

Experiences of Thomas Hardy

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I have had many experiences of Thomas Hardy. Like all great writers, Hardy is complex and multifaceted. Like most readers, I have tended to see only a few things at a time clearly. On each reading of his works, new things have captured my attention, while others have receded into the background. In addition, during the more than twenty years that I have been reading Hardy, I have changed much; I have adopted a number of different perspectives. This has resulted in a wide range of insights, judgments, and responses.

I was first attracted to Hardy by his philosophy, which seemed, much of it, to be true. His beliefs and attitudes reinforced my own; and this is what I was looking for in an author. When I began to read him with the rigor I had learned in graduate school, I became disenchanted with Hardy, both as an artist and as a thinker. His philosophy seemed to be full of contradictions, and his novels seemed crude and incoherent. It took me some time to see that they are, nonetheless, moving stories, and to question the propriety of reading novels in the same way that we read lyric poems. Since I have begun looking at fiction from a psychological perspective, I have come to see that novelists suffer from inner conflicts, like the rest of us. The power of their rhetoric often derives from their need to justify their favorite defensive strategies. Their great genius in the observation and portrayal of human experience does not necessarily make them wise or whole men. Still, they have much to offer. They may have great mimetic gifts, as does Hardy; and they let us know what it is like to be inside of other minds--their own and those of their characters.

I.

I responded to Hardy most powerfully when I was in my early twenties. He seemed, in many ways, a kindred spirit. I saw fiction as an instrument of moral discovery; and I was particularly excited by writers like Hardy, Conrad, and George Eliot, who were exploring the meaning of life in a universe without God. I could not take Hardy's idealistic speculations seriously (nor did he insist that I do so), but I was very much attracted by his agnosticism, his humanism, and his disenchanted vision of man's fate.

Hardy was a militant agnostic, an iconoclast, who both relished this role and smarted under the rejection that it entailed. I, too, liked to tell harsh truths; and I tended to feel outraged or injured when people became upset with me for doing so. Poems like "In Tenebris II" and "Lausanne, In Gibbon's Old Garden" re-enforced both my self-righteousness and my self-pity. I, too felt that "if way to the better there be, it exacts a full look at the worst." Gibbon's words seemed like a perfect battle-cry:

"Still rule those minds on earth
At whom sage Milton's wormwood words were hurled:

*'Truth like a bastard comes into the world
Never without ill-fame to him who gives her birth?'*

I liked *Tess* and *Jude* for their abrasiveness, and I enjoyed the discomfiture of Hardy's contemporaries. At the same time, I empathized with his suffering at the hands of his critics and read with delight his explanation of his decision to abandon fiction for poetry:

To cry out in a passionate poem that (for instance) the Supreme Mover or Movers, the Prime Force or Forces, must be either limited in power, unknowing, or cruel-- which is obvious enough, and has been for centuries--will cause them merely a shake of the head; but to put it in argumentative prose will make them sneer, or foam, and set all the literary contortionists jumping upon me, a harmless agnostic, as if I were a clamorous atheist, which in their crass illiteracy they, seem to think is the same thing. (F. E. Hardy, *Life*, 11, 58)

Hardy bitterly assailed religious and social orthodoxies; but he did so, he felt, in the name of truth and love. I had a vested interest in not registering his pleasure in aggression and in not seeing through his protestations of innocence.

Hardy seems to have believed in a First Cause; the issue for him was not God's existence, but his nature. He was preoccupied with the problem of evil and fascinated by the refusal of human beings to draw the obvious conclusions from the injustice of their lot. Men have been much kinder to God than he has been to them: "... even while they sit down and weep by the waters of Babylon, [they] invent excuses for the oppression which prompts their tears" (*Return of the Native*, VI, i). Hardy felt that man is mocked by Fate. The greatest irony is for man to exalt the forces which destroy him, to blame himself, to exonerate God. Hardy's procedure is to argue from effects to causes: given the absurdity of the world, what can God be like? In his poems he conjures up a fascinating array of possibilities, many of which have the effect of arraigining or mocking the First Cause. His "sober opinion" is "that the said Cause is neither moral nor immoral, but *unmoral*": "'loveless and hateless ... which neither good nor evil knows'" (*Life*, II, 216-217). Hardy's arraigments of God, his protests on behalf of man, sounded in my ears a note of metaphysical revolt. They gave man a dignity, I felt, far greater than he could ever derive from cringing before a beneficent God whose ways must be deemed just not because they are right in the eyes of man, but because they are His. Hardy refused to relinquish the human perspective; he made man the measure of all things.

Man, in Hardy's universe, is both great and small. He is the plaything of Fate but the judge of Creation. Man, not God, is the hope of the universe; he is pitifully weak, but he alone has conscious purpose and values. Hardy's evolutionary meliorism is based on the existence of man. Since a conscious being has evolved out of blind force, there is a possibility that force will be brought under the control of consciousness, which will then inform more and more of the creation. There is a side of Hardy which sees man from the cosmic perspective. He dwells upon man's alienated state, the absence of a responding consciousness out there in the cosmos, the insignificance of our feelings and doings when seen against the backdrop of infinite time, space, and matter. More powerful, however, is the phenomenological perspective. To each of us, the universe depends for its existence upon our consciousness; it comes into being at our birth and

perishes at our death. While we exist, we invest all things with value, depending on the pleasure or pain which they bring us; and these values are real and indisputable. The indifference of the universe in no way alters the fact that our experience is immensely important to us. When seen from his own point of view, each man is a God, the center of a universe.

The cosmic and the phenomenological perspectives combine to produce one of the most powerful qualities of Hardy's fiction, his near universal empathy and compassion. When we see man from inside and outside at once, he emerges as an innocent, passionate, sensitive creature who is doomed to pain and frustration. Fate is oppressive; but Hardy, as narrator, is usually sympathetic. He is the understanding father, the compassionate mother, the appreciative lover for whom we all long. He is on the side of wish, of desire, of happiness--in short, of the pleasure principle. When he is compelled by grim reality to thwart or destroy his characters, we feel that it hurts him almost as much as it hurts them. If he were making the rules, he would give us what we want; he would fashion all things fair.

It is because he sees most of his characters from their own perspective that there are so few villains in Hardy's works. He sees Fate and society from the individual's point of view and finds them to be flawed, pernicious, cruel; but he tends to excuse or to empathize with his characters, even when they cause a good deal of mischief. As members of the mass called society, we often afflict our neighbors; but as individuals we are victims of internal and external forces which are beyond our control. We can choose neither our natures nor our circumstances. If our temperaments or our interests put us into conflict with our fellows, we are victims of an imperfect order in which wish and reality are forever at war. Sometimes in order to generate sympathy for a protagonist, Hardy presents other characters as ill-intentioned or culpably limited (Alec, Angel). But very often he presents conflicts from the perspective of each of the participants; we sympathize with all and find it difficult to blame any. In the Clym, Mrs. Yeobright, Eustacia triangle, for instance, we understand why each character acts as he does, and all are pitiable. Such characters as Troy, Wildeve, Mrs. Charmond, Fitzpiers, Henchard, Lucetta, Angel Clare, and Arabella are not, in the final analysis, excluded from our sympathies. The phenomenological perspective is very appealing. We feel that Hardy is on our side, that he sees how we suffer. We are all innocent victims.

The painfulness of Hardy's work arises from the combination of his sympathetic treatment of individuals with his dark view of the human condition. From the point of view of desire, the world is out of joint. The chief source of man's misery is his possession of consciousness in a world which is governed by blind force. We have evolved too far; we are out of harmony with the instinctual drives within ourselves and with the external order. Most of man's desires are unrealizable; he is doomed at birth to a life of meaningless misery. His hopes, his dreams, even his reasonable expectations, are mocked by reality. He is the prey of time and chance, of disease, age, death, and all the other natural calamities. He turns for relief to his fellow humans, but he finds little solace there. The love relationship is usually unhappy as a result of disillusionment, mismating, and inconstancy. Not only nature, but society as well is ill-adapted to our natures; we are galled by laws, customs, and conventions which make life harder than it has to be. As the well-intentioned Phillotson is made to exclaim: "'Cruelty is the law pervading all nature and society; and we can't get out of it if we would!' " (*Jude*, V, viii).

