug on her:
Tess Durbeyfield did not divine, as she innocently looked down at the roses in her bosom, that there behind the blue narcotic haze was potentially the 'tragic mischief' of her drama--one who stood fair to be the blood-red ray in the spectrum of her young life.

When Tess returns to live at the d'Urbervilles, the journey there is imaged as a fantastic flight through space to hell itself. ("Sometimes a wheel was off the ground, it seemed, for many yards.
Watching the horse's hoofs cast "flinty sparks," and the journey ends at "the bottom," with Tess' face "on fire.

Whenever Tess succumbs to Alec, Hardy always speaks of her as being unconscious, in a reverie, dreaming, dazed, or confused. As they are riding along just before the seduction Alec asks, "Mayn't I treat you as a lover?" Tess is so bemused by his dark powers that she can only writhe uneasily and murmur, "I don't know--I wish--how can I say yes or no when--" afterwards, Hardy describes her state as "temporarily blinded by his ardent manners, ...stirred to confused surrender awhile." Tess perceives the incompleteness of the relationship clearly once the spell is over: "if I had ever sincerely loved you, if I loved you still, I should not so loathe and hate myself for my weakness as I do now!...My eyes were dazed by you for a little, and that was all!"

Tess can evidently only relate to Alec when her conscious self has been drugged or confused. The relationship is inadequate because Tess can only participate in it with the instinctual, subconscious part of her nature--the part, furthermore, which she regards as base. Rather than being a union in any true sense, it acts as a divisive, splitting force in Tess. She evaluates the relationship correctly herself toward the end of the novel when she recognizes that she belongs to Alec in a physical sense alone. His conversion is as unbelievable to Tess as it is to the reader of the novel, and skepticism is justified by Alec's quick relapse to his true, sensual nature.

Tess is a very romantic heroine. Emerging sharply distinct and different from an unchanging, and undifferentiated folk-background, she must engage in a quest for some means of fulfilment adequate to her nature. Despite her disillusioning experience with Alec, her behavior with Angel indicates that what she hopes to achieve is
union with a man whom she can not only respect and even idolize, as she does Angel, but who will accept the darker, subconscious needs of her being and satisfy them, as Alec did. Hardy appears to feel that, for a woman such as Tess, a relationship of this kind is the only possible means of resolving the conflict between spirit and flesh. But Alec is inadequate to satisfy Tess' rational, conscious self, and Angel is unable to accommodate the strong, sensual impulses of Tess' subconscious.

Initially, Tess' conscious aim is to escape from her dark self and its past into an ideal sphere by means of the love between herself and Angel. Hardy suggests, symbolically, that an escape from the subconscious forces of one's being is impossible; Tess and Angel meet a man who recognizes her, and the old coach, manor house, and portraits of the d'Urberville family which they encounter on their honeymoon are symbols of her lineage, and thus of the dark nature which she has inherited from her ancestors. When Angel on their wedding night confesses his own dark nature, Tess briefly acquires the hope that their relationship might be more than a mere escape from the darkness within themselves; that in mutual acceptance of the dark, light and dark—the tragic dichotomy—will be transcended in an all-encompassing union of their two beings.

After Angel's recitation, he asks,

'Do you forgive me?'
'Yes, I will forgive you, at least."
'Then we will dismiss it at once and for ever!—too painful as it is for the occasion—and talk of something lighter.'
'Ah, to be sure! Now then for it, wicked little one.'
'Perhaps, although you smile, it is as serious as yours, or more so.'
'It can hardly be more serious, dearest.'
'It cannot—no, it cannot!' She jumped up joyfully at the hope. 'No, it cannot be more serious, certainly,' she cried, 'because 'tis just the same! I will tell you now.' (286-87)

Angel's inability to meet Tess on this transcendent level becomes obvious almost at once.

Angel's rejection of Tess after their marriage was forecast by the fact that, of all the girls present at the May Day celebrations in Marlott when the novel opens, Tess was the only one with whom Angel did
not dance. Meeting her again at Talbothays, he is mistakenly attracted to her as "a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature." (155) Tess is not virginal, nor is she the fastidious, contained person which virginity might imply. It becomes increasingly obvious as the relationship evolves that there is confusion of both perception and motive in the pair, and that Tess and Angel are often moving at cross-purposes to each other. Though they are "converging, under an irresistible law, as surely as two streams in one vale," (165) it is only to meet briefly and then separate again, divided by an unmovable obstacle.

Tess impresses Angel most deeply in the wan light of early morning, when her sensuality is dimmed and she seems almost transfigured to a less earthly sort of creature:

Whilst all the landscape was in neutral shade his companion's face, which was the focus of his eyes, rising above the mist stratum, seemed to have a sort of phosphorescence upon it. She looked ghostly, as if she were merely a soul at large. In reality her face, without appearing to do so, had caught the cold gleam of day from the north-east; his own face, though he did not think of it, wore the same aspect to her.

It was then...that she impressed him most deeply. She was no longer the milkmaid, but a visionary essence of woman—a whole sex condensed into one typical form. He called her Artemis, Demeter, and other fanciful names half teasingly, which she did not like because she did not understand them.

'Call me Tess,' she would say askance; and he did. (167)

Both Angel and Alec like to call Tess by names other than her own, though the names they choose are of opposite kind. Alec terms her Eve and the witch of Babylon, whereas Angel uses the names of goddesses. Their differing choices reveal that they find in Tess what they wish to see, rather than what is actually there; Alec perceives only her sensuality, while Angel finds her spiritual, goddess-like.

The relationship between Tess and Angel is incomplete. Whereas Alec is unable to respond to Tess in any sense higher than the physical, Angel is too spiritual to love her with physical, animal passion: "He loved her dearly, though perhaps rather ideally and fancifully than with the impassioned thoroughness of her feeling for him." (260) Immediately the ceremony is over, Tess ponders the gap between their feelings and the inadequacy of Angel's love:
Her idolatry of this man was such that she herself almost feared it to be ill-omened. She was conscious of the notion expressed by Friar Laurence: 'These violent delights have violent ends.' It might be too desperate for human conditions—too rank, too wild, too deadly.

