MAN AS ALIEN:

THE ISOLATION THEME IN THOMAS HARDY

DISSERTATION

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By

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INTRODUCTION:
The Isolation Theme in Hardy in Relation to the Period in Which He Wrote

Things move in cycles; dormant principles renew themselves, and exhausted principles are thrust by. There is a revival of the artistic instincts towards great dramatic motives—setting forth that 'collision between the individual and the general'—formerly worked out with such force by the Periclean and Elizabethan dramatists, to name no other.

Thomas Hardy, "Candour in English Fiction," 1890.

As many are aware, the solitary figure is by no means uncommon in serious literature. One thinks of certain unforgettable characters in Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, the Romantics, the Russian masters, Dickens, Emily Brontë, Hardy, Butler, Conrad, Henry James, Mann, and Gide, to name only a few. T. S. Eliot, in commenting on Huckleberry Finn, mentions a number of other famous literary isolates who, like Mark Twain's character, appear to transcend their time and culture and to have something of the universality of Everyman in the morality play:

Huck Finn is alone: there is no more solitary character in fiction. The fact that he has a father only emphasizes his loneliness; and he views his father with a terrifying detachment. So we come to see Huck himself in the end as one of the permanent symbolic figures of fiction; not unworthy to take a place with Ulysses, Faust, Don
Quixote, Don Juan, Hamlet and other great discoveries that man has made about himself.¹


Since the end of the eighteenth century, the theme of estrangement of the individual from society has become peculiarly important in literature. This leitmotiv, running all the way from the Gothic tales and the poems of the Romantic poets to present-day detective fiction and chronicles of the decadent South, is only the literary manifestation of the general condition of fragmentation to which Western man has been susceptible since the Industrial and French Revolutions awakened him to new modes of social, economic, and political living and thinking. Very few of the numerous isolates in the literature of this period drew on enough facets of their personalities to harmonize satisfactorily with the groups they found themselves in. Despite efforts at compromise and reorientation, the isolate found the gate strait and the way narrow, and would not have been likely to share the utilitarian optimism of Emerson's maxim on isolation:

Every man in his lifetime needs to thank his faults. As no man thoroughly understands a truth until he has contended against it, so no man has a
thorough acquaintance with the hindrances or talents of men until he has suffered from the one and seen the triumph of the other over his own want of the same. Has he a defect of temper that unfit him to live in society? Thereby he is driven to entertain himself alone and acquire habits of self-help; and thus, like the wounded oyster, he mends his shell with pearl.  

2 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Compensation," 1841.

During the Victorian period in England (roughly, 1832 to 1901), the idea that man is more an isolate unto himself than a closely-knit part of society became far more current and far more deeply embedded in the national consciousness than it had ever been before. Matthew Arnold's lines,

Yes! in the sea of life enisled,
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
We mortal millions live alone.  

3 "To Marguerite--Continued," 1852.

might be taken to represent one of the dominant philosophical views of what Taine would have called the English race, moment, and milieu. Among those most deeply affected by this view of man's unenviable position was Thomas Hardy, the "last of the Victorians." In his fifteen novels and forty-five short stories (all written during Victoria's
reign), as well as in his numerous volumes of poetry, there recurs the image of a rootless individual lost in a world (to paraphrase Arnold's "Dover Beach") without joy or love or light or certitude or peace or help for pain. This dissertation will deal with Hardy's use in his fiction of the theme of isolation. Before we can understand Hardy's variations on this theme, however, we must first make a brief survey of the period, in order to see what sort of milieu produced the pervasive awareness of man as an isolate.

Victorian England ought properly to be studied against the wider background of nineteenth-century Europe and America, for a number of important circumstances made the life of the average Englishman of a particular class somewhat like the life of his nearest counterpart in France, Russia, or the United States, to name no others. Thus the isolation-literature of nineteenth-century England might well be compared with certain contemporaneous literary works of these other countries. Since space will not permit so extensive a treatment, however, we will refer to these other matters only in passing.

The most perplexing question to answer about Victorian isolation is, where did it have its ultimate origin? Did it really begin with the lonely romantic heroes in Shelley, Byron, Coleridge (and Goethe and Pushkin)? With the late eighteenth-century Gothic mystery novels or William God-
win's novel of 1794, Caleb Williams? With the eighteenth-century "graveyard" poets: Parnell, Gray, Blair, Young?

It is difficult to stop at any one literary genre or period, because there is likely to be an antecedent genre or work hardly less characteristic of isolation-literature. Before the "graveyard" poems there was Hamlet. Before that there was Everyman. The list may be multiplied indefinitely: Piers Plowman, The Wanderer, Ecclesiastes, the Greek tragedies, the legends of creation. One suspects, in short, that Victorian isolation-literature cannot accurately be traced to individual literary works. An examination of the thought of representative Victorians, however, leads to the surmise that certain important developments since the sixteenth century produced, during the Victorian period, a set of circumstances capable of making man's lot far worse (or, depending on the point of view, far better) than it had ever been before.

The fundamental traditions in social organization, religious thought, and political regulation which had molded the lives of Englishmen for centuries were in a state of upheaval. Fortunately for the sanity of the nation, the English Constitution (unwritten but nonetheless ineradicable) and the English Monarch (sometimes criticized but never seriously threatened with removal) remained, sturdy and strong. But the rigid barriers which had separated the
landed upper class from the mercantile middle class and the agricultural and mechanical lower class were crumbling: the vote was being extended to more and more and more of the general male population, the post-feudal mercantilist system was being replaced by one in which the government took relatively little part, and the political power was rapidly passing from the gentry to the middle class and the upper segment of the lower class. In religious matters, the Establishment remained, as a national institution, but it was so weakened by factionalism from within and scientific rationalism from without that the rock of belief and doctrine it was founded on appeared to have been pulverized.

An underlying tension characterized the period, tension between the violent forces of change and the hardly less violent forces of conservatism and reaction. One commentator, writing on the religious history of the age, aptly describes these antagonistic vectors as centrifugal and centripetal in nature:

The predominant note of the period was one of struggle, of adaptation. We have seen it already in the world of thought, where the spirit of reform and the spirit of reaction, of tradition and progress were antagonistic. But that struggle permeated the whole structure of the age. Two tendencies, which we may call the centrifugal and the centripetal—or with Bertrand Russell the desire for Freedom and the necessity for Organization—were perpetually at war.
The "Victorian Compromise," as the tragicomic effort to reconcile these antinomies is often called, served to hold matters somewhat in check, but it was more a stopgap measure than a realistic method for dealing with the brave new world that appeared to be in process of being born.

In making an examination of the effects of the conflict between centrifugal and centripetal influences on man's growing isolation in Victorian England, it is perhaps advisable to begin with the matter of religion and from there to go on to consider social, economic, and political problems. From the sixteenth century onward, Protestant private judgment (however much that may have been affected by the doctrines of the Established Church) had stimulated Englishmen to seek a variety of new ways of dealing with the many problems confronting them, individually as well as collectively. Once free from the authority of the Mother Church, philosophers, statesmen, poets, and others had a wider scope in which to speculate and vent their opinions about God and man's position in the universe. Ideas which would have been considered heretical before the Reformation and Henry VIII's break with the Pope came to exercise a profound influence upon prominent Englishmen. These new
views involved not only such matters as the doctrine of consubstantiation as opposed to that of transubstantiation, or the nature of the living embodiment of Apostolic Succession (the English Monarch rather than the Pope), but more general statements of belief.

The great Church schism of the seventeenth century between the High Church party and the Low Church party (represented by the Puritans) was settled definitively when the restoration of the Stuarts to the throne, in 1660, after eleven years of commonwealth and protectorate government, re-established the High Church party as the ecclesiastical group in power. From then on the tendency toward "purifying" of Church worship from Romish ritual and of human conduct from license and frivolity was largely subdued until the end of the eighteenth century, when the neo-Puritan Evangelicals began making their influence felt. Religious orthodoxy became strongly tinged with deism, and science, invention, and commercial expansion were held to be compatible, to a certain extent, with the religious philosophy (or what passed for one) molding the nation's spiritual outlook. Various sects, outgrowths of the break with Rome, or of a break with the Establishment—Independents, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Unitarians, etc.—claimed a number of adherents, but with the exception of the Methodists, their influence was not great.
The Romantic poets, reacting not so much against belief in God (Shelley is an exception) as against the mechanism and materialism of the eighteenth century, focused attention on God's Creation: the world of nature, and man and his will (or, as present-day psychologists would say, his ego). While Shelley's hero-isolates are rebels against Divine Authority, Byron's are lonely outcasts because they have asserted their wills in opposition to the laws of society. In general, the Romantics continued the earlier

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6 The Byronic hero, so frequently referred to in nineteenth-century European literature, played an important part in making the Russian writers aware of the isolating effects of the post-Napoleonic age, when national boundaries, social cleavages, and man's view of his position in the universe were undergoing drastic changes. Pushkin's Evgeny Onegin, the Russian Byronic hero, is considered the progenitor of a long line of Russian literary isolates. Goethe's Werther may also have assisted the Byronic hero in giving rise to the Russian prototype and its modifications.

deism, with its corollary of neo-Platonism (derived from the seventeenth-century Cambridge Platonist school). They sought a far greater degree of knowledge of man's soul, and the beauty and divinity that reside in products of the Creation, than was possible either through a literal interpre-
tation of Scripture or scientific speculation.

During the nineteenth century, Protestant private judgment was subjected to so great a number of concomitant encouragements and repressions that the ties linking the communicant with his church (Established or Dissenting) loosened or broke for large numbers of individuals. Even some of those who elected to return to the Roman Catholic Church—John Henry Newman and Gerard Manley Hopkins, for example—were not entirely free from perplexing religious doubts. More than in any previous age, men seriously questioned what sort of church organization, if any, would make them a part of a truly Christian community.

Biblical scholars in Germany and elsewhere were investigating the Bible text and subjecting the Biblical narratives, including the Gospel story of Jesus, to scientific scrutiny. Although a number of these Higher Critics, as they were called, did not mean to subvert Christianity, their findings in regard to the authenticity of Biblical statements exercised a profoundly disquieting effect upon many who wished to remain faithful. Books like D. F. Strauss's *Leben Jesu* (1835; translated by George Eliot in 1846) and Ernest Renan's *Vie de Jesus* (1863) were part of a large array of scientific and scholarly works attempting primarily to throw more light on the contents of the Bible. In effect, such books weaned a considerable number of
Christians away from beliefs in original sin, redemption, atonement, and the divinity of Jesus.7


Biological and physical scientists, investigating rocks, fossils, and living creatures, were similarly casting in doubt certain Biblical statements, including those on the chronology of the world. As more and more evidence accumulated to relate man to other biological forms, such doctrines as that of special creation increasingly lost their hold on believers. With the appearance of Darwin's ecological and evolutionary studies in the middle of the century, the traditional basis for faith seemed to many impossible to substantiate. Among the most important works on the scientific interpretation of the earth and its creatures were: Sir Charles Lyell's Principles of Geology (1830), Robert Chambers' Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation (1844), Herbert Spencer's The Development Hypothesis (1852) and Progress: Its Law and Cause (1857), and the monumental work of Charles Darwin--On the Origin of Species (1859) and The Descent of Man (1871). Darwin's conclusions
in regard to the origin of species coincided with those of another investigator working independently, Alfred Wallace. Darwin's evolutionary biology, according to which man had merely evolved from lower forms of life, was taken up and presented in a cogent fashion to the general public by Thomas Huxley and Herbert Spencer. Thanks, in large measure, to the efforts of these two, Darwin's scientific explanations came to influence Victorian thinking more profoundly than the work of almost any other individual of that period.8

Ironically enough, in view of the results of his theory of evolution on popular thought, Darwin was an avowed believer in Christianity, although Huxley and Spencer were not.

The Establishment was obliged to contend with warring elements within and anti-Anglican or anti-religious elements without. Three intra-Church factions now contended for power: 1. the reformist and "purifying" Low Church party (the term "Low Church" is used rather loosely), composed of Evangelicals, 2. the philosophically liberal Broad Church party, and 3. the rigid High Church party, with its conflicting "Church and State" and "Orthodox" (quasi-Catholic) subdivisions. Yet religious issues were far from clear-cut, and the Establishment was theoretically
flexible enough to accommodate practically every shade of belief.

From the end of the eighteenth century the Evangelical movement, working partially with the Established Church (or what may be called the Low Church party of the Established Church) and partially with the Dissenters, attempted to provide ecclesiastical reform. The movement emphasized simple worship as opposed to elaborate Anglican ritual, and the literal interpretation of Scripture rather than complicated Anglican doctrines. Private judgment was greatly encouraged. The individual was believed to be directly inspired by God, needing no massive Church organization to show him the way to Divine Truth.

The Broad Church party had been influenced greatly by the writings of Coleridge, who, ironically, had gone from Unitarianism to a kind of neo-Platonism, and while retaining his unorthodox beliefs, had developed an abstract philosophy of a National Church. The rather amorphous Broad Church party, composed of individuals like Thomas Arnold, J. C. Hare, and Benjamin Jowett, had some affinity with progressive theologians like F. D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley, who were opposed to narrow views of Christianity and who wanted the Church to take into account the scientific and sociological developments of the age. Far more than the Evangelical-Low Church group, they emphasized pri-
vate judgment, extending the range of this faculty to cover diversified secular matters. So great at this time was the opposition of more orthodox Churchmen to the implications of contemporary science\(^9\) that men like Jowett and Bishop

\(\text{\textsuperscript{9}}\)The failure of the Anglican Church to agree upon a philosophical system for reconciling traditional religion with modern science led, indirectly, to such inadequate and ineffectual attempts as the "natural theology" arguments of Paley and Buckland. God's existence was demonstrated on the basis of natural phenomena. Cf. William Paley, *View of the Evidences of Christianity* (1794) and *Natural Theology* (1802), and William Buckland, *Geology and Mineralogy* (1836).

Colenso, who dared to publish scientific interpretations of the Bible, found themselves not only under severe censure but also on trial in ecclesiastical courts. Biblical textual criticism and scientific formulations like Darwin's *Origin of Species*, feared by the orthodox, were generally faced boldly by the Broad Church party.