Hardy's grimness profoundly disturbed many of his contemporaries. It has affected me in different ways at different times. In my early twenties, I savored it. Like Clym Yeobright, I had "reached the stage in a young man's existence: when the grimness of the general human situation first becomes clear" (III, iii). We do not know what brought Clym to this stage, just as we do not know what produced the young Hardy's disillusionment. His intellectual history does not seem to offer a sufficient explanation, and his personal history is obscure. Whatever the cause, as an artist Hardy seems to have been arrested at an advanced stage of youthful disenchantment. A great many of his novels and poems, from all phases of his career, are written from this perspective. He dwells over and over again upon his discovery that time, chance, and change mock our dreams with their bitter ironies. This has great resonance for readers who are themselves undergoing a loss of innocence.

In my own unhappiness, I found Hardy's disenchanted vision consolatory. It assured me that I was discovering the truth about life and that my problems were man's fate rather than something peculiar to myself. They were less humiliating that way. It reinforced my self-pity, justified my anger, and confirmed my innocence. As Sue says, "things in general" are to blame, "because they are so horrid and cruel!" (*Jude*, IV, iii). It glamorized my misery and disillusionment. In *The Return of the Native*, and elsewhere, Hardy raises our suffering to the level of poetry and gives the dark view a kind of grandeur.

II

The Hardy novel which has most interested me over the years is *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. I have written on this novel on four different occasions (including the present one), and I have responded to it each time in a different way. In the preceding pages I have attempted to reconstruct my initial response to Hardy. I shall describe my subsequent experiences of Hardy by tracing my relationship to this novel, which I regard as his greatest work of fiction. This will require some recapitulation of views which I have expressed in print ["A Confusion of Many Standards": Conflicting Value Systems in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, XXIV (1969), 57-79]; but most of what follows will be new.

As an undergraduate I wrote an enthusiastic paper on "*The Rhetoric of Tess of the d'Urbervilles*" (1951) in which I analyzed the means by which Hardy controls both our emotional and our ethical response to his heroine. I was completely caught up in the author's point of view. I saw Tess exactly as he wanted me to. I agreed that she was pure. My sympathy was intense.

I wrote on Tess again in 1964. By this time, I had come to demand a high degree of integration in both philosophical and aesthetic systems, and I had written a book on a much more sophisticated and coherent novelist--George Eliot. After teaching *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* many times, I had become convinced that it just doesn't make sense. In attempting to establish Tess's purity or innocence, Hardy employs ethical norms which are incompatible with each other. As a result of this "confusion of many standards" (J. S. Mill's phrase), his arguments often contradict each other and can in no way be unified into a coherent moral vision.

Tess is pure because she never meant to do wrong. Since we live in an ironical world, in which events rarely turn out as we intend them to, we should not be held responsible for our acts and

their consequences, but only for our moral dispositions. Even if we accept the argument that people should be judged by their intentions rather than by their acts and recognize that Tess intended the opposite of what she did, it does not follow that Tess is pure. For Tess to be pure, her intentions would have to be pure, and to establish the purity of her intentions we need some standard apart from the intentions themselves. Hardy makes us feel that Tess means well, but he does not actually defend her intentions in terms of an ethical norm.

In direct conflict with the argument from intention is Hardy's contention that Tess is pure because there is nothing wrong with what she has done. Hardy's argument seems to be that we cannot judge an act's goodness or badness by its conformity or lack of conformity to the ethical standards of society; for society's conventions and laws are merely arbitrary, man-made, and do not, therefore, carry their sanction in themselves. The true standard of values is the natural order of things; acts are good if they are in harmony with nature, bad if they are not. Conventions which are "out of harmony with the actual world" are harmful and must be reformed. The argument for Tess's purity from the goodness of her intentions implies that her sexual relations with Alec were bad. The argument from nature as norm presents her acts as good--or, at least, innocent--and her intentions as--what? Hardy was apparently unaware of the fact that Tess's intentions would be seen not as good but merely as conventional if judged in terms of their conformity to nature. They were just as misguided as the conventions from which they were derived.

The use of nature as a moral norm carries with it several important implications. If nature is a moral norm, then the cosmic order of things must be an ethical as well as physical process. In an astonishing display of compartmentalization, Hardy uses nature as a moral norm and at the same time regards nature as amoral. If *Tess* is an attack on society and convention, it is equally an attack on the cosmic process. We live on a blighted star. Nature's ways and man's yearnings are quite disparate. There is no justice in the cosmic order.

Hardy is no more successful in attacking conventional values than he is in defending Tess's purity. He criticizes institutions and attitudes of society without having a clear value system of his own as a basis of evaluation. He makes us feel antipathetic toward conventions just as successfully as he makes us feel sympathetic toward Tess, but he does not show us why we should reject the conventions and what we should put in their place. When he shifts his emphasis from the arraignment of the cosmic order to the arraignment of society, Hardy seems to be driven back to nature for a norm by which to judge the human order, not realizing that an amoral nature can provide him with no moral norm. Hardy feels that many things are wrong in society, but he does not know how philosophically to ground his social criticism. Because his cosmos is amoral and consciousness is man's only source of justice and hope, it would be more logical for Hardy to adopt the position of Mill and Huxley that man has in society a moral order which combats the amoral cosmic process and creates a home for the human spirit. And sometimes he does. But there are many conventions that he dislikes, and since he does not know how to distinguish between good and bad conventions, he seems often to reject the social order altogether.

What Hardy could have used was something like the greatest happiness principle of the Utilitarians which enabled them throughout the nineteenth century to attack social abuses while retaining a high regard for society as a humanizing, meliorating agency. The whole point of

Mill's "Nature" is that human well-being and not conformity to nature should be our standard of value. This value system is adumbrated in *Tess* in the form of Angel Clare's recognition of the importance of each man to himself and of the right which we all have to be treated as a Thou by our fellows (XXV). This could very well have provided an ethical center for the novel. Both intentions and conventions could have been judged by their tendency to have either a favorable or unfavorable influence upon human well-being. Because Angel recognizes the participation of others in his own nature and condition, his standard of value is not simply his own happiness, but the well-being of all involved. After his marriage, of course, Angel violates his own values; but they provide a norm by which he himself can be judged.

There is a standard of values in *Tess*, then, which is applicable to the problems that Hardy raised and which could have provided a consistent moral norm. But it does not constitute the real thematic core of the novel. The novel has no real thematic core. We simply cannot integrate its conflicting value systems.

I concluded the original version of "'A Confusion of Many Standards' " with some scathing remarks. Critics defend Hardy against attacks such as mine, I observed, by reminding us that Hardy insisted again and again that he is not a systematic thinker, that his works present a series of "impressions" or "seemings" rather than convictions or arguments. But Hardy himself, in the Preface to *Jude the Obscure*, described his novels as "an endeavor to give *shape and coherence*" [my italics] to his "seemings, or personal impressions"; and in this endeavor, in *Tess* at least, he has clearly failed. Hardy was wise to turn to the writing of brief lyrics in which his fleeting and discordant fancies and speculations could be crystallized one by one, without loss of shape and coherence.

As might be expected, I had trouble getting this essay accepted for publication. Readers to whom journals send such manuscripts are likely to have formed an identification with the author under discussion, or at least to like him very much. I have in my files a sheaf of reader's reports which contain everything from biting attacks on me to elaborate defenses of Hardy. Being enamoured of my own ideas, I dismissed most of my critics as wrong-headed or imperceptive. Within a year or two, however, I came to the conclusion that I had been too hard on Hardy.