'O my love, my love, why do I love you so!' she whispered there alone; 'for she you love is not my real self, but one in my image; the one I might have been!' (273)

The three crows of the cock shortly after are a symbolic comment, not on Tess' past, but on Angel's rejection of her sensuality.

After Tess' confession, Angel comes to realize what Tess knew earlier—that he loves, not her as she really is, but some ideal, spiritualized version of her which he has created:

'the woman I have been loving is not you.'
'But who?'
'Another woman in your shape.'
She perceived in his words the realization of her own apprehensive foreboding in former times. (293)

The references in the novel to Tess as two women is the most extreme evidence given of the split in her nature. The "other" woman is the conscious spirit of Tess, which is so distinct from the rest of her that she feels her soul as something which can leave her body. In a conversation about ghosts in the Crick kitchen at Talbothays Tess observes,

'I don't know about ghosts ...but I do know that our souls can be made to go outside our bodies when we are alive ....
'A very easy way to feel 'em go ...is to lie on the grass at night and look straight up at some big bright star; and, by fixing your mind upon it, you will soon find that you are hundreds and hundreds o' miles away from your body, which you don't seem to want at all.' (155)

It is this aspiring soul perceptible in Tess with which Angel is in love.

As in The Return of the Native and The Mayor of Casterbridge, water is again associated with passion and the subconscious. It is the rain which brings Tess and Angel together physically on two occasions, first when Angel carries the dairymaids across a pool in the road so they can continue to church, and again when he and Tess are taking milk to the train and the rain forces them to huddle together under a single covering. The most significant association occurs during the sleepwalking scene. The waters of the stream over which Angel carries Tess, like those in which Eustacia and Wildeve perish, are turbulent, with a treach-
erously strong current. As Angel is bearing Tess across a "bare plank ... which, lying a few inches above the speeding current, formed a giddy pathway for even steady heads," (317) Tess has a strong desire that she and Angel perish in the rushing stream:

He might drown her if he would; it would be better than parting to-morrow to lead severed lives.

The swift stream raced and gyrated under them, tossing, distorting, and splitting the moon's reflected face. Spots of froth travelled past, and intercepted weeds waved behind the piles. If they could both fall together into the current now, their arms would be so tightly clasped together that they could not be saved; they would go out of the world almost painlessly, and there would be no more reproach to her, or to him for marrying her. His last half-hour with her would have been a loving one, while if they lived till he woke his daytime aversion would return, and this hour would remain to be contemplated only as a transient dream. (318)

Tess' wish is for a mutual annihilation similar to that achieved by Eustacia and Wildeve, and seems to be symbolic of a union essentially sexual in nature. But Angel is not a Wildeve, and so he continues across the plank bridge, and eventually lays Tess in a stone coffin in the Abbey grounds. The relationship between Tess and Angel cannot be consummated on the passionate, subconscious level symbolized by the dark, turbulent stream.

The implication in the final section of the novel that Tess and Angel somehow do achieve a complete union in the deserted house is not convincing. Angel has returned from Brazil a pale and limp, almost ghostly figure, emaciated and prematurely aged. The change in his outlook, like the conversion of Alec, seems too sudden and psychologically untenable to be credited. The most true and powerful thing in this last section is not their reconciliation, but rather Tess' symbolic self-sacrifice at Stonehenge. Like Henchard, understanding, in the end, the irreconcilable division in her nature, Tess no longer wishes to live. Alec in his spiritual sterility and Angel in his physical impotence have both failed Tess. The failure of her relations with both is indicative of her failure to transcend the schism between spirit and flesh, reason and passion, conscious and subconscious, which is the basic law of her being.
Chapter 5 — Jude the Obscure

Jude the Obscure contains the most explicit examination of the conflict which is the central theme unifying The Return of the Native, The Mayor of Casterbridge, Tess of the d'Urbervilles, and this last novel. In the first two, Hardy had rendered his theme to a large extent by means of poetic images; though image and symbol still interpret Hardy's vision to us in Tess and Jude, Hardy also makes increasing use of explicit statement in these two last novels. In the earlier novels, the pressures working in him appear to be releasing themselves largely in an unconscious manner, by means of powerful, natural symbols. Whether or not Hardy consciously used the symbolic pool imagery in The Return of the Native, or Mixen Lane in The Mayor of Casterbridge, for the purposes discussed in earlier chapters is not important. Even if Hardy were not consciously using symbols in his prose, symbolic interpretation can still be valid. Hardy recognized this in his 1912 Preface to Jude the Obscure when he said, "no doubt there can be more in a book than the author consciously puts there." (x) This statement's interest lies in the fact that, coming as it does many years after Hardy had written his last novel, it suggests that he continued to grow in awareness of what the novels were saying long after they were written, and that for years after Jude the Obscure was penned, Hardy's understanding of the full implication of the novels continued to develop.

Considering Hardy's extraordinary sensitivity to criticism, and the hostile reception accorded to Tess of the d'Urbervilles when it was first published in book form,¹ it is surprising that Hardy persisted in bringing out such a controversial novel as Jude the Obscure was to be. Hardy's entry in his diary for April 15, 1892, reads in part as follows:

Good Friday. Read review of Tess in The Quarterly. A smart and amusing article; but it is easy to be smart and amusing if a man will forgo veracity and sincerity....How strange that one may write a book without knowing what one puts into it—or rather, the reader puts into it. Well, if this sort of thing continues no more novel-writing for me. A man must be a fool to deliberately stand up to be shot at.²

Yet Hardy not only stood up again, but shortly after made of himself an
even more conspicuous target by publishing *Jude the Obscure* in 1895, with the result that he was "shot at" more than ever. Even in 1912, writing a new preface to the novel, the memory of the hostility engendered by the book's publication was still rankling in Hardy's mind, and was responsible for the bitter tone of his comments (though critical opinion had already begun to swing sharply around). Five years later, in late 1917, he wrote: "I fear I have always been considered the Dark Horse of contemporary English literature." As the word "fear" indicates, it was a role that Hardy did not revel in. One might conclude that there was something almost compulsive about the writing of the novels; that for some reason it was necessary for Hardy to go the whole length, to discuss the conflict between man's sexual needs and his ideal strivings in as explicit a manner as possible.