The High Church party, traditionally closer to Rome than any other group within the Establishment, included some whose religious concern centered in the Church as a national religious institution and some whose religious concern centered in the Church as a purely spiritual—Catholic and Apostolic—institution. In 1853 a strong impetus to counteract the liberalizing, latitudinarian influences within the Church was provided by the Assize Sermon of John
Keble, a Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. Keble charged that State interference in the regulation of Church affairs was an indication of National Apostasy. He was soon joined by two other like-minded "Orthodox" Fellows of Oriel, John Henry Newman and Hurrell Froude. Emphasizing, in a series of tracts (Tracts for the Times), the importance of Church organization, doctrine, and ritual, and the roots of the Anglican Church in antiquity, they attempted to take English Christianity out of the realm of government interference and modern Evangelistic or rationalistic interpretation. The Oxford Movement, as this campaign was called, gained a wide following (Froude died in 1836, but another prominent Fellow of Oriel, Edward Pusey, later joined the group). It forced many thoughtful Christians to re-examine their beliefs and practices. A number of Tractarians (members of the Movement), following the logical implications of their philosophy, went over to the Church of Rome (Newman, the most famous of these, in 1845). Those who remained ceased, after the 1840's, to constitute an organized group, but their influence was responsible for the widespread revival of interest in doctrines, rituals, vestments, and clerical offices within the Anglican Church. Violent controversy in regard to such matters as these persisted between the High Church party and that of the Broad Church. While the liberalizing tendencies of the latter,
and such individualists as F. D. Maurice succeeded in replacing some of the traditional formalism of Anglicanism with more direct expressions of religious worship, the High Church party managed at the same time to strengthen its position. It is difficult to say where victory lay, as the century drew to a close, unless with the ever-increasing numbers of sceptics or heterodox Christians who felt no further need for institutional religion.10

10 A strong case is made for some measure of victory on the part of the High Church party. Thus Henry Offley Wackman, in his An Introduction to the History of the Church of England, ed. S. L. Collard, 8th ed. (London: Rivingtons, 1914), states (p. 481): "During the five-and-twenty years 1872-1897, the High Church revival became the dominant force in the Church of England." Yet the preceding statement is as follows: "It seems probable that by far the greater part of the irreligion which now exists among educated as well as uneducated people has its roots in the tendency of the age to rid itself of discipline, far more than in honest intellectual doubt." The consensus appears to be that party lines from the later nineteenth century onward are not of major importance. Cf. Edward William Watson, The Church of England, 2d ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1944), p. 165; and Cecilia M. Ady, The English Church and how it works (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1940), pp. 195-196.

In summation, the Established Church, having awakened from what might be called its slumber of the eighteenth century, found many of its sheep strayed and unable to return to the fold, and others within the fold disinclined to be the same tractable sheep their ancestors had been. The
creatures had become imbued (or, some would say, infected) with the deism and scientific rationalism that had slowly been filling the air, and now found the traditional kind of sheepfold quite unsuited to their needs. Some, not believing in the application of "modern" ideas to what they considered a universal and timeless institution, attempted to preserve the old ways. But in time a number of contented ones within the fold began to exert considerable influence, and the fold became more accommodating; many were therefore enabled to crowd within it who would otherwise have been strays. Despite this subtle readjustment of the boundaries of the Established sheepfold, however, many within it were vulnerable to marauding fears and doubts. A number, in other, smaller sheepfolds, also did not appear entirely reassured. Perplexing questions began to be asked more and more frequently. Could the Established sheepfold, or any sheepfold, for that matter, guarantee one communication with God, the Shepherd? If not, how could living outside a sheepfold do so, and yet, why continue to live in one? And another question arose to compound their vexation. How could there be any meaningful communication between members of the flock if they were unable to communicate with God? A few who could no longer accept the old ways were not troubled by this last difficulty; they concerned themselves with immediate problems, such as the needs of their fellow
creatures. The others, disoriented and isolated from one another, could find no shelter anywhere from what they considered to be the storm-cloud and plague-wind that had gradually crept over them.

It will be helpful at this point to observe a number of representative views illustrating the feeling of isolation which resulted from this uncertainty of belief or loss of religious faith. Although these examples are brief and only suggestive at best, they reveal the underlying anxiety and spiritual insecurity of many Victorian writers and, in effect, of the age itself.

Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1830-1831), his spiritual autobiography, deals, among other things, with the vindication of belief in self as a product of Divine creation. Purpose and significance in life were to be found through the fulfillment of duty: by work and obedience the self was to play its role in the Divine plan. Carlyle had arrived at this conclusion through considerable deliberation and study. Having discarded the external forms of the Scotch Calvinism of his youth, he retained certain underlying notions about what was expected by God of man. To these vestiges he added in the course of time certain neo-Platonic elements of German transcendentalism, and adduced a new basis for faith independent of any Christian theological system. One of the best-known chapters of *Sartor,*
"The Everlasting No," describes his early spiritual torments in a mechanistic world without a God he could relate himself to.

Alas, the fearful Unbelief is unbelief in yourself; and how could I believe? Had not my first, last Faith in myself, when even to me the Heavens seemed laid open, and I dared to love, been all-too cruelly belied? The speculative Mystery of Life grew ever more mysterious to me: neither in the practical Mystery had I made the slightest progress, but been everywhere buffeted, foiled, and contemptuously cast out. A feeble unit in the middle of a threatening Infinitude, I seemed to have nothing given me but eyes, whereby to discern my own wretchedness. Invisible yet impenetrable walls, as of Enchantment, divided me from all living: was there, in the wide world, any true bosom I could press trustfully to mine? O Heaven, No, there was none! I kept a look upon my lips: why should I speak much with that shifting variety of so-called Friends, in whose withered, vain and too-hungry souls Friendship was but an incredible tradition? In such cases, your recourse is to talk little, and that little mostly from the Newspapers. Now when I look back, it was a strange isolation I then lived in. The men and women around me, even speaking with me, were but Figures; I had, practically, forgotten that they were alive, that they were not merely automatic. In the midst of their crowded streets and assemblages, I walked solitary; and (except as it were my own heart, not another's, that I kept devouring) savage also, as the tiger in his jungle. Some comfort it would have been, could I, like a Faust, have fancied myself tempted and tormented of the Devil; for a Hell, as I imagine, without Life, though only diabolic Life, were more frightful: but in our age of Down-pulling and Disbelief, the very Devil has been pulled down, you cannot so much as believe in a Devil. To me the Universe was all void of Life, of Purpose, of Volition, even of Hostility: it was one huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine, rolling on, in its dead indifference, to grind me limb from limb.
Not long after this occurred Carlyle's (and Teufelsdröckh's) famous conversion. This conversion did not involve a particular institutionalized faith, but, in Harrold's words (p. 166), "It was merely the regaining of a sense of inner resources, of the mystery of consciousness and freedom, with which to front an apparently mechanical and hostile world."

Tennyson's "In Memoriam" (1850), a tribute to his dead friend and companion Arthur Hallam, deals more with his grief at no longer being with Hallam than it does with uncertainty of belief, a problem Tennyson generally was able to handle somehow. Certain stanzas, however, reveal in striking fashion the sense of painful doubt and insecurity resulting from the wavering from traditional religious faith. (By the end of the long poem Tennyson has managed to resolve his grief and his spiritual vacillation.) In stanza fifty-four this unpleasant mood, blended with a feeling of isolation through physical helplessness, is conveyed by means of a striking image:

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;
That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shriveled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last--far off--at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream; but what am I?
An infant crying in the night;
An infant crying for the light;
And with no language but a cry.

Of the numerous uncertainty-of-belief references in
Arnold, his poem "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse"
(1855) may be cited as one of the most poignant. A loyal
adherent to the Establishment, a fervent pleader for na-
tion-wide conformity (see Culture and Anarchy, 1869), Ar-
<style>text-transform: capitalize</style>rnold nevertheless continued and extended his father's ten-
dency toward scepticism. In this poem Arnold's own shat-
tered faith is compared with what he considers to be the
outmoded faith of the Carthusian monks, whose monastery
(the Grande Chartreuse) he had visited earlier. He and the
monks are cut off from their fellow men, isolated, because
of their religious needs, in a world of unfaith:

Wandering between two worlds, one dead
The other powerless to be born,
With nowhere yet to rest my head,
Like these, on earth I wait forlorn.
Their faith, my tears, the world deride--
I come to shed them at their side.
Arnold's friend, Arthur Clough, no less desirous of an acceptable source of religious conviction, was far more deeply affected by his inability to believe in the traditional Christian doctrines. Less willing to compromise than many "believers" of his time, Clough bravely faced the consequences of his convictions. For example, he resigned a Fellowship at Oriel College in 1847 because he could no longer subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles.¹² One of his most sceptical (and yet religious) poems, "Easter Day" (1869), describes the conflict he felt twenty years before on Easter Day in Naples. "Christ is not risen!" he had told himself:

So in the sinful streets, abstracted and alone,  
I with my secret self held communing of mine own.  
So in the southern city spake the tongue  
Of one that somewhat overwildly sung,  
But in a later hour I sat and heard  
Another voice that spake—another graver word.  
Weep not, it bade, whatever hath been said,  
Though He be dead, He is not dead.  
In the true creed  
He is yet risen indeed;  
Christ is yet risen.

Probably the most despairing and soul-shattered work of the entire age is James Thomson's "The City of Dreadful
Night" (1874). Neurotic and prone to alcohol though he was, Thomson managed to convey in a highly intelligible fashion the negativism and loss of faith in God, man, and self that was the end-point of Victorian secularism and materialism. Despite its complete hopelessness and denial of everything but death, the poem won the admiration of a number of people, including such positive-minded individuals as George Eliot and George Meredith. The "Proem" of "The City" hints at the sort of material that will be developed at length in the poem:

Surely I write not for the hopeful young,  
Or those who deem their happiness of worth,  
Or such as pasture and grow fat among  
The shows of life and feel nor doubt nor dearth,  
Or pious spirits with a God above them  
To sanctify and glorify and love them,  
Or sages who foresee a heaven on earth.  
For none of these I write, and none of these  
Could read the writing if they deigned to try:  
So may they flourish, in their due degrees,  
On our sweet earth and in their unplaced sky.  
If any cares for the weak words here written,  
It must be some one desolate, Fate-smitten,  
Whose faith and hope are dead, and who would die.

Gerard Manley Hopkins, an Anglican who had been influenced at Oxford by the liberal-minded Jowett and the orthodox-minded Fusey, entered the Roman Catholic Church while in his twenties. Not long after his conversion he began studying for admission into the Jesuit order and, following
the completion of his preparations, devoted the remainder of his life to the Society of Jesus. Hopkins' spiritual uncertainties were never so great as to cause him to leave the order or the Catholic Church, but they caused him a certain amount of distress. (Probably another factor in Hopkins' mental strife was the arduous self-denial imposed on him by his priestly calling.) The sonnet known as "Car­riorion Comfort" presents a memorable description of his wrestling with despair. Another sonnet, also written between 1685 and 1687, when he was serving in Ireland, reveals his loneliness and isolation in a land and in a faith far removed from those of his loved ones:

To seem the stranger lies my lot, my life
Among strangers. Father and mother dear,
Brothers and sisters are in Christ not near
And he my peace my parting, sword and strife.

England, whose honour O all my heart woos, wife
To my creating thought, would neither hear
Me, were I pleading, plead nor do I: I wear-
y of idle a being but by where wars are rife.

I am in Ireland now; now I am at a third
Remove. Not but in all removes I can
Kind love both give and get. Only what word
Wisest my heart breeds dark heaven's baffling ban
Bars or hell's spell thwarts. This to hoard un-
heard,
Heard unheeded, leaves me a lonely began.

Some individuals, on the other hand, were isolated because (among other Reasons) their views were not understood or were much at variance with prevailing beliefs. As a
convert to Roman Catholicism, John Henry Newman was isolated from his former associates in the Established Church and somewhat isolated even from Catholic authorities. For many years he provoked his superiors by his individualistic interpretations of Catholic doctrine. It was not until

13Newman's theological individualism may be observed in his opposition to the definition of the dogma of Papal Infallibility. For an elaborate treatment of this matter, see Frank Leslie Cross, John Henry Newman (London: Philip Allan, 1933), Chapter X: "Newman and the Vatican Council," pp. 145-156. On Newman's interpretation of the dogma of Immaculate Conception, see Charles Frederick Harrold, John Henry Newman (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., Inc., 1945), pp. 205-206. (Like Paul before his conversion, Newman had once been violently antagonistic to the representatives of the faith he was later to adopt.)

the publication of his spiritual autobiography, Apologia pro Vita Sua, in 1864, that Newman won the respect of the British Protestant public. Such unswerving members of the High Church party at Oxford as Edward Pusey and Charles Dodgson became, by the 1870's, estranged from many of their fellow Anglicans, the liberal theology of the Broad Church party having come to dominate the Establishment.14

14Dodgson's recent biographer, Alexander L. Taylor, points out that the mathematician-author, a lifelong conservative in all matters, had had his orthodoxy seriously shaken in the late 1850's by the current questionings of traditional religious beliefs. He also calls attention to Dodgson's admission (in the preface to Pillow Problems, written late in his life) that he is susceptible to scepti-
ocal thoughts "which seem for the moment to uproot the firm-

Finally, it must be pointed out that a number of Victorians remained self-confident and energetic without any commitment to Christianity; for example, George Eliot, Herbert Spencer, Charles Swinburne, Thomas Huxley, Samuel Butler, William Morris, George Meredith, Walter Pater, and, in fact, many of the workingmen in the cities and towns. John Ruskin, like a number of the prominent sceptics a product of a very religious home, in his adult life retained a belief in God while rejecting the formalism and doctrine of institutionalized religion.15 John Stuart Mill, one of the few

15Ruskin's religious views are traced in the important biography by R. H. Wilenski, John Ruskin (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1933). See "Ruskin's Religion," pp. 329 - 356. A brief summary of his faith (somewhat comparable with Wilenski's summary, p. 356) is given on p. 412 of the recent, definitive biography of Ruskin by Joan Evans: John Ruskin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954). After mentioning the strict Bible evangelicalism of his childhood, a wider belief that brought him close to Rome, an Agnostic Deism, a Franciscan Christianity, and, finally, a return to "the Bible study of his youth," Miss Evans says:

His constant belief in God is the one clear and unbroken thread that runs through all his religious thought; but it was so spontaneous, so natural, and, it must be added, so much a part of the civilization of his day, that it could provide no basis for a religious system of his own,
though it inspired his own view of art and politics.

Victorians brought up with no religion whatever, remained a nonbeliever for most of his life, but developed a deep interest in the figure of Jesus. In his posthumously published *Three Essays on Religion* (1874) he exhibited a bewildering variety of beliefs—theistic, deistic, Manichean, empiric, etc.\(^\text{16}\)

\(^{16}\)An elaborate study of Mill's theology in relation to the ideas current in his day is given in Leslie Stephen, *The English Utilitarians*, 3 Vols. (1900) (New York: Peter Smith, 1950), Vol. III: John Stuart Mill, pp. 432-452. Other contemporary theological and philosophical views are also treated in this life of Mill.