Several things contributed to this change of heart. My readings in literary theory and my psychological approach to fiction (which I began to develop in 1964) led me to question the emphasis I had been placing on organic unity. I realized that I had been explicating novels with the techniques which I had learned in Earl Wasserman's courses in Romantic poetry and that I had been judging them by the standards of success which are most appropriate to the shorter forms of literature. I had been demonstrating in course after course that the great Victorian novels are artistic failures; they tended to disintegrate under the kind of close reading to which I subjected them. Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* and Auerbach's *Mimesis* helped me to see that realistic fiction by its very nature attempts to combine incompatible elements. The detailed portrayal of social and psychological reality works against form (which derives from mythic patterns) and theme (the realistic novelist always sees more than he can understand). If we go to novels looking for unified aesthetic systems, we are usually going to be disappointed. The absence of organic unity is a flaw, to be sure, but novels have other values; and it is a mistake to

reject them as failures because they cannot compete with shorter forms on the criterion of integration.

These theoretical considerations were reinforced by a rereading of the novel. Having written out my thematic analysis, I was free to respond to other things. I found that *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is a very moving story which is mainly about the experience of its heroine and is only peripherally concerned with the thematic issues to which I had exclusively addressed myself.

I deleted the offending paragraph and wrote a new concluding section which gained the essay immediate acceptance. I called attention there to some of the novel's strengths. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is, I contended, more than anything else, the story of a sensitive, lovable, and well-meaning girl whose fate is horribly cruel and unfair: "Inside this exterior ... there was the record of a pulsing life which had learnt too well, for its years, of the dust and ashes of things, of the cruelty of lust and the fragility of love" (XLII). Tess's story is moving because, despite her helplessness, Tess has a stature that makes her suffering profoundly touching. Tess has dignity because she is loved by the author, because he enters wholeheartedly into her experience of the world, because her feelings have for him, and are made to have for us, an intense reality. Hardy is Tess's advocate: his primary concern is not to revise the old morality in a systematic way, but to win sympathy and acceptance for his heroine. The structure of rationalizations which he erects for Tess's defense is as full of inner contradictions as such structures usually are.

Hardy's identification with Tess is, I concluded, the source of both great strengths and glaring weaknesses. It is responsible for the novel's impressive dramatic, rhetorical, and emotional power, and for its brilliant rendering of Tess's sense of the world. It is also responsible for the novel's failure as social criticism. Hardy is too wrapped up in the phenomenological perspective to be a social thinker. He cannot analyze problems or suggest solutions; he can only cry out in pain and protest. His closeness to Tess enables him to portray her character with absolute authority, but it prevents him from understanding her very well. His analysis of her motives is quite superficial, and often wrong; and his judgments are set askew by an identification which leads him to glorify unhealthy attitudes and self-destructive solutions.

As the last few sentences suggest, I had already begun to formulate the psychological analysis of Tess which I shall offer here. This analysis was suggested to me by a student who, having had several courses with me, expressed surprise that I was not using Horneyan psychology in the study of this novel. I explained, patiently, that I use the psychological approach only where it is appropriate and that Tess is not the sort of fully developed character who should be analyzed in motivational terms. As soon as our conversation ended, I began to reread the novel; and within an hour I was dumbfounded at my own lack of perception. I soon realized that Tess is one of the great characters in literature and that Hardy has far more psychological perception and mimetic skill than he is ever given credit for.

III

There are, at present, two main schools of thought concerning characterization. Marvin Mudrick calls them the "purists" and the "realists." Characters in literature, the purists argue, are different from real people. They do not belong to the real world in which people can be understood as the

products of their social and psychological histories; they belong to a fictional world in which everything they are and do is part of the author's design, part of a teleological structure whose logic is determined by formal and thematic considerations. The realists hold that character creation can be an end in itself, that some characters are so fully realized as to have a life of their own, and that such characters can--and, indeed, should--be understood as though they were real people. The Purist discussions of such characters are highly reductive; they neglect a vast amount of detail which has little formal or thematic significance, but which is there for the sake of the mimetic portrait, because the author needs it in order to represent a human being.

I am a realist. The purists are right about characters which have predominantly aesthetic or illustrative functions; but their arguments do not apply to the highly individualized, richly developed characters who are the protagonists of so many nineteenth-century novels. I have developed a rationale for discussing such characters as though they were real people in *A Psychological Approach to Fiction: Studies in Thackeray, Stendhal, George Eliot, Dostoevsky, and Conrad* (Indiana Indiana University Press, 1974); and I must refer the reader to that work for a full treatment of the theoretical issues. I was not led to the realist position, however, by theoretical considerations. I discovered that certain characters are representations of people as a result of my ability to analyze them in motivational terms, with the help of Horneyan psychology.

When I first encountered Horney, in 1959, I was deeply impressed by her correlation of certain value systems with certain neurotic defenses. It explained to me why I had identified so completely with George Eliot while I was writing my dissertation on her and why I was no longer so enthusiastic about her beliefs. With the completion of my dissertation, which had given me trouble, I shifted from a self-effacing defense system which closely paralleled George Eliot's, to an expansive orientation which did not find living for others to be an appealing philosophy. Over the next several years Horney helped me to understand many things about myself, but it did not occur to me to use her theories in the study of literature. In 1964, however, I had a flash of insight the implications of which I am still working out. I saw that the thematic inconsistencies of *Vanity Fair* make sense when we see them as manifestations of an inner conflict between self-effacing and expansive attitudes. It was not long before I realized that the leading characters of this novel are also intelligible in psychological terms. I have since discovered that Horneyan theory has an amazing congruity with the representation of psychological phenomena in a great many novels, including some of Hardy's. Most of the great nineteenth-century novelists saw and portrayed far more than they could understand or interpret adequately. We now have at our disposal conceptual systems which enable us to analyze what these authors were able to represent, and we are beginning to do justice to the greatness of their mimetic achievement.

In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Hardy's rhetoric reinforces the notion that character is fate. Circumstances play their role in Henchard's downfall, but his chief enemy is himself. In *Tess*, as we have seen, we have an innocent and noble heroine who is hounded by adverse circumstances to an early death. Tess is "a pure woman," a "poor wounded name," whom "the President of the Immortals" destroys for his "sport." In *The Mayor*, Hardy's rhetoric focuses our attention upon Henchard's character and invites us to study it. The rhetoric of *Tess* focuses our attention

not upon Tess's character, but upon Hardy's celebration and defense of it and upon the external causes of her destruction. Tess is at least as complex and interesting a character as Henchard, but it is easy to read the novel and to be deeply affected by it without seeing Tess very clearly at all. When we do see her clearly we perceive that she, like Henchard, makes a large contribution to her own downfall. When we are under the spell of the rhetoric, we fail to see Tess as a mimetic portrait; when we understand her character, we find that it does not sustain the rhetoric. Psychological analysis shows Tess's story to be vastly different from the one that Hardy thinks he is telling and that we respond to with such intensity.

Before I discuss Tess's character, I must first present a very brief outline of Horney's theory. A full account of Horney and of related Third Force psychologists can be found in Chapter II of *A Psychological Approach to Fiction*.

In an atmosphere of warmth, security, and esteem, says Horney, a child "will develop ... the unique alive forces of his real self: the clarity and depth of his own feelings, thoughts, wishes, interests ... the special capacities or gifts he may have; the faculty to express himself, and to relate himself to others with his spontaneous feelings. All this will in time enable him to find his set of values and his aims in life" (*Neurosis and Human Growth*, p. 17). Under unfavorable conditions, when the people around him are prevented by their own neurotic needs from relating to him with love and respect, the child develops a feeling of being weak, helpless, isolated, unworthy. The "basic anxiety" which is thus generated makes the child fearful of spontaneity; and, forsaking his real self, he develops neurotic strategies for coping with his environment. These strategies are of three kinds: the individual can become self-effacing or compliant and move toward people; he can become aggressive or expansive and move against people; or he can become detached or resigned and move away from people. Each of these solutions produces its own set of values and character traits.