In *Jude the Obscure* Hardy deals with the same subject matter which had offended the reading public when *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* appeared, but he treats the subject even more directly in this last book. The instinctual forces which operated in *The Return of the Native* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, and which in *Tess* Hardy began to treat in a more explicit manner, are defined in *Jude* in clear terms as being primarily sexual in nature. It appears that in the novels Hardy is recording his increasing understanding of the conditions of human existence. In this last novel he is discussing the dilemma of how to fulfil sexual desire in a society whose Christian ethic has condemned the sexual drive as something dark and morally wrong. This dilemma manifests itself in the conflict between the conscious dictates of society and the instinctual, subconscious drives of people like Jude. Instinctual and social drives exist in antipathy in the human psyche. Shortly after Hardy's novel-writing days, Freud identified or named the two drives "id" and "ego", and established their importance in human behavior.

The conflict in Jude—the essential antithesis—is symbolized by the contrast between Christminster and Arabella. Hardy not only perceived this contrast, but seemed from the outset to have envisioned it, and to have carefully incorporated it in the architectonic planning of the novel. In a letter to a close friend, written shortly after the publication of *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy comments:
The 'grimy' features of the story go to show the contrast between the ideal life a man wished to lead, and the squalid life he was fated to lead. The throwing of the pizzle, at the supreme moment of his young dream, is to sharply initiate this contrast. But I must have lamentably failed, as I feel I have, if this requires explanation, and is not self-evident. The idea was meant to run all through the novel. It is, in fact, to be discovered in EVERYBODY'S life, though it lies less on the surface perhaps than it does in my poor puppet's.\(^5\)

A few days later he wrote, "Of course, the book is all contrasts—or was meant to be in its original conception."\(^6\)

The conflict in this last novel is repeatedly represented by means of contrasting images of light and dark—especially in relation to Jude's perception of the world. From the outset of the novel, Jude is engaged in a quest.\(^7\) Almost immediately, the quest becomes closely associated in his mind with the city of Christminster. For Hardy, however, the quest in which Jude engages is something more exalted, even mystical, than a search for membership or citizenship in the academic world of Christminster. Hardy images the quest throughout the novel as a search for light on Jude's part, the light of human knowledge and consciousness. Jude's first vision of Christminster is of distant rays of reflected sunlight:

Some way within the limits of the stretch of landscape, points of light like the topaz gleamed. The air increased in transparency with the lapse of minutes, till the topaz points showed themselves to be the vanes, windows, wet roof slates, and other shining spots upon the spires, domes, freestone-work, and varied outlines that were faintly revealed. It was Christminster, unquestionably; either directly seen, or miraged in the peculiar atmosphere. (19)

Shortly after, Jude sees the city glowing at night: "No individual light was visible, only a halo or glow-fog overarching the place against the black heavens behind it, making the light and the city seem distant but a mile or so." (21) Jude comes to think of the city as "a city of light" where the "tree of knowledge grows." (24) Later he perceives the buildings of Christminster as "palaces of light and leading." (100)
As in *The Return of the Native*, the search for knowledge is symbolized by the lamp of the student or scholar. In the early full flush of his conscious aim to go to Christminster, Jude is described as smiling with that singularly beautiful irradiation which is seen to spread on young faces at the inception of some glorious idea, as if a supernatural lamp were held inside their transparent natures, giving rise to the flattering fancy that heaven lies about them then. (28)

Before meeting Arabella, Jude studied zealously to prepare himself for Christminster; in his bedroom there is a "black mark on the plaster above ... made by the smoke of his lamp in past months." (47) When he first arrives in the city in the dark of evening, he explores its streets with the aid of the light from a small lamp. The dim flicker seems ineffectual amid the dense blackness which characterizes the city at night.

In this description of Jude walking unheeded along, outside the walls of the colleges, Hardy indicates that his search for light in Christminster will be unsuccessful. Jude's one true moment of illumination while at Christminster is a highly ironic one. Occurring in a lantern-shaped room overlooking the city, it revealed to him that his dream of attaining an exalted spiritual state through study at the university would never be fulfilled:

He always remembered the appearance of the afternoon on which he awoke from his dream. Not quite knowing what to do with himself, he went up to an octagonal chamber in the lantern of a singularly built theatre that was set amidst this quaint and singular city. It had windows all round, from which an outlook over the whole town and its edifices could be gained. Jude's eyes swept all the views in succession, meditatively, mournfully, yet sturdily. Those buildings and their associations and privileges were not for him... He saw that his destiny lay not with these, but among the manual toilers in the shabby purlieu which he himself occupied. (137)

Shortly after, still under the spell of this moment of illumination, Jude perceives that the values of the university are narrow and exclusive, severed from the real life of Christminster:

He began to see that the town life was a book of humanity infinitely more palpitating, varied, and compendious than the gown life. These strug-
gling men and women before him were the reality of Christminster, though they knew little of Christ or Minster. That was one of the humours of things. The floating population of students and teachers, who did know both in a way, were not Christminster in a local sense at all. (139)

And it is in the dark and varied hues of this other Christminster that Jude is destined to have his being. The light that Jude constantly seeks because it is the nature of his being, like that of the moth, to do so, is shut away beyond his reach by the walls of the various colleges which line the streets of Christminster. Hardy uses an effective figure to describe Jude's relation to the university late in the novel, when Jude is watching the academic procession on Remembrance Day: "the procession of Heads of Houses and new Doctors emerged, their red and black gowned forms passing across the field of Jude's vision like inaccessible planets across an object glass." (395) The impression created by the image is of light distant and inaccessible to Jude, a motif which has run through the novel since the first descriptions of Christminster as a distant glow, with Jude longing to get closer to it.