Thus far in our brief analysis of Victorian isolation we have considered religious matters—the influence upon belief of scientific discoveries and sectarianism within and without the Established Church. But a vast complex of social, economic, and political changes underlay the transformation from a rather complacent acceptance of High Church Anglicanism (with a smattering of deism) in the earlier eighteenth century to a widespread liberalizing of belief and lessening of control by religious authority in the later nineteenth century. At bottom, perhaps, most of the circumstances with which Victorian England (or England of
any period) had to deal originated in social factors. Les­
lie Stephen, in his introduction to the study of the Eng­
ish Utilitarians, indicated something of this view:

The cause of the great religious as well as of
the great political revolutions must be sought
mainly in the social history. New creeds spread
when they satisfy the instincts or the passions
roused to activity by other causes. The system
has to be so far true as to be credible at the
time; but its vitality depends upon its congeni­
ality as a whole to the aspirations of the mass
of mankind.17

17Leslie Stephen, The English Utilitarians, Vol. I:
Jeremy Bentham, p. 6.

A greater commitment to this position is made by a profes­
sor of Victorian literature in a recent study of Victorian
"prophets" (Carlyle, Arnold, Ruskin, James Thomson, Dante
Rossetti, Wilde):

Important as was the problem of adjustment to
the breakdown of religious belief in the nine­
teenth century, its role was generally secondary,
not primary. The main problem was one of social
relationships, not of beliefs. It was because
the problem of belief concealed a problem of so­
cial relationships that it often appeared of pri­
mary significance. Traditionally, religious be­
lief had prescribed and clarified all personal
and social relationships, answered all ques­
tions, defined all possible goals. It was to be
expected, therefore, that when compelled to aban­
don belief, men should endeavor to construct a
social philosophy to furnish a new framework for
personal adjustment.18
While the Church remained comfortable and complacent in the eighteenth century, the society which largely supported it, and which it, in turn, played an important part in regulating, began to show signs of serious instability. "Exploitation, resentment and mutual suspicion," according to Trevelyan's history of the period, "interrupted the harmony of classes which had so long been the mark of Eighteenth Century life." A number of profound changes were taking place in the nation, and it was to be expected that they would exercise different effects on different strata of society. First, the population was increasing rapidly. In 1721, for example, the population of Great Britain was between six and seven million, and by 1821 it had reached fourteen million. While the nobles, landed gentry, and wealthy mercantile class could always accommodate large households, the great numbers of small farmers, nonfarming tenants, and agricultural laborers found it harder and
harder to support their families on slender incomes that would almost certainly remain at a low level. Second, open fields and common wastes, for well over a century at the disposal of the poorer agricultural classes, were systematically enclosed by Parliamentary acts so that the wealthy landowners could grow more corn. Third, the Industrial

20 These enclosures dated from around the middle of the eighteenth century through the first four decades of the nineteenth. Enclosures had been known in the thirteenth century, and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when sheep raising was carried out on a large scale, the practice of enclosing common land (to the great detriment of the agricultural families) was widespread. Considerable common land had remained, however, up to the latter period of George II's reign. See Trevelyan, pp. 141-146, and W. P. Hall, R. G. Albion, and J. B. Pope, A History of England and the British Empire (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1937), pp. 243-244, 486-488. Oliver Goldsmith's "The Deserted Village" (1770) is frequently quoted by commentators on the enclosure acts:

Where then, ah! where, shall poverty reside,  
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?  
If to some common's fenceless limits strayed,  
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,  
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,  
And even the bare-worn common is denied.

Revolution (c. 1764-c. 1820), accentuating earlier technical developments in textile manufacture, the smelting of iron, and the use of the steam engine (which dated from 1705), shifted the nation's primary energies from agriculture to industry and commerce. Even many of those employed in nonagricultural pursuits were adversely affected. The
breakdown of the medieval guild system over two centuries before had extended manual industry to the smaller communi-
ties, but there was now a decided shift away from domestic and rural technical enterprise. Home crafts, such as weav-
ing and spinning, and village trades, such as tailoring, brewing, and vehicle-making, were taken over more and more by manufacturing centers in large cities.

As a result of all these developments, not only were large numbers of humble rural dwellers deprived of their accustomed livelihoods, but they were obliged to seek em-
ployment in the crowded and rapidly expanding manufactur-
ing, coal-mining, and shipping centers—Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Sheffield, Liverpool, Newcastle, and others. Bad as conditions had been in the country, with its greatly restricted opportunities, in the flourishing industrial and commercial centers conditions were far worse. Inhuman abuse of women and children in the coal mines and factories,

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Coal mining was an ancient industry in Great Britain, but by this time it was becoming far more difficult to ex-
tract the coal from the ground. Earlier, coal deposits had been found near the surface, but this supply was to a large extent exhausted. As more coal was needed for the nation's greatly expanding economy, mine shafts were sinking lower and lower into the earth's bowels, where other sources of coal were located.

and unrewarding, arduous toil for the men as well were only
part of the great hardships many of the migratory laborers faced. Overcrowded, unhealthy living quarters, lack of opportunity to enjoy the fruits of labor or the pleasures of the city, and an outlook for the future modelled on the worst features of the present—these were the elements of daily living for large numbers of rootless, socially isolated people in a progressive nation rapidly becoming industrialized. Those who did not succumb to the physical illnesses attendant upon working in the mines and factories might readily fall prey to vice, crime, and debauchery—social illnesses to which poor and uneducated people thrust closely together in unfamiliar surroundings are particularly susceptible. From 1795 onward the needy who could not earn enough to live had their wages supplemented by a kind of parish dole, to the satisfaction of the wealthy employers and the disgust of the less well-to-do ratepayers. This degrading and otherwise unsatisfactory method of poor relief was hardly worse than its successor, provided by the Poor Law of 1834. The new measure set up workhouses, designedly so unappealing that the poor would be discouraged from having recourse to them.  

22An interesting survey of the problem of pauperism at the end of the eighteenth century is given in Stephen's *Jeremy Bentham*, pp. 87-99.
The evils of the ancien régime in feudal eighteenth-century Europe—oppressive absolutism in government, privilege and property for the very few, and corruption among political and religious authorities—were reflected only dimly in England. A nation of freemen with a long tradition of Parliamentary government, a strong penchant for developing natural resources, trade, and commerce, and invitingly penetrable social barriers, England was in no real danger of a radical uprising like the one that arose in France in 1789. Moreover, England had experienced the reorganizations of the Commonwealth and the Protectorate, from 1649 to 1660, and those of the Glorious (and bloodless) Revolution, in 1688, and was thus in a sense immunized against a violent overthrow of government.

Reform in England was another matter. From the 1780's onward there were movements to grant civic rights to Protestant Dissenters and Catholics and to provide for better Parliamentary representation of the small farmers. Tom Paine, following earlier contemporary crusaders for democracy and the "Rights of Man," attacked the British institutions of inherited privilege, speaking out boldly for the rights and needs of the people. Conservative forces—within the Establishment, within Parliament, within the people themselves—prevented these sentiments from taking root and bearing fruit. Only minor improvements in the 'state of
England's were made. Edmund Burke, the greatest spokesman for the conservation of existing institutions and traditions, was responsible for reducing one of the important abuses. His Economic Reform Bill of 1782 eliminated some of the notorious corruption in Parliament (under George III, supporters of the king's policies had been planted in the House of Commons). This "packing" of Commons, however, was as nothing compared with the glaring injustice of Commons' customary composition—members of the wealthy landowner class elected from an aggregation of boroughs many of which had become rotten (i.e., had greater Parliamentary representation than their populations entitled them to).

Despite a growing awareness of the need for various reforms, and despite the outspoken literary and journalistic efforts of Paine and such other writers as William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft (an ancestor of the new "emancipated women" of the later nineteenth century), improvements were slow in coming. The bloody excesses of the French Revolution and France's wars with her neighbors, including England, were in large measure instrumental in making many Englishmen, in government and out of it, suspicious of large-scale social reform of the French variety. The Romantics Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey were among those who lost their faith in Revolutionary France. Less idealistic individuals with vested interests could always decry
the mild domestic agitation as Jacobinism (i.e., French Revolutionary thought), and, therefore, not to be tolerated in England. Harsh repressive measures, some at the instigation of the inconsistent Prime Minister William Pitt the younger (who, until around 1793 had advocated reform), turned the clock of social progress backward. Those who now publicly advocated Parliamentary reform were prosecuted, the habeas corpus act was suspended, and wage earners were prohibited from forming trade unions or otherwise combining. Thus, although the Englishman was supposedly protected and given a place in society by virtue of the hallowed land tenure system, many citizens were now deprived of certain civil rights and isolated from their peers and superiors in the (allegedly) well-knit social hierarchy.

During the period of French militaristic expansion in Europe, from the 1790's to Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in 1815, factional disagreements in increasingly industrialized England were somewhat subdued. In the years preceding the first of the three great nineteenth-century Reform
Bills, that of 1832, the differences began to be more evident. The Tories, who opposed change, desired to keep Parliament in the hands of the landowners. The Whigs, partly allied with the landowners, were more inclined toward Parliamentary reform (extension of the franchise and elimination of rotten boroughs). The Radicals, representing the growing ambitions of the nonvoting classes, sought relief from the economic and political oppression which kept poorer Englishmen unrepresented in Parliament and at the mercy of large landowners and factory operators. The "Philosophical Radicals," or Utilitarians, under the leadership of the abstract theoretician Jeremy Bentham, advocated a different kind of reform, a reform of Parliamentary legislation whereby the government would stop interfering with trade and commerce and would leave those entrepreneurs who

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24 Radical leaders such as Francis Place, "Orator" Hunt, Richard Owen, and William Cobbett were popular orators (Cobbett was a journalist) and mobilizers of public opinion.

25 The passing of the Corn Law in 1815, prohibiting the import of corn until the price on the home market reached eighty shillings a quarter, worked great hardship on rural and urban laborers and, to a certain extent, on the manufacturers. In 1846, after considerable anti-Corn Law agitation, the law was repealed.
controlled the nation's industry and commerce to carry out their business in their own way. Only if this "laissez-faire" policy were carried out, the Utilitarians felt, would the *sumnum bonum*, the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people, be obtained.

Underlying this factionalism, in which the masses of poor, unorganized, and unenlightened workers had little voice, was a profound conflict of interests, in effect a three-sided struggle between two giants and a dwarf. The giants were the landed aristocracy, in control of Parliament, and the increasingly powerful mercantile interests; the dwarf was the aggregate of propertyless workers, the (to borrow a contemporary term) "shirtless ones." In numerical size, of course, the latter was the giant and the two former elements the dwarves, but at this point in England's history group numbers alone could not exert much influence.

The landed interests in Parliament had traditionally favored a mercantilist economy for the nation, according to which the government could regulate production, prices, wages, and imports. The object was to accumulate a surplus of metallic currency and so direct the nation's trade, commerce, and industry that Great Britain would be as economically powerful and secure from unfavorable market conditions as possible. The rising mercantile class, opposed to
the governmental policy of mercantilism, enjoyed the bright prospect of large-scale industrial expansion and greatly increased markets, domestic and foreign (including colonial). The members of this class favored a lifting of governmental restrictions insofar as these interfered with their freedom to decide what were the most profitable methods of production, distribution, and business diplomacy with other nations and individuals.\textsuperscript{26} The philosophical

\textsuperscript{26}Certain important governmental controls on the nation's economy were not lifted until the middle of the century. The Corn Law (which restricted the importation of corn), for example, was repealed in 1846. As for the Navigation Acts giving British shipping a monopoly in British ports, according to Trevelyan (p. 166), "The process of abolishing the Navigation Acts was completed during the later period when Free Trade was the accepted national policy, and when the remainder of the protective tariffs were abolished\textsuperscript{[1846].}"

basis for what "laissez-faire" program (in trade and other matters) the government had was provided by Adam Smith's \textit{The Wealth of Nations} (1776), the writings of David Ricardo (a follower of Smith), Thomas Malthus (a Whig clergyman who warned of overpopulation in connection with limited food supply), and the Utilitarians. The Utilitarians, who were very influential in the formulation of new legislative policy, were thus not "radical" reformers, like those who advocated government by the people and greatly improved work-
ing conditions for labor. Bentham and his group (as well as Ricardo and Malthus), in fact, were concerned with efficient management of the nation by those in power, not with social reform generally (although Bentham was interested in improving prisons). (Some years later such descendants of the early Utilitarians as John Stuart Mill began to advocate popular reform measures, some involving government intervention.) Thus, although the mercantilist school of thought and the "laissez-faire" school did not represent a simple Whig-Tory dichotomy, their differences typified 

27The Whigs were not entirely opposed to mercantilism, and the Utilitarians really belonged to no party, although for a time their relations with the Whigs were cordial. The most complicating factor is the fact that there were liberal and conservative factions among both the Whigs and the Tories.

the two major points of view in Parliament, in regard to economic and related matters. The great numbers of laboring poor, isolated from their employers and, in effect, from themselves, had to be content to put their faith in neither party, but wait and work for better days. Repressions and indignities like the "Peterloo Massacre"28 indicated that

28In 1819 a large crowd of workers in St. Peter's Fields, Manchester, met to hear the Radical leader "Orator" Hunt discuss universal suffrage. The local magistrates, unwilling to have this sort of mass agitation go on, called
out the yeoman cavalry, who killed eleven and wounded several hundred of the audience. Following this "Peterloo Massacre," the Tory government in power put into effect the notorious Six Acts, which so restricted speech and action (on the part of the lower classes) that any dissemination of ideas contrary to those of the existing government became illegal.

those times were not yet near.

From the 1820's onward, the stifling effects of the vested agricultural and mercantile interests upon the underprivileged classes began to abate. Countertendencies inspired by conservative and reactionary elements, in and out of government, were never absent, but as time went by these movements lost more and more of their force. A brief survey of some of the more important legislation beginning with the repeal of the Combination Acts in 1824 will illustrate the rapidly accelerating trend toward government by the people (most of them workers) in contradistinction to the traditional mode of government by the landed aristocracy. (The increasing trend toward government by the people did not indicate a parallel trend toward social unity; English society was undergoing too great a reorganization for the Englishman to feel that he "knew where he stood" in what was no longer a fixed social order.)