The person in whom self-effacing trends are dominant tries to gain attention and approval by being humble, self-sacrificing, undemanding, dutiful. He values goodness and love above all else and tends to glorify suffering. He has powerful taboos against all that is presumptuous, selfish, and aggressive, believes in turning the other cheek, and counts on his virtue being rewarded. The predominantly expansive person tries to be strong, efficient, and exploitative. He is ambitious, craves recognition, abhors helplessness, and is ashamed of defeat or suffering. He believes that might makes right and that the world is a jungle in which each man is out for himself. The basically detached person worships freedom, peace, and self-sufficiency. He handles a threatening world by renouncing his desires and by shutting others out of his inner life. He may have a strong need for superiority, but he realizes his ambition in imagination rather than through actual accomplishments.

In the course of neurotic development, the individual will come to make all three of these defensive moves compulsively; and, since they involve incompatible character structures and value systems, he will be torn by inner conflicts. In order to gain some sense of wholeness, he will emphasize one move more than the others; but the suppressed trends will continue to exist and may emerge powerfully when the predominant solution fails.

While interpersonal difficulties are creating the movements toward, against, and away from people, and the basic conflict between them, concomitant intra-psychic problems are producing their own self-defeating strategies. The destructive attitude of others, his alienation from his real self, and his self-hatred make the individual feel terribly weak and worthless. To compensate for this he creates an idealized image of himself and embarks upon a search for glory. He takes an intense pride in his idealized self, and on the basis of its attributes he makes neurotic claims upon others. His claims make him extremely vulnerable, for their frustration threatens to confront him with his despised self, with the sense of nothingness from which he is fleeing. The defense of his pride requires him to impose stringent demands and taboos upon himself, resulting in what Horney calls the tyranny of the should. The function of the shoulds is "to make oneself over into one's idealized self" (NHG, 68). The shoulds are a defense against self-loathing, but, like other neurotic defenses, they tend to aggravate the condition they are employed to cure. Not only do they increase self-alienation, but they also intensify self-hate, for they are impossible to live up to. The penalty for failure is the most severe feeling of worthlessness and self-contempt. This is why the shoulds have such a tyrannical power.

In our very first glimpses of Tess we see two characteristics which combine to determine much of her behavior and to create many of her difficulties. These are her pride and her sense of responsibility for her family. John Durbeyfield, apprized of his noble lineage by Parson Tringham, rides home in a carriage, singing "I've-got-a-grit-family-vault-at-Kingsbere --and knighted-forefathers in-lead-coffins-there!" " When her companions titter, a "slow heat" rises in Tess "at the sense that her father [is] making himself foolish in their eyes." She tells her mother later that she "'felt inclined to sink into the ground with shame!" " (III). The same sensitivity leads Tess to reject the idea of hiring a young man to take their hives to market when her father is too drunk to go.

Though he refers to Tess's pride repeatedly in the novel and brilliantly depicts its dynamics, Hardy does not dwell upon its sources; and we must put together a variety of clues to get some idea of its origins. Tess's excellence in school, her superiority to her parents, and her "deputy-maternal" role as eldest child undoubtedly contribute to it. It may be partly a defense against the humiliations to which the childishness of her parents often exposes her. Perhaps she has imbibed some of it from her father, who is "'so Proud on account of his Respectability'" (XXXI). The intensity with which the whole family responds to the revelation of its descent from the d'Urbervilles suggests that the news fulfills a powerful craving for superiority. Joan immediately hopes for a grand match for Tess. But this is nothing new: "the light-minded woman had been discovering good matches for her daughter almost from the year of her birth" (VI). However much she discounts her mother's matrimonial hopes for her, " her long exposure to them cannot help but generate longings and fantasies in Tess and a sense that her sexual destiny is to be a special one.

Tess returns home early from the dance because "her father's odd appearance and manner" make her "anxious," and she wonders what has "become of him." When she enters the Durbeyfield cottage, she finds her mother "hanging over the Monday washing-tub, which had now, as always, lingered on to the end of the week." Tess feels "a chill self-reproach that she had not returned sooner, to help her mother in these domesticities, instead of indulging herself out-of-doors." She experiences "a dreadful sting of remorse" that "out of that tub had come ... the very white frock

... which she had so carelessly greened about the skirt.... " Tess's "chill self-reproach" and "dreadful ... remorse" are the products of her own shoulds; her mother "seldom upbraided her ... at any time" (III). Her parents do not upbraid her partly because they are themselves so irresponsible. Their lack of concern adds to rather than lightens her burden; the less her mother worries about the wash, the more Tess is oppressed by it. There is little need to exert much pressure on so dutiful a child.

Tess's anxiety about her father and her feeling of guilt toward her mother are both aspects of her compulsive feeling of responsibility for her family. Tess does not receive the parental care which would give her a feeling of security and the freedom to grow in accordance with her nature. Instead she must from an early age assume responsibility for the care of the younger children and for the welfare of the family as a whole. She must be a parent not only to the children but to her mother and father as well. From the beginning of the novel to the end, she has an overwhelming feeling that the family's fortunes are in her hands, that it is she who must be their Providence. Her own needs, wishes, feelings, and aspirations must be sacrificed to the common good. Joy, spontaneity, self-actualization are out of the question.

Throughout the first phase of her relationship with Alec d'Urberville, from the decision to go to Tantridge to the decision to break with Alec even though she is pregnant, Tess is torn between the demands of her pride and her compulsion to sacrifice herself for her family "Tess's pride," Hardy tells us, makes "the part of poor relation one of particular distaste to her" (V). She is extremely reluctant, moreover, to pursue a gentleman suitor and to expose herself to his scorn. Balanced against her pride is, of course, her compliance. As Joan observes, "'she's tractable at bottom' " (IV). Tess has reacted to the burdens placed upon her by her family not by rebelling against them, nor by detaching herself from them, but by accepting them fully and feeling them as powerful internal demands which she must satisfy if she is not to hate herself. Joan senses this and is confident of her ability to manipulate her daughter by playing upon her self-effacing trends.

Tess's tractability is greatly increased by the death of Prince, for which she feels totally responsible. This violation of her role as the family's mainstay fills Tess with "self-reproach" (IV), lowers her "self-esteem" (IV), and makes her "more deferential than she might otherwise have been to the maternal wish" (V). She has many misgivings about taking the job in Tantridge (Alec's intentions are, after all, fairly clear), but she gives in to the pressure exerted by her mother and the younger children. Her consent means that she must give up her goal of becoming a teacher: "She had hoped to be a teacher at the school, but the fates seemed to decide otherwise" (VI). The fact that she makes this sacrifice so readily and that it is dwelt upon so little indicates the feebleness of Tess's wishes for herself and the strength of her self-effacing tendencies.

It is evident that, despite her own protestations and her author's to the contrary, Tess knows why she is going to Tantridge. She cannot admit it to herself, but her main object in going is to fulfill the family's (and her own) long-standing dream of being elevated by a grand alliance. When Tess seems reluctant, the children wail, "Tess won't go-o-o and be made a la-a-dy of! " As Joan explains to John, it is not her "d'Urberville blood," but her "face," that is, her sexual allure, which is her "trump card" (VII). That is why Joan dresses her up in her Sunday apparel. Tess has misgivings about this; but she defends herself against them and at the same time rationalizes her

acceptance of something she half wants by deferring to her mother's superior wisdom: "Mrs. Durbeyfield was only too delighted at this tractability" (VII). Tess later blames her mother for "dressing her up so prettily" (VIII), but the fact is that she prepares this excuse for herself by her dutiful self-abandonment.