Sue Bridehead quickly becomes involved in the essential contrast of the novel. Like Christminster, she epitomizes the spiritual element in man, and she soon usurps the importance of that city as a symbol of light in the novel. Arabella is hostile to both. Her trapping of Jude into an early marriage was probably what ruined whatever slight chance he had to study at Christminster, and, even though she leaves Jude, she becomes jealous of Sue's claim upon his affections. In her disparagement of Sue for her lack of sensuality, Arabella seems driven by a realization that Sue can meet and satisfy Jude on a level which she can never attain. The system of contrasts in the novel is more complex than this, however, for Sue, like Jude, is split by an inner conflict. Her role in the novel therefore has at least two basic dimensions: she functions symbolically, typifying spiritual values antithetical to the sensuality and darkness of Arabella, and she is also a complicated and split character, fascinating in her own right.
The association of Sue with Jude's quest is indicated by the light imagery which Hardy uses in relation to her. Jude's first visual experience of Sue has suggestions of saintliness and light. Sue's picture is on a mantel which, with its "brass candlesticks," is suggestive of an altar. The photograph is of "a pretty girlish face, in a broad hat with radiating folds under the brim like the rays of a halo."(90) When he sees her in person, she is "illuminating" a church text, and Jude notes, encountering her shortly after in the street, that she is "light and slight." (105) He also meets her in church, perceiving her only indistinctly against the "dim light and the baffling glare of the clerestory windows." (106) Walking with Sue to Marygreen for the first time, it is as if Jude "carried a bright light which temporarily banished the shady associations of the earlier time." (226) The nature of the light in Sue becomes clearer when Phillotson remarks: "Her intellect sparkles like diamonds." (276) Before she is broken and chastened toward the end, Sue's intellect "played like lightning over conventions and formalities." (416) Dominant in Sue, and in the scholars of Christminster, is the light of consciousness, the light of reason which explains all, pushing the dark and unknowable far out of mind. The motives of Christminster for shutting out any knowledge of darkness are not clear, but Sue shuts it away because of guilt and fear.10

Robert B. Heilman presents an interesting view of the significance of Sue as a character:

Hardy was very early in intuiting, though he did not expressly define it, what in the twentieth century has become a familiar doctrine: the danger of trying to live by rationality alone.

In Sue, Hardy detects the specific form of the danger: the tendency of the skeptical intelligence to rule out the non-rational foundations of life and security. Sue cuts herself off from the two principal such foundations--from the community as it is expressed in traditional beliefs and institutions and from the physical reality of sex. The former she tends to regard as fraudulent and coercive, the latter as "gross"; in resisting marriage she resists both, and so she has not much left. Her deficiency in sex, whatever its precise psychological nature...is a logical correlative of her enthroning of critical intellect; thus a private peculiarity takes on a symbolic meaning of very wide relevance.11

The path that Sue sets out to follow is a narrow and tenuous one, espec-
ially in Hardy's view, with his conviction of the large role of the irrational in human affairs.

For a long while Sue sets herself in opposition to the values represented by Christminster, but ultimately she capitulates to the conscious, conventional demands of society. Her capitulation involves a rejection of Jude and his darker needs. To convey the idea that Sue's rejection of Jude and his quest represents a dimming of her vision, Hardy introduces fog imagery in two crucial scenes: first, in Christminster, where Sue informs Jude of her decision to return to Phillotson, and then in Marygreen, where she goes to be remarried to the schoolteacher. It is as though the fog has followed her on her blind, sacrificial pilgrimage there: "The fog of the previous day or two on the lowlands had travelled up to Marygreen, and the trees on the green caught armfuls, and turned them into showers of big drops. The bride was waiting, ready; bonnet and all on. She had never in her life looked so much like the lily her name connoted as she did in that pallid morning light." (445)

The effects Hardy is attempting in this light imagery are subtle. There are many kinds or qualities of light in the imagery of the novels; this becomes apparent in comparing the above image to the following one, from The Return of the Native: "the sun shone in a bright yellow patch upon the figure of the maiden as she knelt and plunged her naked arms into the soft brown fern." (129) There is, in fact, a readily discernible change or progression in Hardy's use of light imagery in these four novels, which seems to be related to Hardy's growing awareness of the deep split and conflict in the modern psyche. As the novels proceed, the light becomes paler and whiter, implying an increasingly sharp dichotomy between it and the darkness which surrounds it. If there is one light which is characteristic of The Return of the Native, it is the dancing, flickering firelight of the opening scenes, in which light and dark, flame and shadow, are inextricably blended, the motion of the flames making it impossible to discern any separation or contrast between them. In both The Return of the Native and The Mayor of Casterbridge, sunlight is also important, especially in relation to such characters as Thomasin and Elizabeth-Jane. In Tess of the d'Urbervilles, the nocturnal scene has become prevalent,
with pale moonlight in contrast to the darkness of night. Also, the contrast between Angel and Alec is depicted in terms of light and dark. In *Jude the Obscure* the sun shines rarely. The characteristic light of this last novel is the feeble light of the student's lamp and the white, wan, ascetic light which seems to emanate from Sue, epitomized in the wedding scene above by the "lily" comparison.

Of the change which comes over Sue toward the end, Jude says this:

> she was once a woman whose intellect was to mine like a star to a benzoline lamp: who saw all MY superstitions as cobwebs that she could brush away with a word. Then bitter affliction came to us, and her intellect broke, and she veered round to darkness. (484)

But the novel says more than this; that there is a kind of pure white light which darker shades, because they have been so completely excluded, can contaminate very easily. And if the light which Jude seeks is wisdom, rather than the formal knowledge which Sue possesses, then Sue's white light is sterile and vulnerable, with darkness implicit in it, because it ignores the broad sphere of essential human experience represented by darker hues. Hardy comes closest to expressing this idea in the image of Jude's lamp producing black soot marks on his bedroom ceiling after months of assiduous study.\(^\text{13}\) Hardy seems to suggest that pure white implies blackness. They help to define one another. Gerard Manley Hopkins a few years earlier posed this problem more explicitly in "Spelt From Sibyl's Leaves":

\[
\text{Let life, waned, ah let life wind}
\text{Off her once skeined stained veined variety upon,}
\text{all on two spools; part, pen, pack}
\text{Now her all in two flocks, two folds--black, white;}
\text{right, wrong; reckon but, reck but, mind}
\text{But these two; ware of a world where but these two}
\text{tell, each off the other; of a rack}
\text{Where, selfwring, selfstrung, sheathe- and shelterless,}
\text{thoughts against thoughts in groans grind.}\(^\text{14}\)
\]