In 1824 the Combination Acts, which made working-class organizations illegal, were repealed. The repeal bill was "engineered" through Parliament by Francis Place, the "Rad-
ical tailor," and his agent Joseph Hume, who occupied a seat in Parliament. Four years later the Test Act, which prevented non-Anglican Christians from holding office, was repealed, and the following year, with the passage of the Catholic Emancipation Act, Catholics were no longer barred from sitting in either House of Parliament. In 1832 the Jews were not admitted to Parliament until 1858.

first of the three great nineteenth-century Parliamentary Reform Bills was passed. Between 1832 and 1884-1885, when the third measure was enacted, the voting population enlarged from one adult male out of thirty to four out of five adult males. Moreover, the numerous rotten-borough seats in Parliament, a bar to effective government, were steadily reduced. In 1832 the voting qualifications still emphasized the holding of property. By extending the vote only to the £10 town householders, the £10 copyholders and long leaseholders, and the £50 short leaseholders and ten-
ants-at-will in the counties, Parliament preserved the principle of government by those with a vested interest in the nation's resources. Thirty-five years later the second Reform Bill (the only one of the three to be passed by a Conservative—i.e., latter-day Tory—ministry), sharply reduced property qualifications for voting, thereby enfranchising more than half of the adult males. Now, with the extension of the vote to artisans and more well-to-do town workers, and the further redistribution of seats to restrict the influence of rotten boroughs, the democratizing effects of reform legislation were beginning to be felt in earnest. This, however, was not to the liking of the privileged representatives of the old order, who felt like isolated defenders of a crumbling fortress. The third Reform Bill, passed in 1884, made household suffrage available to the counties—agricultural laborers and mine workers, previously excluded, were now enfranchised. A supplementary bill, passed in 1885, restricted even further than had previously been done Parliamentary representation from the small towns. Many recently enfranchised voters, unenlightened as to their new civic duties and responsibilities, were hardly less isolated from society at large than the wealthy landowners (or landholders) whose votes no longer determined the policy of the nation.

Other legislative measures granted more and more of
the general public's physical (if not psychological or spiritual) needs. In 1833 public funds were first made available for education, and the first effective Factory Act was passed, establishing legal limits for the working hours of children and young persons. (Other important acts improving conditions in factories and mines were passed between 1842 and 1891.) In 1835 an efficient system of prison inspection was instituted, and in the same year, with the passage of the Municipal Reform Act, borough councils elected by the ratepayers were established. In 1846, as I have indicated, the Corn Law was repealed, thus giving the poor agricultural workers (those most vulnerable to its effects) some measure of protection against widely fluctuating prices of domestic corn. In 1869, the Debtors Act forbade imprisonment for debt. The following year public elementary education was established, and in 1871 religious tests at Oxford and Cambridge were abolished, thus making it possible for non-Anglicans, who had previously been denied admission to the two greatest universities in the nation, to attend them. In 1872 voting was made secret, thereby eliminating much of the abuse that had been perpetrated during elections, by virtue of the opportunities for coercing voters as they publicly indicated their preferences. Acts passed during 1875-1876 granted various legal rights (including the right to peaceful picketing) to trade
unions, and in 1882, with the passage of the Married Women's Property Act, married women were allowed rights to private property equal with rights enjoyed by their husbands.

This progressive legislation reflected the will of the great masses of underprivileged laborers, slowly being given material and civic benefits, and slowly learning to strive together for a common purpose. From at least the time of the Napoleonic wars the nation had witnessed huge mass movements, some of them far from peaceful, betokening the latent power and overt aims of the lower classes. Some years before the "Peterloo Massacre," dissatisfied handicraft workers in Lancashire, Yorkshire, and elsewhere destroyed machinery and burned mills in a series of violent demonstrations against what they considered injustices on the part of the manufacturers. Once trade unions were no longer illegal (1824), labor organizations began exerting pressure on the authorities for better working conditions and greater civil rights for workers. In 1836 the reformer William Lovett founded the London Working Men's Association (its members were self-educated artisans), the precursor of what was soon to be a powerful organization seeking a broad extension of workers' rights and privileges. In 1838 he and Francis Place, heading a group called the Chartists (composed of workingmen and members of the lower middle
class), produced a six-point "People's Charter," which they attempted to put through Parliament. This Charter called for universal male suffrage, secret voting, equal electoral districts, abolition of property qualifications for members of Parliament, payment of members of Parliament, and annual general elections. (By 1918 all but the last reform had been enacted.) Although the Chartists affiliated with another workingmen's movement and also joined forces for a time with the Anti-Corn-Law League (organized by the textile manufacturers Richard Cobden and John Bright), they became weakened by ineffective leadership (particularly when Lovett and Place left the movement) and, around 1848, ceased to be an important force. While England was mercifully free from the revolutions that rocked Europe in 1830 and 1848, and from much of the anarchist agitation to which neighboring countries were susceptible, there were a num-

31 Lionel Trilling, in surveying the violence (much of it due to the anarchist movement) of the latter part of the century, calls attention to the fact that "in 1883 there were several dynamite conspiracies in Great Britain and in 1885 there was an explosion in the House of Commons." [Lionel Trilling, "The Princess Casamassima," in The Liberal Imagination (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., Doubleday Anchor Books, 1953), p. 78.]

ber of riots long after workers had won many important concessions from Parliament. Two of the more serious of these
uprisings were the Hyde Park riots of 1866 and the Trafalgar Square riots of 1887. The differences that separated Victorian Englishman from Victorian Englishman thus continued to be felt throughout much of the century.

Enlightened Churchmen like F. D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley, by means of the Christian Socialism movement of the third quarter of the century attempted to provide the sort of education working people would need to become better citizens. But throughout the century the major impetus toward improvement of the condition of the lower classes came from the workingmen themselves. Dissatisfied with an unsympathetic government (earlier in the century) which did not recognize their pressing needs, and which made the condition of poverty a heinous offense (witness the debtors' prisons and the equally prison-like workhouses for the poor), these underprivileged Britons sought from the government further rights and benefits. Most significant of the "self-help" activities of the lower economic classes, gradually becoming enfranchised, was the movement toward consolidation of labor. The year 1866 saw the establishment of another London Working Men's Association, the ancestor of the Labour Party, which was destined to play an increasingly important role in the government after 1900. In 1869 the Trade Union Congress was organized, and the Party was even closer to realization. The solid basis of the Labour
Party was, according to a historian of the period, the growing trade union movement, although the Trade Union Congress was joined, in its creation of the Labour Representation Committee, by the Fabian Society (founded in 1884), the Independent Labour Party (founded in 1893 by Keir Hardie), and the Social Democratic Federation (founded in 1881 by H. M. Hyndman). The Labour Representation Committee, dating from 1900, put up fifty-one candidates in the general elections of 1906 and twenty-nine of them got in. After this victory it changed its name to the Labour Party, and from that time onwards there has always been a Labour Party in Parliament. 

Women were traditionally without many civil and political rights that even the poorest worker took for granted, and sometimes became more cut off from society than the most isolated men. During the nineteenth century, hesitant to speak up and request the privileges of ordinary citizens, they did not make any concerted organized attempts to improve their status. Such benefits as they received—minor ones in regard to educational opportunities and per-

According to Hall, Albion, and Pope (p. 818), "they were admitted to take examinations at the University of London in the late sixties, not long after at Cambridge, and finally at Oxford, where eventually separate colleges were established for them."
sonal property rights for married women (the Married Women's Property Act of 1882)—were not greatly augmented until 1918, when they received the franchise. A few "emancipated women," no longer content to accept woman's traditional role of wife and stewardess, asserted themselves and sought a career and single blessedness instead of marriage and subservience to a husband. Such "emancipation," however, was not proof against social rejection and loneliness.

As the century drew to a close, a mild form of paternalistic socialism developed, particularly under the administration of the municipalities. The seeds of this radically new British institution had actually been sown early in the century by the wealthy manufacturer Robert Owen, whose model community at New Lanark was organized on the basis of an autocratic, yet benevolent, pattern with a mild element of socialism. The Co-operative Movement, founded in 1844 by Chartists, Owenites, and trade-unionists, fostered the development of British socialism, as did the Christian Socialism movement of Maurice and Kingsley. The last two decades of the century saw "municipal socialism" bringing a large number of improvements in the condition of
the working classes. According to Trevelyan (pp. 249-250): "Baths and wash-houses, museums, public libraries, parks, gardens, open spaces, allotments, lodging houses for the working classes were acquired, erected or maintained out of the rates. Tramways, gas, electricity and water were in many places municipalized." But socialism, of whatever variety, related only to governmental functions. Basically, the great masses of people, with their diverse views on what authority consisted of, were not welded together into a well-organized (or well-reorganized) whole.

In summation, the British government, which had been dominated by landed aristocracy in the first quarter of the century, by the last quarter was very considerably under the influence of the people (that is, the adult male population), and, perhaps as a result, had become mildly so-

35Although Britain's constitutional monarch and House of Lords ought not to be overlooked, space limitations prevent an elaboration of their influence in Victorian England. Until 1876, when Disraeli, as Prime Minister, made Queen Victoria Empress of India, the prestige of the British monarch (during the nineteenth century) had not been high, largely because of the growing democratization of the country. From 1876 onward, however, the monarch, as the head of a great empire, took on new importance. The House of Lords in the nineteenth century retained its traditional prerogative of exercising absolute veto power over bills brought up in the House of Commons. Not until 1911, with the passage of the Parliament Bill, was this power removed, to the great diminution of the legislative authority of the upper house.
cialistic. The profound alteration of social cleavages, of political and economic privileges, which led to this development in government, and the breath-taking developments in science and technology could not fail to have an unsettling effect on the outlook of most Britons. The fact that the traditional religious faith, which had insured spiritual security and a sense of "belonging" to a group (if only of members of the same sect), was rapidly losing its hold only added to the general uneasiness and uncertainty as to how matters stood. The often-repeated platitudes about Victorian complacency and equilibrium through compromise conceal the welter of turbulent emotions and conflicting impulses raging in the breasts of countless hereditary lords, recently enfranchised artisans and tradesmen, partially "emancipated" women, would-be social reformers, and nonaristocratic apologists for the old order. The wheels of progress, rotating far more rapidly than might have been expected, had disrupted the original relationships of rank and station, the original notions of order and the fitness of things. Some individuals were impelled farther and farther away from the hub of what had once been a rigidly organized society; some were drawn closer to the center of the remaining body of institutions. But, given what has aptly been called the centrifugal and centripetal tendencies of the age, there was widespread fragmentation, a gen-
eralized feeling of estrangement from one's fellow creatures of whatever rank or relationship. Thus it is not surprising that the theme of isolation (social as well as spiritual), however openly or covertly it may have been treated, is so important a feature of Victorian letters.36

36It is interesting to observe here the comment of the nineteenth-century French observer Alexis de Tocqueville on isolation in the American democracy. An aristocrat writing during the reign of Louis Philippe, de Tocqueville saw a connection between a feeling of unity and the ancien régime, and a further connection between a feeling of isolation and democracy:

Aristocracy had made a chain of all the members of the community, from the peasant to the king; democracy breaks that chain and severs every link of it.

As social conditions become more equal, the number of persons increases who, although they are neither rich nor powerful enough to exercise any great influence over their fellows, have nevertheless acquired or retained sufficient education and fortune to satisfy their own wants. They owe nothing to any man, they expect nothing from any man; they acquire the habit of always considering themselves as standing alone, and they are apt to imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands.

Thus not only does democracy make every man forget his ancestors, but it hides his descendants and separates his contemporaries from him; it throws him back forever upon himself alone and threatens in the end to confine him entirely within the solitude of his own heart.

[Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (1835; 1840), ed. Phillips Bradley, II (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), 99.] While this is suggestive, a recognition of de Tocqueville's aristocratic bias serves as a corrective to a literal acceptance of the observation. The isolation de Tocqueville speaks of (and we may also consider Victorian England in this connection) may be due in large part to the
fact that citizens in a new democracy must undergo a period of adjustment in which they relate themselves in a specific way to the developing needs and institutions of their society. Only until these individuals find the best method for "fitting in" are they likely to be solitary figures. The finality and eternality (if we may coin a term) in the last paragraph of de Toqueville's statement do not appear to be warranted, either for the United States or for post-Victorian England.

A few representative instances of the Victorian's feeling of isolation from the other members of his society may now be presented. (These instances may of course contain overtones of spiritual isolation arising from loss of faith, but that subject has already been treated at some length.)

Charles Dickens portrayed a number of isolated and forlorn characters caught in the grip of massive economic forces, thanks to industrialism and Utilitarian influence in legislation. One of his most isolated figures is Stephen Blackpool in *Hard Times*, alienated from the privileged class upon whom he depended for a livelihood. A poor and scrupulously honest power-loom weaver of mediocre intelligence, Stephen refuses to join his fellow workers in Josiah Bounderby's factory in their proposed labor organization. The reason for this is that he has promised his sweetheart Rachel to avoid the trouble that will inevitably be caused by the workers' uniting against the factory owner. At a meeting of the workers, Stephen is denounced by the dema-
gogic labor organizer for treason to his fellows, and is expelled from the group.

Thus easily did Stephen Blackpool fall into the loneliest of lives, the life of solitude among a familiar crowd. The stranger in the land who looks into ten thousand faces for some answering look and never finds it, is in cheering society as compared with him who passes ten averted faces daily, that were once the countenances of friends. Such experience was to be Stephen's now, in every waking moment of his life; at his work, on his way to it and from it, at his door, at his window, everywhere. By general consent, they even avoided that side of the street on which he habitually walked; and left it, of all the working men, to him only.

He had been for some years, a quiet silent man, associating but little with other men, and used to companionship with his own thoughts. He had never known before the strength of the want in his heart for the frequent recognition of a nod, a look, a word; or the immense amount of relief that had been poured into it by drops through such small means. It was even harder than he could have believed possible, to separate in his own conscience his abandonment by all his fellows from a baseless sense of shame and disgrace.37

37Hard Times, Book the Second, Chapter IV. Voicing his protest against the injustices done to the factory workers, Stephen incurs the wrath of his employer, Bounderby, and is fired. This is all the more serious since Stephen has now acquired a "bad name" (for being "troublesome"), and will be unable to get work in any of the other factories in the community where he has spent his life.

George Eliot, in her short story "Brother Jacob" (1860; 1864), describes the struggles of a member of the lower class to elevate himself beyond the level of his fam-
ily. David Faux is the son of a British yeoman and the 
nephew of a butler. Training for the confectioner's line, 
David feels that this is not really what is best suited to 
his personality. As one who is not at ease in his own 
class and finds no ready access to one that is higher, Da­
vid is cut off off from those around him.

His soul swelled with an impatient sense that he 
ought to become something very remarkable— that 
it was quite out of the question for him to put 
up with a narrow lot as other men did: he 
scoimed the idea that he could accept an average. 
He was sure there was nothing average about him 
... . No position could be suited to Mr. David 
Faux that was not in the highest degree easy to 
the flesh and flattering to the spirit. If he 
had fallen on the present times, and enjoyed the 
advantages of a Mechanics' Institute, he would 
certainly have taken to literature and have writ­
ten reviews; but his education had not been lib­
eral. ... his ideas might not have been below a 
certain mark of the literary calling; but his 
spelling and diction were too unconventional.