Tess is, indeed, tractable. Without owning it to herself, and with much inner conflict, she attempts to carry out her family's commission. She is supposed to captivate Alec. She does. She is supposed to sleep with him, if necessary. She does. Joan's idea is that "'if he don't marry her afore he will after' " (VII). Tess stays around after the seduction in hopes that Alec will play his part. It is only when she perceives that he has no thoughts of marriage that she recoils from him, outraged, and seeks to restore her pride by breaking with him even though she is pregnant.

When she returns home a fallen woman, Tess claims that she "was a child" when she went to Tantridge and blames her mother for not telling her "'there was danger in men-folk' " (XII). Her behavior toward Alec during the first three months of her stay clearly indicates, however, that she is aware of his intentions and is afraid of him. Alec's attentions put Tess under a terrible strain. She must elude him without offending him. Her inner conflict is manifested clearly when, while they are riding in the Chase, Alec asks if he may treat her "as a lover": "She drew a quick pettish breath of objection, writhing uneasily on her seat, looked far ahead, and murmured, 'I don't know - I wish - how can I say yes or no when -' " (XI). Tess cannot say yes when it means disgrace; she cannot say no when it means disconcerting the whole scheme for rehabilitating her family. What she wishes, perhaps, is that Alec would ask her to marry him, even though she does not love him.

Hardy presents Tess's fall as the result of a concatenation of circumstances over which she has little control. She is the innocent victim of Alec's treachery, of the moral looseness of Tantridge, and of cosmic indifference. Tess's pride and her compulsion to sacrifice herself for her family are no less important causes of her fate, however. Car Darch takes offense at Tess's laughter partly because she is jealous of Alec's attentions to Tess, but partly also because of Tess's haughty demeanor. Car feels, rightly, that Tess is laughing at her from a height, and her pride is offended. When Car wants to fight, Tess is outraged: 'Indeed, then, I shall not fight!' said the latter majestically; and if I had known you was of that sort, I wouldn't have so let myself down as to come with such a whorage as this is!' " This arrogant speech brings down "a torrent of vituperation" upon Tess. Tess is "indignant and ashamed." She is ashamed, presumably, because she has exposed herself to this contamination, this outrage upon her dignity. Not only does she feel sullied by these vulgar proceedings, but her claims to superiority are being thrown in her face: "I'm as good as two of such!' "

Tess is "edging back to rush off alone" when Alec appears and urges her to jump up behind him: "'we'll get shot of the screaming cats in a jiffy.'" Tess is "almost ready to faint, so vivid [is] her sense of the crisis." She is torn between her fear of Alec and her desire for a vindictive triumph which will restore her pride. As they ride off toward the Chase, Tess clings to Alec, "still panting in her triumph, yet in other respects dubious" (XI).

Tess is too exhausted by the exertions of the day and the turbulent emotions of shame, indignation, fear, conflict, and triumph which she has experienced to observe that Alec is taking

her into the Chase or to make a spirited resistance to his new stratagem. Her resistance is further weakened by the inner conflict which is activated by his generosity to her family:

"Bye the bye, Tess, your father has a new cob to-day. Somebody gave it to him."

"Somebody? You!"

D'Urberville nodded.

"O how very good of you that is!" she exclaimed, with a painful sense of the awkwardness of having to thank him just then.

"And the children have some toys."

"I didn't know-you ever sent them anything!" she murmured, much moved. "I almost wish you had not - yes, I almost wish it."

"Why, dear?"

"It-hampers me so."

"Tessy-don't you love me ever so little now?"

"I'm grateful," she reluctantly admitted. "But I fear I do not-" The sudden vision of his passion for herself as a factor in this result so distressed her that, beginning with one slow tear, and then following with another, she wept outright. (XI)

Like her mother, Alec knows how to make Tess tractable.

Tess weeps because she knows that Alec's kindness to her family is part of his pursuit of her, that her submission is the price of his bounty, and that she cannot, for her family's sake, turn him away. Instead of remaining alert and resisting Alec's advances, as she has done up till now, Tess "passively" sits down in the leaves he has heaped, falls into a reverie when he leaves, and is asleep when he returns. She is tired, to be sure, but her passivity and drowsiness are more symptoms of psychological than of physical fatigue. She can neither resist nor submit; nor can she contend any longer with her inner conflicts. By going to sleep she escapes her conflicting emotions, eliminates the need of choosing a course of behavior, and puts herself in the hands of fate. If anything happens, she is not to blame.

Both Tess and her author account for Tess's remaining with Alec for several weeks after the seduction in a very vague way. Tess tells Alec, "My eyes were dazed by you for a little, and that was all" (XII). Hardy explains that Tess, "temporarily blinded by his ardent manners, had been stirred to confused surrender awhile." Both Tess and Hardy need to deny the fact that Tess stayed on because she hoped that Alec would marry her. That, after all, was the only possible solution to her inner conflict. Tess tells Alec that she didn't "'understand [his] meaning till it was too late'" and that she made up her mind to leave as soon as she saw what she "'ought to have seen sooner.'" It was not his sexual designs that Tess did not understand and failed to see soon enough, but his determination to treat her like another one of his lower-class mistresses. When her mother reproaches her for not getting Alec to marry her, Tess thinks to herself: "Get Alec d'Urberville in the mind to marry her! He marry her! On matrimony he had never once said a word." Tess thinks, now, that she might not have snatched "at social salvation" even if he had asked her, but she is full of injured pride and needs to reaffirm her dignity in this way.

When Tess realizes that Alec has no intention of marrying her, she can no longer sacrifice her pride to her family's needs. The injury is too great. Her strongest need is to reassert her pride by

showing Alec that she is not one of his playthings. She needs desperately to prove that she does not belong to the whorage" of Car Darch and that ilk. When her mother says that "any woman" but Tess would have gotten the man to marry her "after that," Tess replies proudly, "Perhaps any woman would except me.'" Tess's pride dictates not only that she must leave Alec and tell him repeatedly that she does not love him and tell herself that she would not have married him even if he had asked, but also that she must accept no assistance from him, even though she is poor and pregnant and he is guilty, wealthy, and eager to help.

Tess is angry with Alec and angry with her mother; but she is most angry, of course, with herself. She "detests," "loathes," and "hates" herself for her weakness. She has these feelings, we are told, because she does not love Alec; and the fact that she was ready to sell herself undoubtedly contributes to her self-contempt. But the chief reason for her self-loathing is neither her lack of affection for Alec nor the "moral hobgoblins" of religion and convention (XIII); it is, rather, the seemingly irrevocable damage she has done to her idealized image. With her idealized self shattered, her despised self rises to the fore. Hardy is quite right in feeling that Tess is too hard on herself; her self-hate is excessive. The loss of her self-respect and of her honored position in the family and the community plunges Tess into despair. Instead of being the family's savior, she is its shame. Tess wishes for death, obscurity, obliteration: "Her depression was terrible ... she could have hidden herself in a tomb."

Tess defends herself by withdrawal: "... her sole idea seemed to be to shun mankind." She retreats into her bedroom; she subjects herself to "long domiciliary imprisonments" (XIX). Tess regains some measure of courage and serenity by detaching herself subjectively as well. She sees herself from a cosmic perspective. Whatever the consequences of the past, "time would close over them; they would all in a few years be as if they had never been, and she herself grassed down and forgotten." She soothes herself by reflecting that the world's opinion of her is not terribly important, that she is only "a passing thought" to others, that "alone in a desert island" she would not have been in despair "at what had happened to her." Thus fortified, she determines to get what pleasure she can from the present moment and is able to bear "herself with dignity" and to look "people calmly in the face at times, even when holding the baby in her arms" (XIV).