Though the light of Christminster and Sue may be false, Jude strives unrelentingly after it. But darkness cuts continually across the light imagery of the novel, foiling the light and frustrating his attempts. And it is around Arabella that some of the most significant dark imagery of the novel clusters. When Jude first meets her she is washing the
"innerds" of a pig, "for black-puddings and such like." (44) Jude feels himself "drifting strangely," (45) and though he briefly and consciously perceives the dark sensuality of Arabella, symbolized by her throwing of the pig's pizzle, it is only "for a short fleeting while, as by the light of a falling lamp one might momentarily see an inscription on a wall before being enshrouded in darkness." (46) Hardy also depicts Arabella's father as a "black-whiskered man." (49)

In many ways Arabella is more a caricature than a character. Hardy declares her at the outset to be "a complete and substantial female animal--no more, no less." (42) It is as a sexual stimulus that she affects Jude, and his response to her is purely sexual in return. In Jude the Obscure, Hardy repeats the assertion made in Tess of the d'Urbervilles that human nature is in part controlled by dark, instinctual impulses which are automatic in function. At their first meeting, Jude singles Arabella out from her companions

as a woman is singled out in such cases, for no reasoned purpose of further acquaintance, but in commonplace obedience to conjunctive orders from headquarters, unconsciously received by unfortunate men when the last intention of their lives is to be occupied with the feminine.(43)

Because the sensuality of Arabella speaks to a dark, unconscious need in Jude from which he cannot escape, he returns to her even after he has rejected her as inadequate to fulfill his nature and, like the problem in Jude which she represents, Arabella's presence persists with Jude until the end.

Instinct—the subconscious—working in Arabella has the same amorality and deviousness which characterized the inhabitants of Mixen Lane, in The Mayor of Casterbridge, or Alec d'Urberville's early behavior toward Tess, in Tess of the d'Urbervilles, and Jude has the same naivety which the Casterbridge constabulary showed in trying to penetrate the shady activities of the Lane, and which Tess displayed about Alec's behavior before her seduction. The sexual drive working in Arabella causes her to wear a false hairpiece, practice the art of dimpling, and lie to Jude about being pregnant in order to get him to marry her. Like Tess, Jude shows a surprising willingness to be duped. Also like Tess, he feels chagrin at the betrayal of his conscious aims by dark
forces beyond his control. However, whereas Tess views the conflict as an external one and expresses her frustration in the anger against d'Urberville which ultimately leads her to murder him, Jude achieves the understanding, maturity, and self-knowledge to perceive the essentially inward nature of the problem, and to accept full responsibility for it.

There is a moment in *Jude the Obscure* when the conflict in Jude, the tension between the opposed forces represented by the black-white dichotomy in the imagery of the novel, is briefly transcended. For a short time, Jude and Sue seem to achieve a truce in the struggle between light and dark, conscious and subconscious. The temporary victory of these two aspirants over the deadly conflict between spirit and flesh coincides with their visit to the Great Wessex Agricultural Show. In this episode, the dominant black-white imagery pattern of the novel is broken by the light of the roses which Jude and Sue find in the horticultural tent. The rose is concrete and living, and yet it seems almost the least gross of living things. Though the flower is sometimes richly colored, the hues of its petals can at times seem delicate and well-nigh translucent. It is often used as a symbol of ideal beauty. Like the moon in *The Return of the Native*, its symbolic value or function seems to be as a bridge between the realms of the real and the ideal.  

The introduction of the roses at this point seems to suggest that Jude and Sue briefly achieve a union between flesh and spirit—the dark, subconscious needs of the blood and the conscious yearning for spiritual fulfillment. What happens on the explicit level in this scene appears to substantiate poetic suggestion. Arabella, watching Jude, Sue, and Father Time from a distance, is at first disparaging about the nature of the love between them: "As for that body with him—she don't know what love is—at least what I call love! I can see in her face she don't." Later, watching them stop by the roses, Arabella becomes jealous, morose, uncertain, for Sue seems transformed from her usual pale, ethereal self:

Sue's usually pale cheeks reflected the pink of the tinted roses at which she gazed; for the gay sights, the air, the music, and the excitement of a day's outing with Jude, had quickened her
blood and made her eyes sparkle with vivacity. She adored roses, and what Arabella had witnessed was Sue detaining Jude almost against his will while she learnt the names of this variety and that, and put her face within an inch of their blooms to smell them. (357)

Arabella then sees Sue look up at Jude and smile "in a way that told so much." (358) Inspired by the roses, which she seems to associate with Jude and herself, Sue says, "I feel that we have returned to Greek joyousness, and have blinded ourselves to sickness and sorrow, and have forgotten what twenty-five centuries have taught the race since their time, as one of your Christminster luminaries says." (358) For Hardy, this moment of escape from the conflicts inherent in the human condition can only be possible as a very transient illusion: Father Time intrudes to remind Jude and Sue that the roses soon will wither.

Later, Sue refers to this period as "our perfect union--our two-in-oneness." (408) It comes to a sharp end with the death of the children, after which Sue feels guilt about the complete pleasure she and Jude have taken in one another:

We went about loving each other too much--indulging ourselves to utter selfishness with each other! We said--do you remember?--that we would make a virtue of joy. I said it was Nature's intention, Nature's law and 'raison d'etre' that we should be joyful in what instincts she afforded us--instincts which civilization had taken upon itself to thwart. What dreadful things I said! And now Fate has given us this stab in the back for being such fools as to take Nature at her word! (409)

It becomes apparent at this point that, despite the modern, emancipated tone of Sue's comments earlier in the novel, she is still under the sway of the Christminster traditions which she had ridiculed in the scholars of the university. A much earlier incident indicates that though her inclinations appear pagan her nature is essentially an ambivalent one. While out walking one day, she purchases statues of Venus and Apollo from an itinerant pedlar. They are made of "white pipeclay." Almost immediately after buying them, she becomes concerned about the propriety of carrying nude figures, and, showing the shame of Adam and Eve, she covers them with greenery:
They seemed so very large now that they were in her possession, and so very naked... After carrying them along a little way openly an idea came to her, and, pulling some huge burdock leaves, parsley, and other rank growths from the hedge, she wrapped up her burden as well as she could in these, so that what she carried appeared to be an enormous armful of green stuff gathered by a zealous lover of nature. (109-10)