When a man is not adequately appreciated or 
comfortably placed in his own country, his 
thoughts naturally turn towards foreign climes; 
and David's imagination circled round and round 
the utmost limits of his geographical knowledge, 
in search of a country where a young gentleman of 
pasty visage, lipless mouth, and stumpy hair, 
would be likely to be received with the hospita­
ble enthusiasm which he had a right to expect... .

38 "Brother Jacob," Chapter I.

Henry James, usually considered with the American nov­
elists, wrote so frequently of the English scene that it
may not be amiss to include him in our sampling. There are so many different types of isolation in the novels and stories of James (himself a rootless "cosmopolitan" in the broad sense) that it is difficult to choose from among them. In The Princess Casamassima (1886), however, James presents a situation that is highly illustrative of the social upheavals that were taking place in Victorian England. Revolution, although it never came, was sometimes not far away, and in this analysis of conspirators representing different social strata James shows some of the forces favoring an actual outbreak. Hyacinth Robinson, one of the leading characters, is a poor young bookbinder—the illegitimate son of an English nobleman and a French harlot—who finds himself proud of the family that will have no part of him, and at the same time sympathetic toward the anarchist cause.

There were times when he said to himself that it might very well be his fate to be divided to the point of torture, to be split open by sympathies that pulled him in different ways; for hadn't he an extraordinarily mingled current in his blood, and from the time he could remember wasn't there one half of him always either playing tricks on the other or getting snubs and pinches from it?39

He sometimes saw the name of his father's kin in
the newspaper, but he then always cast the sheet
away. He had nothing to ask of them and wished
to prove to himself that he could ignore them
(who had been willing to let him die like a rat)
as completely as they ignored him. A thousand
times yes, he was with the people and every pos­
sible vengeance of the people as against such
shameless egoism as that; but all the same he was
happy to feel he had blood in his veins that
would account for the finest sensibilities.40

40Ibid., pp. 156-157.

Alfred Tennyson, a staunch defender of the old order
while he accepted, but only to a limited extent, the
changes that the later nineteenth century was bringing to
England, reveals in his poem "Locksley Hall Sixty Years
After" the isolation of an old man who is losing contact
with the contemporary life of his country. Rightly point­
ing out the social evils that blight the land, he goes fur­
ther and extends his censure to the granting of the fran­
chise to the lower classes. This sort of thing, he seems
to intimate, is as dangerous as the industrial and techni­
cal and psychological progress that have despoiled his
once-proud nation.

You that woo the Voices—tell them "old experi­
ence is a fool,"
Teach your flatter'd kings that only those who
cannot read can rule.

Pluck the mighty from their seat, but set no meek
ones in their place;
Pillory Wisdom in your markets, pelt your offal
at her face.

Tumble Nature heel o'er head, and, yelling with
the yelling street,
Set the feet above the brain and swear the brain
is in the feet.

Bring the old dark ages back without the faith,
without the hope,
Break the State, the Church, the Throne, and roll
their ruins down the slope.

Authors—essayist, atheist, novelist, realist,
rhymester, play your part,
Paint the mortal shame of nature with the living
hues of Art.

Is it well that while we range with Science, glo­
rying in the Time,
City children soak and blacken soul and sense in
city slime?

There among the glooming alleys Progress halts on
palsied feet,
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the thousand
on the street.

There the Master scrimps his haggard sempstress
of her daily bread,
There a single sordid attic holds the living and
the dead.

There the smouldering fire of fever creeps across
the rotted floor,
And the crowded couch of incest in the warrens of
the poor.

Nay, your pardon, cry your "forward," yours are
hope and youth, but I--
Eighty winters leave the dog too lame to follow
with the cry,

Lame and old, and past his time, and passing now
into the night;
Yet I would the rising race were half as eager
for the light.

Light the fading gleam of Even? light the glimmer of the dawn?
Aged eyes may take the glowing glimmer for the gleam withdrawn.⁴¹


Our last example will be drawn from a work of the 1890's. Earlier in the century a number of prominent writers were faced with the problem of deciding what was the proper function of an artist in a society emphasizing business and industry, a society of social, economic, and political transformations.⁴² By the end of the century the

ther through art or through mere sensory experience, led in certain quarters to a kind of decadence of the spirit, an overrefined awareness of the most minute qualities of aesthetic sensation. When carried too far, this might easily lead to the same kind of weltschmerz and isolation from an increasingly more complex materialistic society that afflicted the Romantic poets. Thrown back upon the limited resources of one's own senses, one might become in time actually antisocial, deriving aesthetic gratification from what caused the members of society pain. Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) presents the story of such a man, an elegant, overly fastidious member of high society who attains his wish to remain young and live life to the

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*44* The decadent movement in English art was the final outcome of the romantic movement which began near the dawn of the nineteenth century. It was the mortal ripening of that flower which blossomed upon the ruins of the French Revolution, heralding not only the rights of man, which was an abstraction savouring more of the classic ideal, but the rights of personality, of unique, varied and varying men. (Jackson, p. 56.)
fullest, whatever that might mean.

For, while he fascinated many, there were not a few who distrusted him. He was very nearly black-balled at a West End club of which his birth and social position fully entitled him to become a member, and it was said that on one occasion when he was brought by a friend into the smoking-room of the Churchill, the Duke of Berwick and other gentlemen got up in a marked manner and went out. Curious stories became current about him after he had passed his twenty-fifth year. It was rumoured that he had been seen brawling with foreign sailors in a low den in the distant parts of Whitechapel, and that he consorted with thieves and coiners and knew the mysteries of their trade. His extraordinary absences became notorious, and, when he used to reappear again in society, men would whisper to each other in corners, or pass him with a sneer, or look at him with cold searching eyes, as though they were determined to discover his secret.

Of such insolences and attempted slights he, of course, took no notice, and in the opinion of most people his frank debonair manner, his charming boyish smile, and the infinite grace of that wonderful youth that seemed never to leave him, were in themselves a sufficient answer to the calumnies, for so they termed them, that were circulated about him. It was remarked, however, that some of those who had been most intimate with him appeared, after a time, to shun him. Women who had wildly adored him, and for his sake had braved all social censure and set convention at defiance, were seen to grow pallid with shame or horror if Dorian Gray entered the room.45

45 The Picture of Dorian Gray, Chapter XI.

It is important to point out that while any given example of the modern literary isolate may not be particularly remarkable, the large number of individual cases is ex-
tremely significant as an indication of the widespread social fragmentation process. Hardy appeared to realize this when he wrote, in 1890:

Things move in cycles; dormant principles renew themselves, and exhausted principles are thrust by. There is a revival of the artistic instincts towards great dramatic motives—setting forth that 'collision between the individual and the general'—formerly worked out with such force by the Periclean and Elizabethan dramatists, to name no other. More than this, the periodicity which marks the course of taste in civilized countries does not take the form of a true cycle of repetition, but what Comte, in speaking of general progress, happily characterises as 'a looped orbit': not a movement of revolution but—to use the current word—evolution. Hence, in perceiving that taste is arriving anew at the point of high tragedy, writers are conscious that its revived presentation demands enrichment by further truths—in other words, original treatment: treatment which seeks to show Nature's unconsciousness not of essential laws, but of those laws framed merely as social expedients by humanity, without a basis in the heart of things; treatment which expresses the triumph of the crowd over the hero, of the commonplace majority over the exceptional few.46

46 Thomas Hardy, "Candour in English Fiction" (1890), in Life and Art by Thomas Hardy: Essays, Notes, and Letters Collected for the First Time, ed. Ernest Brennabeke, Jr. (New York: Greenberg Publisher, 1925), pp. 76-77.

Hardy, like many other writers of the time, described a number of isolated or lonely figures in a state of unwholesome separation from their fellow men. To a certain extent there was something of the isolate in Hardy himself.
By nature he was unenergetic (as were the recent generations of his father's family) and overly introspective.\(^{47}\)

\(^{47}\)Hardy scholars have remarked on the apparently autobiographical comment in Chapter VI, Book Second of *The Return of the Native*: "He [Clym Yeobright] already showed that thought is a disease of flesh."

Throughout most of his adult life he led a semi-retired existence, spending seven or eight months each year living quietly in Dorset, composing stories and poems, and keeping up, after a fashion, with the intellectual currents of the time. Like many eminent Victorians, Hardy had lost his religious faith; he regretted the loss and hoped (in vain) to see the institution of a revised, rationalistic Church service which would broaden the foundation for a modern Christian faith. It is not at all probable, as some have argued, that his readings in such pessimistic philosophers as Schopenhauer made him adopt his habitual negative, rather morbid view of life.\(^{48}\) In his earliest poetry (particularly "Hap," written in 1866), as has been pointed out, he

\(^{48}\)This view Hardy called "evolutionary meliorism" and summarized it as follows, using a line in his poem "In Tenesbris: II": "if way to the Better there be, it exacts a full look at the Worst." See his "Apology" to *Late Lyrics and Earlier* (1922) in *Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937), pp. 525-532.
expressed views that are comparable with those in the poetry he wrote at the end of his life.\textsuperscript{49} His life with his

\textsuperscript{49}The best sources of information on Hardy's reading and his intellectual views are found in:

Florence Emily Hardy, \textit{The Early Life of Thomas Hardy: 1840-1891} (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923) and \textit{The Later Years of Thomas Hardy: 1892-1928} (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930). This is the definitive biography of Hardy and was written for the most part by Hardy himself.


first wife (1874-1912) was not happy, apparently as a result of at least three important factors: their temperamental uncongeniality (a persistent theme in Hardy's stories and poems is the fading of love after marriage), their childlessness, and his wife's mental instability. In view of his withdrawn nature, his lack of a positive philosophy, and his unsatisfactory life with the first Mrs. Hardy, Hardy's emphasis on social isolation is not surprising. But it would be too much to say that these factors caused him to write about solitary figures.

The aim of this dissertation is to examine in considerable detail the more important isolates in Hardy's fiction. Why are these individuals not a part of their socie-
ty? How do they get along with other people? What do they do in order to alter their condition of isolation? By inquiring at length into such matters as these it should be possible to throw a certain amount of light on the underlying meaning of Hardy's unique contribution to modern isolation-literature. It should also be possible to get a clearer picture of Hardy as a literary artist and a representative of late Victorian England.

Two preliminary questions must first be answered: 1. Which are the important isolates for this study? 2. What method will be followed in this inquiry?

Hardy's fifteen novels and forty-five stories contain dozens of characters that are not as socially integrated as they would like to be. None of the characters is completely isolated, however—each, no matter how solitary, is in contact with one or more people. But certain ones are so restricted in their social relations and are developed so extensively by Hardy that they stand out in marked contrast to the other isolates, many of whom have only "walk-on" roles. Among those who are treated only superficially by Hardy or whose isolation is not really a serious matter are Christian Cantle and Diggory Venn in The Return of the Native, Baron von Xanten in "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid," Stephen Smith in A Pair of Blue Eyes, Swithin St. Cleeve in Two on a Tower, Edmond Willowes in A Group of
Noble Dames, and the unwanted children in "An Imaginative Woman" and A Group of Noble Dames.

Twelve important rootless figures emerge from Hardy's novels and short stories: Clym Yeobright and Eustacia Vye in The Return of the Native; Mrs. Chundle in "Old Mrs. Chundle"; William Dare in A Laodicean; Timothy Summers in "The Three Strangers"; Michael Henchard in The Mayor of Casterbridge; Sophy Twycott in "The Son's Veto"; Tess Durbeyfield in Tess of the D'Urbervilles; Jocelyn Pierston in The Well-Beloved; Jude Fawley, Sue Bridehead, and Father Time in Jude the Obscure. In each case Hardy draws an elaborate portrait of the individual as a solitary figure quite unlike most of the other members of society, so unlike them, in fact, that he is practically an island unto himself. The dramatic sufferings and struggles of these twelve isolates will be described and clarified in the course of this dissertation.

Our method will be, first, to survey briefly a number of critical views on Hardy's treatment of the individual-environment relationship, and second, to formulate a new approach to the study of a most important aspect of that relationship, the isolation of man from society. A new approach seems particularly desirable, because Hardy criticism has not adequately dealt with the individual-environment relationship, many commentators contenting themselves...
with merely praising Hardy for the tragic grandeur of his characters and his descriptions of nature and rustic folk. This sort of emphasis has not substantially aided our understanding of Hardy, and one cannot help feeling that the essential Hardy remains unexplained. Of far greater importance to the modern reader, it would seem than Hardy's felicitous descriptions or his nobly tragic tone, is the underlying pattern of individual-environment relations in a Hardy work. The reader is curious to know, for example, what interacting elements in Clym's personality and in his environment make him a solitary, ineffectual figure, what elements in Jude's, in Sue's. Are Hardy's tragic (or, let us say, unsuccessful and isolated) characters merely victims of heredity, or environment, or fate, as many Hardy commentators seem to feel? This information, if we had it, would not only make clear what Hardy was really saying in his fiction, but would provide us with a better understanding of the dynamics of human behavior, for Hardy intended to capture certain universal qualities in his particularized descriptions of Wessex characters.50

50Wrote Hardy, in 1893: "The whole secret of fiction and the drama—in the constructional part—lies in the adjustment of things unusual to things eternal and universal. The writer who knows exactly how exceptional, and how non-exceptional, his events should be made, possesses the key to the art." See Florence E. Hardy, The Later Years of Thomas Hardy, p. 16. This volume will henceforth be re-
ferred to as *IX*, and the earlier volume by Florence Hardy as *EL*.

Perhaps much of the Hardy criticism appears so narrow in scope because it has not drawn sufficiently on the insights of investigations in areas outside the field of literary study—the physical and social sciences, for example. Literary criticism in general has borrowed only sparingly from these sources, but quite possibly it will be obliged to collaborate with the sciences to a considerable extent in order to really explain what the action in a work of literature signifies.