The death of Sorrow eliminates some of the consequences of Tess's fall. The reawakening of her youthful energies and of her desire for enjoyment leads her to dream of a fresh start. She resolves that there will "be no more d'Urberville aircastles in the dreams and deeds of her new life"; she will "be the dairy maid Tess, and nothing more" (XV). But "one of the interests" of Talbothays "to her was the accidental virtue of its lying near her forefathers' country," and she has a vague hope that some "good thing might come of her being in her ancestral land." Hardy speaks of her period of withdrawal as "silent reconstructive years" (XVI) and suggests that she is still undergoing a process of favorable growth and "transmutation"; but Tess at Talbothays is essentially the same person that she has been all along. She is sadder and wiser--that is, she is more fearful and resigned--but it is clear that her resignation and her realism are giving way before the upsurge of youthful hope. Maybe the past can be annihilated. Maybe the loss of virginity is reversible (XV). Maybe her d'Urberville ancestry will still bring her glory.

Tess falls so passionately in love with Angel Clare because through him she can satisfy her pride and fulfill her dream of glory. Angel is a gentleman, an "admirable and poetic man," whose

learning at first seems to place him far above her. When Tess discovers "the distance between her own modest mental standpoint and the unmeasurable, Andean altitude of his, she [becomes] quite dejected, disheartened from all further effort on her own part whatever" (XIX). Tess has always been the smartest person around; her early dream, like Angel's, was to be a teacher of men. Angel's intellectual superiority crushes her pride and makes her feel like "a nothing."

Angel's love is so precious to Tess because it lifts her out of the ordinary world and transports her to the "Andean altitude" which he occupies. Once he loves her, she can transfer her pride to him and participate in his superiority. It becomes an immense satisfaction rather than a humiliation to feel that his "soul [is] the soul of a saint, his intellect that of a seer" (XXXI). She worships him idolatrously (XXXIII); he is "godlike in her eyes" (XXIX); she looks at him "as if she [sees] something

immortal before her" (XXXI). Her worship of Angel is a form of self-exaltation; the more she idolizes him the greater the glory which she acquires by possessing him. The passion of the other girls intensifies Tess's desire. His preference for her confirms her superiority (XXIII); she has "won [him] from all other women" (XXXI). When she and Angel are together, she is no longer "any woman," "one of a long row only"; she dwells in a world of poetry and is herself a mythical being--an Artemis, a Demeter, an Eve (XX). Angel sees her as she longs to be seen, as she sees herself in her most exalted moments. He confirms her idealized image of herself. Nothing is more intoxicating, more irresistible than this.

Her love of Angel throws Tess into terrible conflict; her thirst for glory clashes with both her resignation and her self-effacing shoulds. Though she comes to Talbothays full of youthful energy and a "zest for life" (XVI), Tess has taken a firm resolution never to marry. Only by resigning herself to "a future of austere isolation" (XXVII) can she escape her past, preserve her honor, and protect herself against renewed self-contempt. When Angel begins to court her, she tries to repress her feelings and to stay aloof, but to no avail. When he proposes, she refuses "with pain that [is] like the bitterness of dissolution" (XXVII). Tess feels that to marry him under false pretenses is a "wrong" which "may kill him when he knows" (XXVIII); she is "sure" that she "ought not to do it." What Angel offers her is so precious, however, and, once her resignation is broken down, so essential to her existence, that she simply cannot obey her conscience in this matter, particularly after her letter miscarries. Her "one desire" is "to make herself his, to call him her lord, her own--then, if necessary, to die" (XXXIII).

On the day of the wedding Tess is a "celestial person" who moves "about in a mental cloud of many-coloured idealities" and feels "glorified by an irradiation not her own." But when the sound of the church bells dies away reality reappears and her guilt rises to the fore. By the time they reach home she is "contrite and spiritless." When she learns that Retty has attempted suicide and that Marian has been found drunk, she feels that she must confess: "It was wicked of her to take all

without paying. She would pay to the uttermost farthing; she would tell, there and then" (XXXIV).

Tess "tells" and then passively accepts Angel's punitiveness because only by suffering can she satisfy her self-effacing shoulds and relieve her self-hate. She cannot effectively challenge his rejection of her because she shares it herself: " 'I feel I am so utterly worthless!' " (XXXVI). Tess acquiesces in Angel's treatment of her not only because she feels worthless and guilty and needs to suffer, but also because her submission enables her to retain possession of him and to preserve him as a source of glory. The loss of Angel's adoration is a staggering blow; but as long as Tess can feel that Angel is hers she has not lost everything. Her chief means of possessing him, now, is through slavish submission; as long as he treats her as his, then she feels him to be hers. " 'I shan't do anything,' " she tells him,

"unless you order me to; and if you go away from me I shall not follow 'ee; and if you never speak to me any more I shall not ask why, unless you tell me I may."
"And if I do order you to do anything?"
"I will obey you like your wretched slave, even if it is to lie down and die.' "
(XXXV)

Tess is, indeed, prepared to die if by so doing she can establish herself finally as Angel's possession.

The possession of Angel has value for Tess only if he is an exalted being. This is why, after a few attempts at self-defense, Tess takes "everything as her deserts, and hardly [opens] her mouth" (XXXVI). Hardy celebrates her behavior: "quick tempered as she naturally was, nothing that he could say made her unseemly; she sought not her own; was not provoked; thought no evil of his treatment of her. She might just now have been Apostolic Charity herself returned to a self-seeking modern world." Tess's motives for accepting all blame, repressing her resentment, and abandoning her just claims are, I think, more self-seeking than charitable. Having transferred her pride to Angel, she must protect her image of him as a glorious creature. In order to do this, she accepts total responsibility not only for her own faults, but for his behavior: The worse he behaves, the more culpable she is. Tess can live with almost any amount of self-condemnation as long as Angel remains God-like and remains hers.

Tess's behavior from the time of Angel's departure to her second capitulation to Alec d'Urberville is dictated largely by the motives which we have so far examined. Hardy's rhetoric presents Tess as once again the victim of forces and circumstances beyond her control, but psychological analysis shows that in this phase of her existence, as in the earlier ones, Tess's fate is to a significant degree the product of her character. Tess withdraws from her family in order to protect her pride. She sends them twenty pounds to re-thatch the house, but she cannot let them know that she is "a deserted wife, dependent, now that she had relieved their necessities, on her own hands for a living." After "the *eclat* of a marriage which was to nullify the collapse of the first attempt," this "would be too much indeed" (XLI).

"The same delicacy, pride, false shame, whatever it may be called" (LIII) prevents her from turning to Angel's parents for help, once she has exhausted her resources. When her discovery of Angel's proposal to Retty drives her finally to seek out the Clares, she is deterred from carrying out her intention by a series of circumstances which exacerbate her sense of worthlessness and fear of humiliation. When they are reunited at the end, Tess tells Angel that because of her

family's desperate plight she was "obliged to go back" to Alec (LVII); but this is not true. She could have applied to the Clares. This thought occurs to her shortly before her capitulation:

"I shall not come-I have plenty of money!" she cried.

"Where?"

"At my father-in-law's, if I ask for it."

"If you ask for it. But you won't, Tess, I know you; you'll never ask for it--you'll starve first!" (LI)

Her pride system is such that it is easier for Tess to become Alec's mistress than to expose herself to the judgment and scrutiny of Angel's parents.

Another source of Tess's trouble is her passivity. If she had written to Angel soon and often, he might have returned in time. Her passivity is, in part, a continuation of the slavish submission which she displays on her honeymoon. Hers is a "silence of docility"; it means that "she [asserts] no rights, [admits] his judgment to be in every respect the true one, and [bends] her head dumbly thereto" (XLIX). Tess's passivity stems also from her self-abandonment and self-pity. She wanders about randomly, "obliterating her identity," and cutting herself off from family and friends (XLI). She thinks of Angel in a "warm clime" while she sleeps in the fields, cold and unprotected: "Was there another such a wretched being as she in the world?" Tess finds a kind of romance in the sorriest of her plight and the magnitude of her despair. This gives her a vested interest in preserving or intensifying her misery. If she is the most wretched person in the world, she is not an ordinary person, one of a long row only. Her wretchedness, moreover, is a proof of her love and nobility, especially since she does not blame Angel for it and remains loyally devoted.