Sue's guilt about even these pale reproductions of the human body prefigures the consuming guilt which comes to her after the children's deaths. Like Tess, she feels the masochistic need to punish herself because of the shame she attaches to the dark needs she has gratified with Jude. When he praises her courage, both "as a thinker and as a feeler," she replies,

Don't say that, Jude! I wish my every fearless word and thought could be rooted out of my history. Self-renunciation—that's everything! I cannot humiliate myself too much. I should like to prick myself all over with pins and bleed out the badness that's in me! (417)

Sue, in fact, is as deeply divided as Jude by the conflict between conscious and subconscious. This explains the extreme vacillations in her conduct through the novel, especially toward Jude, with whom she so often plays the coquette. The conflict in Sue also explains her fascination for the reader; one is inclined at times to see her, rather than Jude, as the centre of the novel. What Hardy terms "the elusiveness of her curious double nature" (251) makes her one of his most absorbing characters.

Hardy continues the use in Jude the Obscure of certain symbolic devices employed in The Return of the Native, The Mayor of Casterbridge, and Tess of the d'Urbervilles to render the conflict in his leading characters. Water again appears as a symbol of the subconscious. Jude's meeting with Arabella takes place in the middle of a "small plank bridge" (43) which crosses the stream near her home. A more interesting instance of the water symbolism occurs when Jude's marriage to Arabella is breaking up. Jude walks to a nearby pond, intending to commit suicide:

Jude put one foot on the edge of the ice, and then the other: it cracked under his weight;
but this did not deter him. He ploughed his way inward to the centre, the ice making sharp noises as he went. When just about the middle he looked around him and gave a jump. The cracking repeated itself; but he did not go down. He jumped again, but the cracking had ceased. Jude went back to the edge, and stepped upon the ground. (82)

Like the failure of the marriage, this incident indicates Jude's inability to immerse himself in the life of the subconscious. Sensual gratification alone cannot satisfy him. Jude's behavior at this point is like that of Angel Clare in the sleepwalking scene: whereas Tess wished to drown with Angel in the rushing stream, Angel carried her safely to land. Land seems symbolic of consciousness, the known, in these episodes.

Unable to take his life, to lose consciousness, Jude turns to drink: "He began to see why some men boozed at inns." (82)

In both *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* Hardy showed the split, divided natures of his leading characters by a technique of projection: Henchard saw his double floating in the pond, and Tess sometimes felt her soul leave her body. In *Jude the Obscure* Hardy again employs this device, with certain changes, to reveal the conflict in Jude. He suggests such a close connection or affinity between Jude and Sue that she seems almost a projection of him, at least of that spiritual aspect of his being which quests after the ideal. Even before Jude meets Sue, Hardy suggests that the relationship between Jude's spirit and body is a tenuous one. When he first arrives in Christminster and is exploring the city after dark, Jude becomes so meditative, so hyper-conscious of his mind in isolation from the concrete reality surrounding it, that he feels bodiless, like a wandering spirit: "Knowing not a human being here, Jude began to be impressed with the isolation of his own personality, as with a self-spectre, the sensation being that of one who walked but could not make himself seen or heard." (92)

The first suggestion that Jude and Sue's beings are intertwined in some vital sense occurs when Sue escapes from the Training-School at Melchester by crossing a river, and comes to Jude's rooms soaking wet. Moved that she came to him in her trouble, Jude thinks what "counterparts" they are. Her donning of his clothes suggests a confusion of identity between the two. Looking at her, Jude sees a "slim and fragile being
masquerading as himself on a Sunday, so pathetic in her defencelessness that his heart felt big with the sense of it."(173) Sue comments, "I suppose, Jude, it is odd that you should see me like this and all my things hanging there?" (173) The blurring of their individual identities which occurs here is reinforced at various other points in the novel by explicit comments. Hardy states that "when they talked on an indifferent subject ... there was ever a second silent conversation passing between their emotions, so perfect was the reciprocity between them."(244)

Even Phillotson acknowledges the unusual nature of the bond between Jude and Sue—"the extraordinary sympathy, or similarity between the pair. He is her cousin, which perhaps accounts for some of it. They seem to be one person split in two."(276) The confusion in identity reaches a climax at the Agricultural Show: "That complete mutual understanding, in which every glance and movement was as effectual as speech for conveying intelligence between them, made them almost the two parts of a single whole."(352) A. Alvarez notes that "At times ... [Sue] seems less a person in her own right than a projection of one side of Jude's character." 18 To Jude, Sue is "so ethereal a creature that her spirit could be seen trembling through her limbs....so incarnate as to seem at times impossible as a human wife to any average man."(224) Implicit in this perception of Sue seems to be a recognition that he can never possess her, yet Jude persists. Later, frustrated by Sue's refusal to satisfy him sexually, Jude's perception of her spirituality is even stronger: "you spirit, you disembodied creature, you dear, sweet, tantalizing phantom--hardly flesh at all; so that when I put my arms round you I almost expect them to pass through you as through air!"(294) When Sue finally does succumb to Jude's sexual demands, he can not escape the feeling that he has despoiled something pure.

Alvarez differentiates Sue and Arabella as follows: "Sue and Arabella are ... like the white and black horses,, the noble and base instincts, which drew Plato's chariot of the soil.19 Neither woman is capable of fulfilling Jude, Arabella because she cannot understand the quest after the ideal which is such a basic part of Jude's character, or Sue because she rejects sexual desire as something dark and
sinful. And Jude becomes totally disillusioned about Christminster long before his death. In the maturity which he slowly and painfully attains by the end of the novel, he clearly perceives the limitations of all three. Of the three, it is the failure of Sue to achieve Jude's vision, and her degrading surrender to convention, which cause him the greatest anguish. Briefly rebelling, he tells her,

You make me hate Christianity, or mysticism, or Sacerdotalism, or whatever it may be called, if it's that which has caused this deterioration in you. That a woman-poet, a woman-seer, a woman whose soul shone like a diamond—whom all the wise of the world would have been proud of, if they could have known you—should degrade herself like this! I am glad I had nothing to do with Divinity—damn glad—if it's going to ruin you in this way! (423)

But Sue is lost to Jude, beyond the reach of even his anger.