If we can use for our study of isolation in Hardy certain concepts of modern science, perhaps we can deal more fruitfully with the relations between individual and environment than has been possible with earlier methods of Hardy criticism.
CHAPTER TWO

THE ISOLATE AND HIS ENVIRONMENT:

I. THE LIMITATIONS OF THE COMMONLY HELD VIEWS OF HARDY'S FICTIONAL WORLD

It has become a commonplace in modern literary criticism that more books have been written about Thomas Hardy than he himself wrote. The number of critical articles, if added to the number of critical books, would swell the Hardy bibliography to an astronomical figure. The 1954 "American Bibliography" in the Publications of the Modern Language Association lists fourteen entries for Hardy,¹ as compared with sixteen for Charles Dickens, seven for George Eliot, twenty-seven for Henry James, twenty for James Joyce, and forty-four for William Faulkner. Allowing for the exceptionally heavy interest in Faulkner which characterizes recent criticism and the present high prestige of Dickens, James, and Joyce, Hardy appears to be holding up rather well for a writer dismissed so contemptuously by F. R. Leavis in his recent survey of "great" English novelists. Despite the fact that the "big" critics do not lavish their

¹The number should have been sixteen. Two articles (one by the writer) were unintentionally omitted from the list. Another critical biography (English) of Hardy also appeared in 1954.
attention on Hardy, the continued interest in him by lesser critics (Hardy has for many years been well represented in the annual bibliographies) would appear to seriously challenge Leavis' verdict.²

²See F. R. Leavis, The Great Tradition (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., Doubleday Anchor Books, 1954), pp. 35-36. (The Great Tradition first appeared in 1948.) According to Leavis (p. 36), "It is . . . a little comic that Hardy should have been taken in the early nineteen-twenties—the Chekhov period—as pre-eminently the representative of the 'modern consciousness' or the modern 'sense of the human situation.'"

The voluminous scholarship on Hardy has cleared up some problems pertaining to biography, bibliography, symbolic technique, and the Wessex background of his works, but a most important aspect of the fiction—the exact relationship between the individual and his environment—remains to be clarified. Unless we understand how such figures as Jude and Clym reveal (under varying circumstances) only certain facets of their complex personalities and react with only certain elements of their no less complex environments, we cannot really understand what Hardy was trying to say in his stories of isolation, no matter how much else we know about him.

Hardy commentators have generally assumed that in his fiction he intended to represent a conflict or a shaping
process between the individual and the environment, or fate. For decades critiques on Hardy have indicated something like the following: Hardy shows man in a universe hostile or indifferent to him, but in any event all-powerful; man resists the crushing forces outside him (or even strives to achieve certain goals), but his attempts are frustrated and in the end he is conquered. The implication is that there are two discrete volitional "units"—man and everything external to himself—which are so separated from one another that the only contact possible between them is either one of impact, as though they were two billiard balls (everything external to man representing the cue ball), or one of molding, as though they were potter and clay (man representing the clay). But Hardy's fictional view of man and his environment was not nearly so superficial—or so imaginative. This may be shown in two ways: first, by a close reading of Hardy's notebook entries and miscellaneous non-fiction writings, and second, by a close reading of his fiction. Before looking into Hardy's own work, however, it is necessary to examine representative specimens of Hardy criticism dealing with the individual-environment relationship.

One of the earliest critical analyses of Hardy's fiction, Havelock Ellis's "Thomas Hardy's Novels" (1883), devotes a certain amount of attention to the isolation theme in Hardy. Hardy's characters are isolated, according to El-
lis, because their environments are isolated:

It can scarcely be said in the life Mr. Hardy describes that the family, and not the individual, is the social unit; here are only individuals. It would almost seem that in the solitary lives on these Dorset heaths we are in contact with what is really a primitive phase of society, in which the lines that bind man to man have not yet come to be perceived in any save a slight and fragmentary way. At all events this seems the simplest manner of accounting for that failure to grasp at all adequately even their most obvious obligations which characterizes the men often, the women generally, in these novels. To that also we may attribute the isolated and inflexible nature of the individual which has so deeply impressed Mr. Hardy. It would appear, then, that those qualities which we have found to be distinctive of his heroines, the absence of moral feeling, the instinctiveness, had a direct relation to the wild and solitary character of their environment.³

³[Havelock Ellis], "Thomas Hardy's Novels," The Westminster Review, New Series, LXIII (1883), 362. See also p. 364.

The most elaborate study of Hardy's treatment of men and environment is Herbert B. Grimsditch's Character and Environment in the Novels of Thomas Hardy (1925). Much of the book is devoted to an elaborate analysis of such "objective" environmental elements as Wessex country life, customs, and occupations, but Grimsditch interprets these as only part of the external influences molding the individual. The other elements in the environmental "mold" are, Grimsditch seems to imply, cosmic forces, and everything that is
part of this over-all environment constitutes the individual's fate. Thus Grimsditch sets up for Hardy's fiction an artificial dichotomy between the individual and the rest of the universe, and interprets the novels as dramas in which the former is the protagonist and the latter (as an abstraction) is the antagonist:

The main materials out of which Hardy constructs his tragedy are the interplay of human emotions and the conflict between the aspirations of conscious man and the absolute law of unconscious fate.4


The aim of this study is to consider the principal characters of the novels with special reference to the way in which they are moulded by environment (taking the word in its widest sense), so producing that clash between the individual and an immutable destiny which has been shown as the chief source of Hardy's tragedy.5

5Ibid., pp. 134-135. We must, says Grimsditch (p. 178), be aware of the light Hardy throws on beautiful aspects of existence, "however much we may feel that in his works man is a helpless puppet in the grip of fate."

Another Hardy commentator, Lascelles Abercrombie, in his 1927 study of Hardy goes even further by actually personifying the cosmic environmental forces believed to be in
conflict with Hardy's characters. Abercrombie complicates matters, however, by also speaking of an all-pervading influence which must be obeyed by the individuals:

The main, ruthless stream of tendency, which the characters must in the end obey, exhibits itself not only around but in the characters themselves; only thus could they symbolize the basic conception of Hardy's tragedy. They have in them some weakness, disability, inherited instinct, or perhaps some error in the assertion of their strength, which inevitably becomes the chance for the power of the world finally to assert itself against them.6


D. H. Lawrence, who in his book-length essay "Study of Thomas Hardy" (published posthumously in 1936) devoted considerable attention to the problem of isolation in Hardy's novels, considered the outstanding individuals in them to be in a state of unsuccessful opposition to the environment of society or to life itself. Those of Hardy's characters who were sufficiently different from their fellows, Lawrence felt, could not endure, because they lacked the security of group sanction, because they were biological "freaks" unfit to survive. Lawrence's view thus expresses a kind of social Darwinism, but without any notion of adjustment to new surroundings:
This, then, is the moral conclusion drawn from the novels:

1. The physical individual is in the end an inferior thing which must fall before the community: Manston, Henchard, etc.

2. The physical and spiritual individualist is a fine thing which must fall because of its own isolation, because it is a sport, not in the true line of life: Jude, Tess, Lady Constantine.

3. The physical individualist and spiritual bourgeois or communist is a thing, finally, of ugly, undeveloped, non-distinguished or perverted physical instinct, and must fall physically: Sue, Angel Clare, Clym, Knight. It remains, however, fitted into the community.

4. The undistinguished, bourgeois or average being with average or civic virtues usually succeeds in the end. If he fails, he is left practically uninjured. If he expire during probation, he has flowers on his grave.

7D. H. Lawrence, "Study of Thomas Hardy," in Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence, ed. Edward D. McDonald (New York: The Viking Press, 1936), p. 438. Another significant Hardy study which devotes some attention to the problem of isolation is Albert J. Guerard's Thomas Hardy: The Novels and Stories (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949). Guerard makes much of the nineteenth-century isolation theme, but does not systematically analyze Hardy's treatment of it. Pertinent here is Guerard's statement (p. x) that Hardy "had contradictory feelings about his tradition-haunted Wessex and sympathized both with those who longed to escape it and those who longed to return."

A number of decades after Havelock Ellis' article on Hardy's fiction, another critical work--mentioning Hardy only in passing--referred to the (supposed) shaping influence of environment on the motivation of Hardy's characters. Despite the incidental nature of the reference to Hardy, the underlying idea is important here. Kenneth Burke, in A
Grammar of Motives (1945), went far beyond Ellis in tracing the relationships between location and character. According to Burke, there are numerous instances in literature in which the natural scene is "sufficient motivation for an act." Calling this relationship between scene and act the "scene-act ratio," Burke elaborated a principle to explain the interaction:

From the motivational point of view, there is implicit in the quality of a scene the quality of the action that is to take place within it. This would be another way of saying that the fact will be consistent with the scene.

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8Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1954), pp. 6-7. (This is a reprinting of the 1945 edition.) Burke's "scene-act ratio" is only part of an elaborate "dramatistic" theory of motivation. Involved in this theory are "act," "scene," "agent," "agency," "purpose."

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Hardy's fiction, according to Burke, exemplifies this scene-act relationship:

We find a variant of it in the novels of Thomas Hardy, and in other regionalists who derive motivations for their characters from what Virgil would have called the genius loci.

9Ibid., p. 6.
tion is an obvious instance of this scene-agent ratio in the novel. 10

Ibid., p. 474. Burke, working within the framework of his theory, might also have applied his "scene-agent ratio" to Hardy.

Harvey Curtis Webster, in On A Darkling Plain (1947), sought to discern philosophic trends in Hardy's writings. Taking literally Hardy's fictional statements (often no more than fanciful metaphors) about chance, fate, heredity, sex, and society, Webster arrived at simplified categorizations and dichotomies—supposedly Hardy's—in order to account for what happens to the Wessex characters. Thus Webster speaks of

The unresolved inconsistency of arraigning the universe and society as separate causes for the same offense and the irreconcilable views of tragedy as either man against the universe or man against society exemplified in the novels from The Woodlanders [1887] to Jude [1895].


Bradford A. Booth, in "Form and Technique in the Novel" (1950), expressed a view of Hardy's individuals held by earlier critics. The antagonist in the Hardyan fictional drama is not society, not the immediate physical environ-
ment, but an outside force:

The pitiless, indiscriminate fate of Tess and The Return of the Native is the fate of 'Hap' and 'The Convergence of the Twain.' Everywhere men and women are whipped to their knees, not by the harsh but remediable agencies of society, nor yet by the violence of their own passions, but by a blind, irrational force that strikes the good as well as the evil. Hardy anchored his philosophy in his contemplation of 'life's little ironies.'

In his essay on Hardy in The Victorian Sage (1953), John Holloway devoted considerable attention to the physical environment (as the other element besides the individual) in Hardy's fictional scheme. An important feature of what Holloway considered the close relationship between man and environment is man's subordination to it:

But that Hardy shows people as merely situated within a wider and spreading landscape is not the full story. They are not simply in, but governed by and subdued to their environment.

A recent critic, Walter Allen, in his book The English
**Novel** (1954) preserved the idea that man and the forces of nature are pitted against one another like characters in a drama or contenders in an arena:

Hardy was scarcely a moralist at all, because in his universe morals were beside the point: between the forces of nature, including therein the forces of his own nature, and man's aspirations there could be no reconciliation; they were eternally opposed, and from the human view the workings of nature must appear hostile and malign.\(^{14}\)


[Hardy] is intent to show that the stars in their courses fight against the aspiring, the man or woman who would rise above the common lot through greatness of spirit, of ambition, or passion.\(^ {15}\)

\[^{15}\text{Ibid., p. 239.}\]

As for Hardy's own views of the relationship between the individual and his environment (in the widest possible sense), they do not appear to coincide with the interpretations of the above-quoted critics. Perhaps the most important misconception of the critics is that Hardy described malevolent forces in the universe thwarting and otherwise harming man.\(^ {16}\) This notion is unequivocally refuted by a

\[^{16}\text{This view or one closely related may be found even in}\]
a work which, like Burke's *A Grammar of Motives*, mentions Hardy only in passing. Thus Noel Gilroy Annan, in his *Leslie Stephen: His Thought and Character in Relation to His Time* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952), says (p. 193): "[Leslie Stephen] did not believe in the Perfectibility of Man, or think that evil was caused by priests and kings, or, like Hardy, by a hostile universe."

statement Hardy made thirty years after a reviewer of *Tess* of the D'Urbervilles wrote: "Hardy postulates an all-powerful being endowed with the baser human passions, who turns everything to evil and rejoices in the mischief he has wrought." Hardy's reply was:

As I need hardly inform any thinking reader, I do not hold, and never have held, the ludicrous opinions here assumed to be mine—which are really or approximately, those of the primitive believer in his man-shaped tribal god. And in seeking to ascertain how any exponent of English literature could have supposed that I held them I find that the writer of the estimate has harked back to a passage in a novel of mine, printed many years ago, in which the forces opposed to the heroine were allegorized as a personality (a method not unusual in imaginative prose or poetry) by the use of a well-known trope, explained in that venerable work, Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, as 'one in which life, perception, activity, design, passion, or any property of sentient beings, is attributed to things inanimate'.

Under this species of criticism if an author were to say 'Aeolus maliciously tugged at her garments, and tore her hair in his wrath', the sapient critic would no doubt announce that author's evil creed to be that the wind is 'a powerful being endowed with the baser human passions', etc., etc.

However, I must put up with it, and say as Parrhasius of Ephesus said about his pictures: There is nothing that men will not find fault with.
Not only did Hardy not believe in malevolent forces in the universe, but he apparently did not believe that man was clearly distinguishable from his environment and that man and environment were to each other as protagonist to antagonist or as clay to potter. In order to demonstrate this it is necessary to "explain away" a statement he made in 1895, at the time _Jude the Obscure_ was being reviewed. According to Hardy (_IV_, p. 44):

> Tragedy may be created by an opposing environment either of things inherent in the universe, or of human institutions.

The word "opposing" does not, of course, signify that the physical or social environment is a volitional agent whose aims are contrary to man's. Hardy's above-quoted self-defense against such a belief leaves no room for doubt on the matter. As for the idea of strict separation between man and environment implied in Hardy's statement, the dichotomy is more apparent than real. A number of his comments reveal that although Hardy was fully aware of the properties of the personality and the properties of natural phenomena and social institutions, he seems to have felt that there was a subtle blending of character and environment and that
the two could not be considered apart from the totality in which they were joined.

The word "merging" best expresses this view. In 1876, when he was thirty-six, Hardy wrote:

If it be possible to compress into a sentence all that a man learns between 20 and 40, it is that all things merge in one another—good into evil, generosity into justice, religion into politics, the year into the ages, the world into the universe. With this in view the evolution of species seems but a minute and obvious process in the same movement.\(^{18}\)

\(^{18}\) This is probably Hardy's clearest statement of his fundamentally monistic position. See IV, pp. 168, 271-272 for his attack on what he considered the dualism of Bergson.