Despite her sufferings as an abandoned wife, Tess continues to repress her resentment and to glorify her husband. The meaning of her life still lies in being possessed by Angel and in participating, thereby, in his glory. If he would come to her she would be "well content" to "die in [his] arms" if only he had forgiven her. If he cannot forgive her and allow her to live with him as his wife, she will be "content, ay, glad, to live with [him] as his servant ... so that [she] could be near [him], and get glimpses of [him], and think of [him] as [hers]" (XLVIII). The protection of her pride in Angel requires not only that Tess refuse to blame him for her plight, but also that she defend him against the criticism of others. She won't seek a position at Talbothays because "her return might bring reproach upon her idolized husband" (XLI). She warns Alec d'Urberville not to "speak against" her husband (XLVI), and when Alec calls him a "mule," Tess "passionately" strikes him with her glove, hard enough to draw blood (XLVII). This is a foreshadowing of the murder, which is precipitated by an insult to Angel. He "'called you by a foul name,' " she explains to Angel, "'and then I did it' " (LVII).

When Tess writes her denunciatory letter to Angel it is a clear sign, for the reader who has understood her thus far, that she had abandoned hope of realizing her pride through him and is going to capitulate to Alec. Having despaired of getting Angel back, she can allow her repressed resentment to emerge: "'O why have you treated me so monstrously, Angel! I do not deserve it ... I can never, never forgive you!' " (LI). Her accusations excuse her in advance for what she is going to do.

Alec gains power over Tess chiefly through his repeated offers of assistance to her family. Tess's second capitulation is in many ways a repetition of the first. Her family is again in dire straits; Tess again feels responsible; and Alec again plays very cleverly upon her compulsion to sacrifice herself for the younger children. But more than this is going on. Alec also seems to exercise a strong personal influence over Tess. On every occasion that she encounters him after Angel's departure, Tess experiences terror, dread, and anxiety. Alec is a domineering, manipulative, masterful man; and Tess, despite her strong determination to resist him, has an impulse toward submission in his presence.

Alec and Tess have a kind of master-slave relationship such as often develops between expansive and self-effacing partners. "Remember my lady," warns Alec, after Tess has struck him, "I was your master once! I will be your master again" (XLVII). Tess's resistance, the fact that she has never loved him or yielded readily to his will, makes her all the more attractive and strengthens Alec's determination to conquer; for Alec does not want love, or even sex, so much as triumph. Tess, though unwilling, and torn by inner conflicts, finds Alec difficult to withstand. In his presence, she feels herself to be weak, dependent, paralyzed, made for a victim. He satisfies a need she has for punishment and masochistic self-immolation. After she strikes him, she sinks down before him in submission:

"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 those people under the rick! I shall not cry out." (XLVII)

Why not?

Tess has never had a strong, protective father; it is she who has had to perform the parental role. She has sought to care for her family, however, not through self-assertion and the pursuit of mastery, but through self-sacrifice and submission. Her goal has been to find a powerful male who would take care of her and her family. She has been conditioned by her family and her culture to see submission to a protector as the appropriate way to fulfill her security needs. Her first attempt to gain a protector misfires; Alec offers assistance, but on terms which are unacceptable to her pride. She looks to Angel for protection also, and he promises it; but she once more finds herself alone and unaided. Her pride prevents her from applying to the Clares. With the reappearance of Alec, who is soon promising once again to relieve her wants, to lift her out of subjection, and to care for her family, Tess is tempted to transfer her submission from Angel to him. She desperately wants to remain loyal to Angel; but Alec's expansiveness triggers her self-effacing responses and makes her terrified of giving way. The fact that Alec has possessed her sexually, whereas Angel has not, increases her sense of being in his power. The only way she can hold on to Angel is by feeling herself to be his; but Angel's silence makes her despair of having him on any terms. Alec's continued pressure and the worsening fortunes of her family finally overcome her resistance. As Alec's mistress she fulfills her duty to her family, but at a terrible price.

Angel's return throws Tess into "unspeakable despair," as she realizes that he would have been hers if she had waited. She hates Alec for having persuaded her that Angel would never return and for having caused her, once again, to lose him. When Alec taunts her and insults Angel, Tess

plunges a knife into his heart. Her motives are vengeance, defense of her pride, and, most important, perhaps, a hope of regaining Angel. By her act she not only removes Alec as an obstacle, but she also proves to Angel how much she loves him: "It came to me as a shining light that I should get you back that way. I could not bear the loss of you any longer--you don't know how entirely I was unable to bear your not loving me! Say you do now, dear, dear husband; say you do, now I have killed him!" (LVII). Tess has laid down her life for Angel, as Izz said she would (XL).

Tess has no desire to live. She wants to make "herself his, to call [Angel] her lord, her own," and then to die. She feels guilt for her crime--"How wickedly mad I was!" (LVIII) and wants to be punished. Most important, she wants to die in her recaptured Eden, with Angel loving her and thinking well of her. Tess wants to die in her dream, in full possession of her glory. To live means to suffer conflict and change, to be exposed to failure and self-hate. Thus, when she is apprehended at Stonehenge, she is at peace: "It is as it should be.... Angel, I am almost glad--yes, glad! This happiness could not have lasted. It was too much. I have had enough; and now I shall not live for you to despise me!" (LIX).

The trouble with the ending, aesthetically, is not that it is too grim, but that it is too happy. Not only does Tess die at the perfect moment, with her dream come true, but her wishes seem to control the action in other respects as well. She wants Angel to marry Liza-Lu, and the final scene indicates that he will. Tess wants this marriage because through it she will (1) retain possession of Angel--"if she were to become yours it would almost seem as if death had not divided us" (LVIII) and (2) bequeath to her family the gentlemanly protector which it has been her duty to provide. Once he leaves for Brazil, Angel stops being a mimetic character; his change of heart and his cherishing of Tess at the end are necessary for the fulfillment of the novel's thematic and aesthetic patterns, but they are essentially unmotivated. Though they do not belong to Hardy's mimetic portrait, they are not out of harmony with it, and Angel retains some semblance of being a real person. In the final scene, however, he is nothing but a puppet, a figment of Tess's dream which the author has made come true.

Our psychological analysis of Tess leads us to several additional conclusions about the novel as a whole. The implied author's intense sympathy for Tess seems to be a product of his identification with and admiration of her self-effacing character structure. It is this sympathy which controls the novel's rhetoric throughout and which accounts for the dreamlike quality of the ending. It also produces a great mimetic portrait which, when properly understood, works against, rather than sustains, the novel's aesthetic and thematic patterns.

We should note, however, that there is a very important way in which the novel's rhetoric and its mimetic portrait of Tess reinforce each other. Both generate an empathic involvement with Tess, an entry into her experience of the world, which makes us feel her human weight and dignity, despite her weaknesses. We may feel that Hardy praises her too much, but we can join with him in loving her, just as we love anyone whose inner life has been made real for us.

IV

The psychological approach illuminates Hardy's fiction in a number of ways. It helps us to understand his artistic personality, to appreciate his growth as a mimetic artist, and to distinguish between his representation and his interpretation of life. I have not space to develop these points with the thoroughness which they demand; but I shall try to suggest, in closing, my current thinking.