Jude's conscious ambitions and ideals, like those of Clym, Henchard, and Tess, are repeatedly foiled by the subconscious needs of his own psyche. During the course of the novel he grows away from his initial innocence, acquiring knowledge and understanding of the warring elements in his nature. His sensual needs, originally subconscious, become known to him, but they remain opposed to Jude's quest to achieve a higher mode of being. Ironically, though Jude attains the maturity to accept his dark needs, it is only to find that Victorian society will not tolerate them. Jude's isolation is enhanced by Sue's rejection of him when she succumbs to the pressures of convention toward the end of the novel. Forsaken by the only person for whom he had ever felt any deep affinity, Jude, like Henchard, dies in an extremity of loneliness which arouses not only our pity, but terror and awe as well at his unrelenting determination.

If Jude the Obscure is not Hardy's most poetic novel, it does contain the most explicit statement of the conflict which is a central theme in Hardy's major fiction. Guerard noted that "Jude the Obscure remains ... the extreme point at which we must take Hardy's measure as a 'thinker'. And it becomes quite clear that we must base his importance as a novelist on entirely different grounds." Our response to Hardy's novels is less intellectual than emotional. The tone of all Hardy's prose is plangent and sincere. And it is in Jude the Obscure that
Hardy's honesty, his unreserved emotional commitment to his subject, is most apparent. The false, placating closing scenes of the three earlier novels are gone; in this last novel we are left only with a bitter and ironic sense of loss. Hardy can no longer mitigate the expression of his vision to please editor or reader. At the end of this novel, there is the extraordinary feeling that Jude expresses the vision of Hardy fully. Jude's understanding of life seems almost more than human: he perceives the nature of his own being, both its strength and its dark needs; he comprehends the natures of both Arabella and Sue and, through understanding the meaning which they have in his life, the ultimate nature of the problem which has been the primary focus of his existence. This breadth of vision which Jude achieves makes him the most significant character in these four Hardy novels. It is through Jude that our understanding of the conflicting forces Hardy has been exploring in the novels is most enlarged.
Chapter 6 — Conclusion

This account of the conflict underlying Hardy's vision in *The Return of the Native*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, and *Jude the Obscure* is based on a highly selective approach to the varied material which Hardy presents in them. Albert J. Guerard devotes an entire section in his study of Hardy to an examination of the "conflicting impulses" operating in the novels, in particular Hardy's realist and anti-realist tendencies. Guerard notes that Conrad, out of "singularly divergent impulses," created "a fairly coherent body of work. He contrived to express a final vision of things; he managed to forge a style. Hardy's impulses as a novelist," on the other hand, "were even more numerous and divergent than Conrad's, and they did not always work together in harmony." 

So Hardy and Conrad represent challenges of disparate types to the critic. Conrad calls for an act of comprehension; an attempt, for example, to grasp the complex, comprehensive vision of existence which he erects painstakingly in *Nostromo*. With Hardy the problem is more a matter of reconciliation than comprehension. Hardy calls for an attempt to unify the many divergent strands of meaning in the novels -- his "seemings" or "provisional impressions" into a pattern expressive of his vision.

The analysis of these four novels in terms of the conflict between the rational and irrational, conscious and subconscious elements operating in the leading characters appears to be an effective way of drawing the wealth of varied imagery and symbolism of the novels into an expression of the vision of life which is felt always, flowing powerfully through the prose. Despite the many seeming contradictions in the novels, there is a unity of effect which transcends them. Hardy's perception of the eternal conflict in human nature, made fiercer by man's developing consciousness, is apparent in his rendering of the chief characters in his major novels. And the specific nature of the conflict which seems for Hardy the definitive
quality of human existence is revealed with increasing clarity and explicitness in the last novels. The tone of his prose becomes more bitter and ironic and, as though he can no longer rest satisfied with the indirectness of a poetic mode of presentation, he intrudes frequently into the narrative of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* with explicit comment.

Though there are other characters in these four novels, such as Eustacia Vye and Sue Bridehead, who are of absorbing interest, it is through analysis of the split nature of Clym Yeobright, Michael Henchard, Tess Durbeyfield, and Jude Fawley that Hardy's vision is most clearly seen. These four people are the ones in the novels who are most obviously split by conflicting desires and needs. Commenting on these characters, Ted R. Spivey notes that they are in the tradition of the romantic hero: "They are heroes whose desires are never fulfilled, but whose spirits...are never crushed." Although men like Henchard and Jude eventually become passive in the face of the inevitable and unchangeable, their passivity encompasses both acceptance and defiance. Clym, Henchard, Tess, and Jude are slowly and inexorably driven by external circumstances and the conflict within themselves to a state of Christ-like renunciation. Their renunciation has more of defiance in it than surrender; it is the expression of their refusal to accept anything less of life than they are capable of imagining and desiring. Brought to bay by dark, sinister elements, both internal and outside themselves, they renounce life rather than accept it on terms which would demean them.

Interest in these four novels, often termed Hardy's 'major' fiction, remains at a high level. As Guerard notes, the reasons for our interest in Hardy are not the same reasons which attracted earlier generations (if we accept what earlier critics claimed to be Hardy's appeal for those generations at its face value). We are less interested in the quaint picture Hardy draws of a vanishing, rural way of life, or in the careful planning of his novels which is starkly obvious at certain awkward moments, than in Hardy's perception of the vital importance in human existence of the irrational elements in our natures.
As we watch the leading characters of these novels struggling to reach some new form of life in which they can escape the tension between spirit and flesh, and as we see them betrayed by rebellious dark forces within themselves -- what Guerard terms "the demonic in human nature," we feel the kinship of Hardy with the absurd literature and the littérature noire of our time. Reading the novels is still a highly relevant experience, echoing as they do the modern perception of life as something in which reason is constantly threatened by the instinctual, where glimmers of light suddenly become lost in vast dark spaces, and where the known and seemingly certain dissolves treacherously in the face of the absurd or the unknowable.
NOTES

Chapter 1


2. *Life*, p. 3.


4. Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* (London: Macmillan, 1963), pp. 6-7. All further references to this novel will be taken from this edition.

5. Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (London: Macmillan, 1963), p. 101. All further references to this novel will be taken from this edition.


7. Though even in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, written less than a decade before *Jude the Obscure*, the heroine makes long and wearisome journeys on foot.

8. Hardy describes Shaston as a distinct anomaly, "one of the queerest and quaintest spots in England." (p. 240)


10. Hardy's neo-platonic statements about his rendering of nature might well be applied to his handling of these non-developing characters to evaluate their function: "I don't want to see the original realities -- as optical effects, that is. I want to see the deeper reality underlying the scenic, the expression of what are sometimes called abstract imaginings." (*Life*, p. 185) Speaking more generally of his works of art, Hardy said, "I have repeatedly stated in prefaces and elsewhere that the views in them are SEEMINGS, provisional impressions only, used for artistic purposes because they represent approximately the impressions of the age, and are plausible, till somebody produces better theories of the universe." (*Life*, p. 375) Hardy has the platonic awareness of the difficulty in perceiving the final nature of reality. At one point he observed in his notebook, "I was thinking a night or two ago that people are somnambulists -- that the material is not the real -- only the visible, the real being invisible optically. That it is because we are
in a somnambulistic hallucination that we think the real to be what we see as real." (Life, p. 186) Hardy uses these typical characters in the novel to suggest truths about human nature. In Father Time he appears to be trying to render the reality behind his modern type explicitly. Indirection seems more successful, at least aesthetically.

11. The first words Henchard says to Susan after all those years are, "I don't drink ...You hear, Susan?—I don't drink now— I haven't since that night." (p. 83)

12. Hardy's full statement of purpose was that he wished "to deal unaffectedly with the fret and fever, derision and disaster, that may press in the wake of the strongest passion known to humanity; to tell, without a mincing of words, of a deadly war waged between flesh and spirit; and to point the tragedy of unfulfilled aims." (vi)

Chapter 2

1. Life, pp. 185-86.

2. Hardy used this term shortly before writing Tess of the d'Urbervilles in noting a possible subject for a novel: "A 'sensation-novel' is possible in which the sensationalism is not casualty, but evolution; not physical but psychical." (Life, p. 204)

3. Life, p. 163.


5. Clym's consciousness has been developed by education. His return to the heath is not a rejection of consciousness, for he wishes to teach the folk there.

6. Hardy's attitude toward time is certainly ambivalent. He is realist enough to accept the inevitability of change yet strongly pulled by tradition. This is perhaps most obvious in the contrast between Michael Henchard and Donald Farfrae, and in Hardy's complex attitude toward them.


10. McCann, p. 143.


Chapter 3


3. Providence and Mr. Hardy, by Lois Deacon and Terry Coleman (London: Hutchinson, 1966), offers new grounds for supposing Hardy to have had a personal interest in the theme of incest. His affair as a young man with Tryphena Sparks, a near-relative, had incestuous implications because of her illegitimacy and consequent uncertain parentage.


5. Guerard, p. 150.


Chapter 4

1. Interesting symbolic parallels can be drawn between Rolliver's inn and Peter's Finger, especially in the air of secrecy and duplicity surrounding both establishments.


3. Dorothy Van Ghent, p. 86.


Chapter 5

1. Tess of the d'Urbervilles was published in 1891.
2. Life, p. 246.


4. Earlier Hardy critics, such as Lionel Johnson and Lascelles Ambertonie, noted Hardy's careful planning and structuring of the novels and conferred praise. Guerard questions this praise of "what today seems one of Hardy's gravest weaknesses: his tendency to shape and plan his novels according to some obvious architectural principle and his failure to conceal the blueprint. (Guerard, pp. 11-12) In The Making of "The Return of the Native" (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1963), John Paterson shows, by careful analysis of the various revisions Hardy made of this novel, that opposed to Hardy's conscious plans for The Return of the Native were other, more creative forces which played a large role in determining the final shape of the novel.

5. Life, p. 272.


7. Lewis B. Horne, "Fawley's Quests: A Reading of Jude the Obscure," Tennesse Studies in Literature, Vol. 1X (Knoxville, Tenn.: Univ. of Tenn. Press, 1964), pp. 117-27, reads the novel as an ironic treatment of the romance-quest: "But when the quest fails, when the object remains unattained and the hero without honor, the quest assumes the cloak of irony, dramatizing the disparity between the ideal and the real, the thing hoped for and the thing achieved, that is the common source of the ironic. In such a way does Hardy use the romance-quest in Jude the Obscure," (p. 117)

8. There is an interesting ambiguity in this image, the light producing darkness, which will be discussed later.

9. The setting of Christminster is actually Oxford.

10. After Sue's guilt sweeps over her, forcing her to reject Jude, he finds her one day on the chancel steps of a church. She is described then as "a heap of black clothes." (p. 422)


12. There is also fog, however, when Jude and Sue go to be married in a civil ceremony, (p. 341) implying criticism of the legal aspect of marriage.

13. Quoted earlier on p. 76.

15. A. Alvarez ("Jude the Obscure in Hardy: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Albert J. Guerard, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963, p. 118) takes a different position: "The only real moment of ecstasy Jude shares with Sue is bodyless, precipitated by the scent and brilliance of the roses at the agricultural show. 'The real marriage of Jude and Sue was,' as Lawrence said, 'in the roses.'" However, a study of Arabella's behavior seems to argue a more sensual contact between Jude and Sue, of which Arabella becomes jealous.

16. Heilman comments on Sue's coquetry: "Hardy catches very successfully the spontaneity of each of her acts and gestures; they are authentic, unprogrammed expressions of diverse elements in her personality. Coquetry is, in the end, the external drama of inner divisions, of divergent impulses each of which is strong enough to determine action at any time, but not at all times or even with any regularity. The failure of unity is greater than that of the ordinary personality, and the possibilities of trouble correspondingly greater." (p. 315)

17. In this respect, Sue is like Eustacia. Both perhaps display the conflict in Hardy between conscious intention at the outset of the writing of a novel and the emotional appeal which certain characters acquired for him as he wrote.

18. A. Alvarez, p. 115.


Chapter 6


2. Guerard, p. 47.

3. Life, p. 375.


5. Guerard, p. 6.

6. Guerard, p. 3.
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