Again and again Hardy elaborated on his belief in a comprehensive merging process. According to him, the question of the dispossessed Dorset cottager merges in the topic of the Rights of Man, poetry and religion modulate into each other, the poet and novelist should show the sorriness underlying the grandest things and the grandeur underlying the sorriest things, the poet's province is to find beauty in ugliness, and organic and inorganic modulate into each other.\(^{19}\)

\(^{19}\) This is by no means a complete list of Hardy's "mergings." The sources for the foregoing beliefs are, respectively, as follows: "The Dorsetshire Labourer" (1883), in Life and Art by Thomas Hardy, p. 47; "Apology" to Late lyr-
Hardy's statements about character and environment reflect this idea of merging. In an article on fiction Hardy wrote:

Those novels . . . which impress the reader with the inevitableness of character and environment in working out destiny, whether that destiny be just or unjust, enviable or cruel, must have a sound effect, if not what is called a good effect, upon a healthy mind.²⁰

²⁰Thomas Hardy, "The Profitable Reading of Fiction" (1888), in Life and Art by Thomas Hardy, p. 66. When he prepared the definitive edition of his works Hardy divided his fiction into three categories: "Novels of Character and Environment," "Romances and Fantasies," and "Novels of Ingenuity." Those in the first category were Under the Greenwood Tree, Far from the Madding Crowd, The Return of the Native, The Mayor of Casterbridge, The Woodlanders, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Jude the Obscure, Wessex Tales, and Life's Little Ironies.

The inseparability of character from environment is indicated in a notebook entry of the following year (1889):

"When a married woman who has a lover kills her husband, she does not really wish to kill the husband; she wishes to kill the situation."²¹ In dealing with the artist's treat-

²¹EL, p. 289.
ment of tragedy, Hardy again revealed his awareness of the close relationship between what lies within the individual and what lies without:

Note. A Plot, or Tragedy, should arise from the gradual closing in of a situation that comes of ordinary human passions, prejudices, and ambitions, by reason of the characters taking no trouble to ward off the disastrous events produced by the said passions, prejudices, and ambitions.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., p. 157. This note, written in 1878, is similar to one written in 1885 (ibid., p. 230): "Tragedy. It may be put thus in brief: a tragedy exhibits a state of things in the life of an individual which unavoidably causes some natural aim or desire of his to end in a catastrophe when carried out."

Two vivid illustrations of Hardy's concern with man as an inseparable part of the individual-environment totality are found in notebook entries for 1888 and 1890. In contradiction to the view of his critics that Hardy showed environment to be a rigid and unchanging mold, Hardy's own statements indicate that environment is dynamic and capable of considerable alteration, as is the individual himself.

Different purposes, different men. Those in the city for money-making are not the same men as they were when at home the previous evening. Nor are these the same as they were when lying awake in the small hours.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{23}Ibid., p. 267.
I am more than ever convinced that persons are successively various persons, according as each special strand in their characters is brought uppermost by circumstances.24

24Ibid., p. 301.

As for a fictional illustration of this idea, Hardy's description of Eustacia Vye provides a striking instance:

Such [nonconformist] views of life were to some extent the natural begettings of her situation upon her nature. To dwell on a heath without studying its meanings was like wedding a foreigner without learning his tongue. The subtle beauties of the heath were lost to Eustacia; she only caught its vapors. An environment which would have made a contented woman a poet, a suffering woman a devotee, a pious woman a psalmist, even a giddy woman thoughtful, made a rebellious woman saturnine.25

25The Return of the Native, p. 81.

Should any question remain as to whether Hardy believed the individual himself, or the environment (with its unpredictable elements), more important in determining what would happen to the individual, the following statement (written in 1902) unequivocally states the position for the equal importance of both:

Life is what we make it as Whist is what we make it; but not as Chess is what we make it; which ranks higher as a purely intellectual game than
Thus Hardy's attitude toward the relationship between man and environment appears to be something quite different from what the critics have imagined it to be. There is, Hardy seems to have felt, not a conflict or a shaping effect, but a subtle interaction of the individual with all of the elements that happen to constitute his environment, as a result of which a specific kind of situation is produced. The individual's fate is not determined by his character or his environment alone, but by the situation, in which character and environment are merged in an indivisible totality.

How can we apply this view of an individual-environment totality to a study of Hardy's handling of the theme of isolation? In order to make such an application it will be helpful to borrow certain insights from social psychology. Until the 1930's, social psychologists had interpreted human behavior on the basis of the age, sex, intelligence level, or surroundings, of the subject. A sharp demarcation was believed to exist between the individual and his environment, and human behavior was believed to be the result of what might be called the sum of all of the sig-
nificant factors pertaining to the former and all of those pertaining to the latter. In the 1930's a German psychologist named Kurt Lewin began to formulate a new approach to the study of behavior. His psychological theory involved not an arithmetical addition of the characteristics of the individual and his environment, but a complex series of spatial relations in which subject and surroundings were considered as constituting a dynamic whole, a "gestalt."

To represent these Lewin used the obscure and unorthodox branch of mathematics called topology and the no less obscure and unorthodox geometric convention of hodological space.

Lewin was a product of the "gestalt" school of psychology, which emphasized wholeness (the "gestalt") in perception, in contradistinction to the other psychological schools, which emphasized structures of consciousness (images, thoughts, and feelings), mental functions, and behavioral reflexes.

"Every Scientific psychology," said Lewin, "must take into account whole situations, i.e., the state of both person and environment. This implies that it is necessary to find methods of representing person and environment in common terms as parts of one situation." This dynamic totality,

Kurt Lewin, Principles of Topological Psychology.
which varied with each new circumstance, Lewin called the psychological life space.

Other investigators in the following years developed somewhat similar formulations (but not necessarily with Lewin's very difficult mathematics), and by the later 1940's Lewin's "field" approach had won a very respectable place among the developments in modern psychology. In 1947, for example, an eminent psychologist named Gardner Murphy added to the vast bibliography on human personality a book exemplifying a "biosocial" approach, based primarily on Lewin's "field" theory of behavior. According to Murphy,

This concept of a unitary field of organism-environment is important for personality study. The pioneer here is Kurt Lewin; and though our development of the concept takes a form different from his, our great indebtedness to him is obvious. Angyal and Sullivan, too, have developed systems congenial to the present one. The issue may best be stated by contrasting field theory with the accepted conventional view of the relation of individual to environment. According to this conventional view, there is a clearly defined outer world, or stimulus, and an individual, or organism, upon which the stimulus acts; as the stimulus acts, it sets free one of his potential responses. The nature of the stimulus determines which potential response—smiling, jumping, shouting—will be released. Thus the situation can be defined before the individual is defined. But we have just seen that this is not the case, for the individual selects from and consequently defines the situation. Moreover, in
line with the conventional view, the individual can be defined before the situation is defined; but here again we have just seen [preceding page] that this also is impossible. What the situation will be for this individual, what the individual will be for this situation, will depend not upon properties self-contained within each but upon the properties of the field that constitutes the form of their interaction. This makes a profound practical difference; field theory is not a complicated way of restating the obvious, but a step toward greater realism.30

30Gardner Murphy, Personality: A Biosocial Approach to Origins and Structure (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1947), pp. 382-383. Murphy's very simplified diagrams of the "field" relations between the individual and his environment are far more readily understandable and practicable than are Lewin's overly complicated ones.

Can such psychological formulations as the "field" theory of human behavior be applied in a purely literary study? The writer feels that they can, if used cautiously and with qualifications. A prominent literary critic, in fact, has expressed strong interest in the application of the "field" approach to literary criticism. Thus, Stanley Edgar Hyman, in his recent survey of criticism, wrote:

[The theoretical framework of the "gestalt" school of psychology], emphasizing 'field' concepts, makes full provision for the behavioral patterns of the unconscious mind, which are just as configurative, and recognizes in theory that the incongruous relationships of poetic metaphor are as 'productive' perceptions for poetry as the more traditional relationships of mathematics are for science. There is not much doubt that when the younger integrative gestaltists, followers of the late Kurt Levin [sic] (who wrote in Principles of
Topological Psychology: 'the only approach to deeper problems was the brilliant work of Freud'), and social gestaltists like S. E. Asch and J. F. Brown finally turn their attention to the structural relations, configurations, 'fields,' and 'topology' of works of literature, and professional critics pick up and extend their insights, a new area of tremendous value will open up to literary criticism.31


The "field" approach appears particularly suitable for a study of Hardy. Hardy's fictional view of man certainly does not seem to have been adequately analyzed by the ordinary critical methods. I have stated before that Hardy did not, as critics have assumed, describe man vs. society or man vs. the elements, but rather man in society and man among the elements. The individual (isolate or otherwise) in Hardy is actually part of a complex totality of circumstances in which no clear line can be drawn between personal traits, needs, and motives, and environmental goals and hazards. All of these factors, existing in a state of dynamic interaction, produce human striving and human success or (as happens so often in Hardy) human failure. A modified and literarily oriented "field" approach should be able to explain what really happens when Hardy characters
find themselves cut off from their fellows and struggling in solitude (to a greater or a lesser degree) to cure, or at least alleviate, their isolation.
II. THE "FIELD" THEORY AS APPLIED TO HARDY

A. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE "FIELD"

In order to apply the "field" approach of the modern social psychologists to Hardy's stories of isolation it is desirable that we use a simplified drawing which will show the relations between individual and environment. Perhaps a slightly modified version of the diagram Murphy employs in his book on personality will be suitable here:

![Diagram of Field Theory]

The circle on the left represents the individual. It contains all of the observable and hidden factors that constitute his personality. The circle on the right represents the individual's external environment. It contains everything in his immediate vicinity that influences him or is potentially able to influence him. "The ellipse," according to Murphy, "represents interaction; the organism is selecting from the situation, and the situation is selecting from the organism."
Personality, p. 883. I have changed somewhat not only Murphy's diagram but also his terminology and treatment. Thus, for example, for his term "situation" I use "environment," and for his term "organism" I use "individual." Murphy's statement that "the situation is selecting from the organism" is not meant to be taken in an anthropomorphic sense. The situation selects only insofar as it evokes a certain type of behavior from the individual.

Unless the reader grants one fundamental assumption, the "field" theory will appear incomprehensible or, perhaps, what Murphy called "a complicated way of restating the obvious." This assumption is that what happens to an individual (for example, one of Hardy's isolates) results from the interaction of personality factors with environmental factors. That is, if a character in one of Hardy's works antagonizes his associates and is thereupon rejected by them, the rejection ought not to be described as the result of the individual's querulousness or antisocial conduct. Nor ought it to be described as a result of unfriendly or hostile feelings on the part of the others. Nor yet ought it to be described as a result of the individual's conduct plus the feelings of the others. Rather, the rejection ought to be described as the result of a striking lack of harmony in the individual's field between his behavior and what his associates expect of him.

This kind of description attempts to deal with the "field" in which a certain part of the individual's person-
ality interacts with a certain part of his environment. In the foregoing diagram the "field" includes only those parts of each which are so mutually related. Thus the notion of a "field" is only an abstraction, an endeavor to describe the "pool" of circumstances in which each individual's personality is always partially immersed. Those aspects of the personality which are not involved in relating an individual to his environment (actually, to a certain portion of his total environment) lie outside his "field." Those aspects of his environment with which he is not involved similarly lie outside his "field."

A passage in Jude the Obscure strikingly illustrates the difference between an object in an individual's environment but outside his "field," and one that lies in his "field." Jude Fawley as a youth had had very little to do with women (with the exception of his great-aunt), particularly women his own age. At nineteen he unintentionally attracts the attention of a girl living in the neighborhood, and she thereupon makes it her business to "capture" him. Hardy describes their first interview thus:

The unvoiced call of woman to man, which was uttered very distinctly by Arabella's personality, held Jude to the spot against his intention—almost against his will, and in a way new to his experience. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that till this moment Jude had never looked at a woman to consider her as such, but had vaguely regarded the sex as being outside his
Thus, up to the time Arabella had begun to entice Jude, women (his great-aunt excepted) were outside his "field":

![Diagram 2](image)

Fig. 2.

When Jude became susceptible to Arabella's charms, women no longer were outside his "field":

![Diagram 3](image)

Fig. 3.

The problem of change is, naturally, of great importance in our "field" theory. No individual remains the same for long, any more than his environment remains the same. Now one set of personality traits will join with a
particular set of environmental factors to comprise the individual's "field," and shortly thereafter two other sets (perhaps vastly different from the first pair of sets) will constitute the "field." Two examples from Hardy may clarify the matter. In *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, Hardy described one of the chief characters, Stephen Smith, as follows (p. 102):

... his brain had extraordinary receptive powers, and no great creativeness. Quickly acquiring any kind of knowledge he saw around him, and having a plastic adaptability more common in woman than in man, he changed colour like a chameleon as the society he found himself in assumed a higher and more artificial tone. He had not many original ideas, and yet there was scarcely an idea to which, under proper training, he could not have added a respectable coordinate.

In other words, since Stephen Smith sought to be "at home," if possible, wherever he found himself, he revealed different facets of his personality as the occasion warranted. Thus with every change in social milieu, Stephen had a new "field." Hardy's statement (quoted in Chapter Two) that persons become other persons as each strand in their characters is brought uppermost by circumstances is thus a gloss on his description of Stephen Smith.

In *A Laodicean*, Captain de Stancy reprimands his illegitimate son William Dare for misconduct. Dare quickly responds:

'I have acted according to my illumination. What
can you expect of a man born to dishonour?'

'That's mere speciousness. Before you knew anything of me, and while you thought you were the child of poverty on both sides, you were well enough; but ever since you thought you were more than that, you have led a life which is intolerable...'

Once again Hardy shows how an individual's "field" changes with his relationship (or what he conceives to be his relationship) to his environment. While Dare assumed he was one kind of person—poor, but legitimate—one pattern of relations existed between him and his environment, and he therefore had a particular "field." When Dare discovered he was really a different kind of person—the son of a member of a noble family, and illegitimate—a new pattern of relations came into being, and his earlier "field" became transformed into another. So unlike his earlier conduct was his later conduct that he was, in effect, someone else. But it was Dare's outlook on life that had changed, not his body or his fortunes, and therefore it is his new "field" that should be taken into account rather than his personality.4

4 For our purposes we will not represent changes in the individual's "field" by multiplying diagrams excessively, thereby producing little more than a profusion of circles
and ellipses. It appears more desirable to use very few "field" diagrams, and instead to describe in figurative terms the shifting relations between the individual and his environment.

An interesting feature of the "field" of each of the twelve isolates in our study is what might be called "restricted merging" of individual with environment. This notion of "restricted merging," like the "field" concept itself, is only an abstraction for explaining how the isolate participates in the world of objects and activities in which he finds himself. It may appear at first glance as if the individual and his environment cannot merge at all, not even in a "restricted" fashion. After all, we have been accustomed to thinking of man as living entirely within a particular environment. With this deeply rooted thought habit, how can we visualize a "field" which is not-man and not-environment, but which results from the merging of personality traits and (of all things!) physical entities? The idea of interaction between man and environment is not hard to grasp, and we have, in fact, employed it earlier in this chapter. The notion of merging, however, appears almost too far-fetched for even hesitant acceptance.