Hardy's artistic personality (that is, the personality which we infer from all of his novels) displays all of the Horneyan trends. Hardy is aggressive toward social and cosmic forces which limit the individual. He arraigns God, he attacks widely held conventions and beliefs, he bewails the vulnerability and helplessness of man. He is sympathetic toward restless, passionate, discontented, dreamy people like Eustacia and Mrs. Charmond; some of their outbursts sound remarkably like his own. At the same time, characters who reflect his own rebellious, iconoclastic, unconventional side are always crushed. Sometimes he portrays them as victims, and sometimes he indicates that they are getting their just deserts. The one novel in which he sees character as fate is about an aggressive hero. In any event, expansiveness does not work. Social ambition, the pursuit of sexual conquest, and the attempt to master fate always cause trouble. In Hardy's universe, passionate aspiration of any sort invites disaster; his romantics are either chastened or destroyed, and sometimes both.

Self-effacement ought to work; but, since there is no just God in the heavens, it usually does not. Hardy is usually blind to the unhealthiness of self-effacing behavior (his attitude toward Sue when she becomes guilt-ridden is an exception). He tends to glorify his compliant characters as good, loving, unselfish, dutiful, saint-like, as he does with Tess. In a just universe, such qualities would be rewarded. The destruction of such noble people justifies bitter remarks about the President of the Immortals. When self-effacing characters succeed (as does Diggory Venn), Hardy feels that he is being unrealistic, that he is violating his austere artistic code. His universe is one in which expansive people are struck down and self-effacing people, as a rule, are victimized by their fellow-men and by fate. There are more exceptions to this in the earlier than in the later novels. As he becomes confident of his status and his powers, his vision becomes darker and his art more austere.

The most favored strategy in Hardy's novels is resignation. The philosophy which he attributes to Elizabeth Jane at the end of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is Hardy's advice on how to be. Resignation is often combined with self-effacement, as it is in Elizabeth Jane, Gabriel Oak, Diggory Venn, Giles Winterbourne, and Marty South. The last two lead frustrated lives; but they are glorified by Hardy's rhetoric more, perhaps, than any other characters. Resigned people may not achieve happiness; but they, at least, avoid being made into fools. They do not expect much (and hence cannot be terribly disappointed); and they bear their suffering with stoical dignity.

Resignation appears to be the dominant trend in Hardy's artistic personality. Hardy seems to be a man who has been traumatized by disappointment and who is determined never to be so deeply hurt again. His novels are pervaded by a basic distrust of life. One defense against a world that is always mocking or deceiving its is to be constantly on guard; by dwelling on the worst that fate can do we at least protect ourselves against her ironies. Another defense is to reduce our aspirations, to discipline our feelings, to regard whatever happiness may come our way as but a passing episode in a general spectacle of pain. By telling over and over again the stories of

passionate, aspiring, or good and trusting people who are mocked by fate, Hardy at once gives expression to his subordinate trends and envisions their consequences. The destinies of his characters justify his resignation: there, but for his bitter wisdom, goes he.

When we approach his characters as representations of people, we can see that Hardy matured remarkably as a mimetic artist. Many of his earlier characters have a few well-defined psychological traits, but we are not given detailed and coherent pictures of their motivational systems, and it is difficult to relate their attitudes and behavior to a sophisticated conception of their psyches. Even the most memorable of them--Bathsheba, Gabriel Oak, Clym, Eustacia, Mrs. Yeobright seem to be fragmentary and superficial creations when compared with a character like Tess. *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, and *Jude the Obscure*, however, contain great mimetic portraits. Henchard, Elizabeth Jane, Jude, and Sue are highly individualized characters who can be understood in the same way that we have understood Tess.

As Hardy's characters become more complex, his thematic treatment of them becomes less compelling. He seems particularly blind to the contribution which their neuroses make to their unhappy lives. He can see through solutions which he rejects, such as Henchard's expansiveness or Sue's religious mania; but for the most part, even while he is portraying their psychological problems in great detail, he continues to blame his characters' misery almost wholly upon nature, fate, society, and things in general. The less fully developed his characters are, the easier it is to accept Hardy's view of them and their fate. If we understand his mimetic characters psychologically, however, we cannot help being sceptical of his interpretations and resistant to his rhetoric. We have seen how this works in *Tess*. *Jude the Obscure* is an even more striking example. Jude is far more the victim of his neurosis (and of the bleak childhood which produces it) than he is of the social and cosmic injustices upon which Hardy loves to dwell.

Like a great many authors (and people), Hardy tends to confuse existential, historical, and psychological problems. As I have indicated, this was one of the early sources of his appeal for me. It is tempting to romanticize our sufferings by seeing the world as out of joint. However grim the resulting world view, it is more palatable to pity ourselves as the victims of external forces than to take responsibility, in part at least, for our own difficulties. This kind of externalization may protect our pride and ward off self-hate; but it is ultimately self-defeating. We cannot begin to work at our problems until we have owned them. We have little to gain from Hardy in the way of conscious insight. He rationalizes, denies, projects, and in a variety of other ways avoids being aware of what he sees. His pride in facing reality is not justified.

The mark of a great realist is that he somehow transcends his defensive needs and accurately portrays a reality which he cannot afford to understand. His rhetoric, his interpretation of life, even, sometimes, his structuring of the action may be a reflection of his conflicts or a justification of his predominant solution with its accompanying value system and world view. But insofar as he is capable of portraying reality, in some of its aspects at least, mimetically, we have a triumph of healthy perception. Hardy tells us that his characters are victims of society and fate; but he shows us, through his careful depiction of their inner lives, the way in which their compulsiveness combines with circumstances to destroy them. He tends to glorify certain defensive strategies, but he shows us their destructiveness to the personality.

I am not suggesting that we simply ignore or analyze away Hardy's own perspective. We should regard it, rather, as a source of insight into his phenomenology. However confused or defensive his responses may be, Hardy is a sensitive and gifted man who is struggling, like the rest of us, to make sense of reality. It is a rich and powerful experience to enter into his perspective, to see life through the medium of his temperament. Fiction helps us to know what it is like to be other people and to have their experience of the world.

Criticism, in its way, does a similar thing. All criticism is, in some measure, autobiographical. We tend to be fascinated by authors whose preoccupations are somehow reflective of our own, who confirm or challenge our sense of the world, or who articulate attitudes, values, or solutions toward which, or away from which, we happen to be moving. We may write as though we have no personal stake in the interpretations we are expounding, but analysis will usually reveal a vested interest of some sort.

I was drawn to Hardy initially because I identified strongly with some of his attitudes and with certain aspects of his vision. His agnosticism and his insistence on a humanistic perspective still appeal to me. His arraignment of the cosmic and social orders is very forceful; but I see, now, that he has little conscious recognition of psychological problems and that his analysis of the relationship between internal and external factors is distorted by his defensive needs. His resignation is an understandable response to life; I have plenty of it myself. But, in my stronger and better moments, I believe that we can fulfill our natures and get the most out of life only by opening ourselves to experience. I am drawn to Hardy now, in part at least, by my need to criticize him. His defenses have an attraction still about which I am uncomfortable. In arguing with him, I am trying to convince myself. We have a need to repudiate those aspects of ourselves which we are attempting to outgrow, and this often takes the form of seeing through them when we encounter them in others.

Our aesthetic responses are likewise a reflection of ourselves. However much we may try to weigh and balance an author's virtues and defects, we are limited by our own sensibilities. Most of us respond really well to only a few aspects of literature, and it is hard to know when we are over-estimating their importance. I am quite aware that there are important values in Hardy to which I have never responded strongly and to which I have not done justice here. Fortunately, there are other critics who have found these things particularly rewarding and who have a gift for calling them to our attention. This is what critics do for us: they allow us to see works of literature through the medium of their highly developed sensibilities and from their particular perspective. None of them offers more than a partial truth, and none is free from distortion.

Since my perspective has changed, and with it my sensitivity, I have offered several views of Thomas Hardy. Naturally, I think that the last is the best, and I tend to see my former perspectives from my current one. But anyone who has changed much is bound to be humble about his present truths, to recognize that they, like their predecessors, may someday be transformed by new revelations.