Hardy, it will be recalled, stressed the fact that "all things merge in one another"—religion and politics, organic and inorganic, and so on. Instead of using "merge"
(or its synonyms) to designate completion of the blending process, with resultant loss of identity of components, Hardy generally used the term to suggest relationships, or partial identifications, based on a series of gradations.\(^5\)

\(^5\)When he discussed poetry and religion, however, Hardy spoke of transition and absolute identification. According to him, "poetry and religion touch each other, or rather modulate into each other; are, indeed, often but different names for the same thing" ("Apology" to Late Lyrics and Earlier, pp. 530-531).

Thus, religion and politics shade into one another, as do organic and inorganic, tragedy and comedy, and good and evil, to name no others.

Let us now attempt to apply this concept of the merging of all things to our "field" theory. The individual and a certain portion of his environment are identified with each other, in the sense that they are closely associated. Certain traits or other features of the individual enable him to form, maintain, and (if he wishes) even disrupt his connection with people, institutions, and other entities around him. To the extent that his characteristics, whatever they may be, make it possible for him to be identified (i.e., closely associated) with a specific portion of his environment, to that extent is he merged with his environment. "Merged" is thus used in a figurative sense to indicate the degree to which the individual and
his environment are identified with one another in the individual's "field." The "field," which is the scene of this merging, has something in common with the kind of spectrum Hardy appears to have had in mind when he spoke of the merging of all things.

It is not easy, however, to visualize the elements of the human personality and of the environment surrounding it as a series of gradations running from one extreme to another. It is more helpful to think of the "field" as a pool in which two different and nonhomogeneous liquids are constantly blending. The amount of each liquid being infused in the pool (to continue our illustration) does not remain constant. Thus at any given moment the pool will contain relative amounts of each of the two liquids, and the composition of the pool will vary as the composition of each of the liquids varies. The pool has different properties from those of the two constituent liquids, although certain components of each may be distinguished in the pool.

Thus far we have explained the application of the term "merging" to the "field" relations between individual and environment. What of "restricted merging" between individual and environment, which characterizes the "fields" of Hardy's isolates? "Restricted merging" means simply that the individual is not in direct contact with many elements of his environment. He is "showing" only a very limited
portion of his total personality to the world. Introverts, hermits, certain types of "lone wolves" exemplify this "restricted merging." The "field" of any one of these individuals contains a relatively small portion of the individual's total personality, and a relatively small portion of the individual's total environment:

![Diagram of Individual, Field, and Environment]

Fig. 4.

Each individual, no matter how isolated, has his "field," but the more isolated the individual, the more restricted is his merging in the "field" with his environment. An example from Hardy may be helpful here.

Clym Yeobright's elderly mother, in *The Return of the Native*, is a minor figure, but strikingly drawn. Like Clym, but for different reasons, she is isolated from those around her. Her "field," with its "restricted merging" between individual and environment, is thus described by Hardy:

She had a singular insight into life, considering that she had never mixed with it. . . .

What was the great world to Mrs. Yeobright? A multitude whose tendencies could be perceived, though not its essences. Communities were seen by her as from a distance; she saw them as we see the
throng which cover the canvases of Sallaert, Van Alsloot, and others of that school—vast masses of beings, jostling, zigzagging, and processioning in definite directions, but whose features are indistinguishable by the very comprehensiveness of the view.6

6The Return of the Native, p. 223.

Each of the twelve isolates in our study falls into one of two categories, on the basis of his position in his "field." Six isolates are what might be called superfluous characters,7 and the other six unrealistic characters.

7I am taking the term "superfluous character" from the important nineteenth-century Russian literary prototype, the "superfluous man," or "lishnii chelovek." From the early part of the nineteenth century until the early twentieth, Russian literature was filled with stories of lonely, footloose, ineffectual individuals who had no place in society. For further information on the Russian "superfluous man" the reader is directed to one of the most representative stories of this genre, Ivan Turgenev's "The Diary of a Superfluous Man" (1850), and to the following critical sources: D. S. Mirsky, A History of Russian Literature, ed. and abr. Francis J. Whitfield (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), p. 189; Marc Slonim, The Epic of Russian Literature from Its Origins Through Tolstoy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 120; and Janko Lavrin, Goncharov (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1954), pp. 20, 35.

The grouping is as follows:
The terms "superfluous characters" and "unrealistic characters" are used in a figurative sense. Each group represents a certain kind of "restricted merging" with the environment in the "field." The superfluous figures are, on the whole, without a clearly defined role in the economy of their society. The society they find themselves in does not appear to have a satisfactory place for them, and they are (or come to be) in the position of nonentities, isolates. The unrealistic figures, while they each have what might be considered a place in society, make a fundamental error of judgment about something in their environment. They attempt to relate themselves in a certain way to the object or objects they are mistaken about, and, as a result, either become isolated, or are more isolated than they were.
before. Thus, the merging of the superfluous character is restricted because he is not sufficiently "accepted" by his (or her) associates—i.e., by those in his environment—and therefore brings only a small amount of his total personality into play. The merging of the unrealistic character is restricted because he does not understand his environment well enough to associate satisfactorily with certain features of it to which he is attracted; here too the individual utilizes only a limited portion of his personality. Since there are such poor relations between the individual (whether superfluous or unrealistic), and what are to him (or her) the important features of the environment, the "field" will not contain very much of either the individual or the environment. In effect, very little of the total personality and very little of the environment are interacting, or merging, in the "field."^8

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^8 The superfluous characters are, in a sense, slightly unrealistic, just as the unrealistic characters are, in a sense, slightly superfluous. However, the first group is distinguished by the superfluity of its members, while the second is distinguished by the unrealistic viewpoint of its members.

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An illustration of both types will perhaps clarify the matter. In The Return of the Native (which contains a number of isolates, although most of them are minor characters)
Hardy depicts an aged rustic, Grandfer Cantle, and his son Christian. The former may be taken as an example of the unrealistic type of character, and the latter as an example of the superfluous type. The old man, who is as unserious and high-spirited and frolicsome as a boy, is unduly proud of his singing voice and his having been a member (many years before) of the local militia mobilized against a possible Napoleonic invasion. He regards his fellow inhabitants of Egdon Heath as physically and intellectually inferior to him, and attempts to derive prestige from what he considers their reliance on him. 

"'Tis a weight," according to Grandfer Cantle (The Return of the Native, p. 37), "upon a man to be looked up to as commander, and I often feel it." To his younger neighbors, however, he is an old fool, albeit an energetic addition to any community gathering. Hardy thus presents the unrealistic old man as he recounts what happened when he met Clym Yeobright's mother:

'... Well, then, I spoke to her in my well-known merry way, and she said, "O that what's shaped so venerable should talk like a fool!"—that's what she said to me. I don't care for her, be jownd if I do, and so I told her. "Be jownd if I care for 'ee," I said. I had her there—hey?'

'I rather think she had you,' said Fairway.

'No,' said Grandfer Cantle, his counten ance slightly flagging. '"'Tisn't so bad as that with me?'

'Semingly 'tis ... .'9
Grandfer Cantle's youngest son, Christian (aged thirty-one, and born when his father was about forty), is a melancholy and pitiable figure. Lacking in self-respect, cowardly, and sexless ("maphro'tight fool" he had once been called by a woman to whom he had proposed), he is hardly higher in status than the village idiot would be. Christian's superfluity is revealed with particular vividness as Hardy describes the aftermath of a typical blunder on the "boy's" part:

'I never saw such a clumsy chap as you, Christian,' said Grandfer Cantle severely. 'You might have been the son of a man that's never been outside Blooms-End in his life for all the wit you have. Really all the soldiering and smartness in the world in the father seems to count for nothing in forming the nature of the son. As far as that chief Christian is concerned I might as well have stayed at home and seed nothing, like all the rest of ye here. Though, as far as myself is concerned, a dashing spirit has counted for sommat, to be sure!'

'Don't ye let me down so, father; I feel no bigger than a ninepin after it. I've made but a bruckle hit, I'm afraid.'

'Come, come. Never pitch yourself in such a low key as that, Christian; you should try more,' said Fairway.

'Yes, you should try more,' echoed the Grandfer with insistence, as if he had been the first to make the suggestion. 'In common conscience every man ought either to marry or go for a soldier. 'Tis a scandal to the nation to do neither one nor t'other. I did both, thank God! Neither to raise men nor to lay 'em low—that shows a poor do-nothing spirit indeed.'
'I never had the nerve to stand fire,' faltered Christian. 'But as to marrying, I own I've asked here and there, though without much fruit from it. Yes, there's some house or other that might have had a man for a master—such as he is—that's now ruled by a woman alone. Still it might have been awkward if I had found her; for, d'ye see, neighbours, there'd have been nobody left at home to keep down father's spirits to the decent pitch that becomes a old man.'

'And you've your work cut out to do that, my son,' said Grandfer Cantle smartly. . . .10

10Ibid., p. 476.

How is the "field" theory to be applied to Hardy's superfluous and unrealistic isolates? A common underlying pattern running through the story of each of the figures provides a basis for utilizing "field" concepts in order to deal with the entire group of twelve isolates, and with each one separately. Two further abstractions (constituting a departure from psychological "field" formulations) are needed, however, to develop this matter. Theoretical as these formulations may appear, they will, it is hoped, make possible a clarity of insight hitherto lacking in analyses of Hardy's fiction.

The individual encounters two types of objects (generally human) in his environment. I shall call one type, because of its effect on the individual, a "destroyer," and the other, for a similar reason, a "redeemer."11 The loca-
Despite the religious connotation that attaches to these terms, I am not using them in the respective senses of an Adversary and a Saviour. Rather, I mean that the individual is harmed through his relations with the "destroyer" figure, and benefitted (or potentially benefitted) through his relations with the "redeemer" figure.

Location of these objects with respect to the "field" is of the utmost importance, determining whether the individual will remain isolated or will merge extensively with his environment in the "field." It must be remembered that only two locations of the object with respect to the "field" are possible. In the first, the object is in the individual's environment but not in his "field"—that is, the object is in his vicinity but does not affect him in any way:

![Diagram showing locations of objects in Individual, Field, and Environment](image)

Fig. 5.

In the second, the object is in the individual's environment and in his "field"—that is, the object is in his vicinity and it affects him:
In almost all of the novels and stories in our study the figure whom I call "the 'destroyer'" is within the individual's "field." In those instances in which the "destroyer" is not, it had originally been in the "field," and had at that time exercised a beneficial (or potentially beneficial) influence on the individual, but has come to be outside the "field" in the environment proper, and now exercises a harmful influence on the individual.\textsuperscript{12} If the "de-

\textsuperscript{12}I.e., the situation illustrated in Fig. 6 has changed to that illustrated in Fig. 5.

"destroyer" remains within the individual's "field," the individual is sooner or later likely to become isolated or to remain isolated, whatever the actual intention of the "destroyer." The "destroyer" has the effect of harming the individual by drastically limiting his ability to merge, in the "field," with his environment. (The more merged is the individual with his environment--assuming that the environ-
ment is not filled with poison gas or something equally toxic—the more he fulfills himself, and, consequently, the better off he is.) The individual, adversely affected by either the presence or the absence of the "destroyer," is an isolated figure, unable to enter satisfactorily into the world of activities in which he finds himself. As for the "redeemer," if he is within the "field," he has a very good chance of "saving" the individual from isolation (and all the harmful effects attendant upon being isolated). If the "redeemer," although in the "field," fails to "save" the individual (i.e., fails to make possible extensive merging, in the "field," between individual and environment), it is because the "destroyer" is countering the "saving" effects of the "redeemer." And, of course, if the "redeemer" is not in the "field" at all, he has no real chance of "saving" the individual. Perhaps this unnatural-sounding terminology will appear slightly less abstruse if examples of the "destroyer" and the "redeemer" are given.

Alec d'Urberville in Tess of the D'Urbervilles represents a "destroyer." One night, Alec, taking advantage of Tess Durbeyfield's youthful ignorance and helplessness, attacks her. As a result, Tess suffers much subsequent misery and hardship, including the alienation of affections of the man she finally marries (he cannot bear to accept as a wife a woman with a past like Tess's). Some years after
Alec's outrage, Tess and Alec meet again. Now a revivalist preacher, the erstwhile rake attempts to tell Tess of his amazing Christian conversion:

'Don't go on with it!' she cried passionately, as she turned away from him to a stile by the wayside, on which she bent herself. 'I can't believe in such sudden things! I feel indignant with you for talking to me like this, when you know—when you know what harm you've done me! You, and those like you, take your fill of pleasure on earth by making the life of such as me bitter and black with sorrow; and then it is a fine thing, when you have had enough of that, to think of securing your pleasure in heaven by becoming converted! Out upon such—I don't believe in you—I hate it!'


The University of Christminster in Jude the Obscure represents the "redeemer," or, rather, the potential "redeemer." (All the other "redeemers" in our study are human. The University of Christminster, while a [potential] "redeemer" only in a figurative sense, exercises as profound an influence as that of the human "redeemers" in this analysis.) Jude, a poor and self-taught country boy, desires above all else to matriculate in the University of Christminster. So important is this goal to Jude that he acts as if his salvation depended on his gaining admission to the University. Once in the town of Christminster, Jude finds
work as a stone-cutter while he makes his plans for entering the University. Realizing that his reading background is inadequate for him to begin work at the University even should he be admitted to it, Jude writes letters to five of the University officials, telling them of his predicament and asking for advice as to what he should do:

When the letters were posted Jude mentally began to criticize them; he wished they had not been sent. 'It is just one of those intrusive, vulgar, pushing, applications which are so common in these days,' he thought. 'Why couldn't I know better than address utter strangers in such a way? I may be an impostor, an idle scamp, a man with a bad character, for all that they know to the contrary. . . . Perhaps that's what I am!' Nevertheless, he found himself clinging to the hope of some reply as to his one last chance of redemption. He waited day after day, saying that it was perfectly absurd to expect, yet expecting.

14 Jude the Obscure, p. 135. Italics mine.

It may be helpful at this point to provide a chart listing the "destroyer" and "redeemer" corresponding to each of the twelve isolates, and indicating whether or not the "destroyer" and "redeemer" are in the isolate's "field" (or have moved in or out of the "field"): 
### A. Superfluous Characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>&quot;Destroyer&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;Redeemer&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clym Yeobright</td>
<td>Eustacia Vye</td>
<td>0 heath society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Dare</td>
<td>0 Paula Power</td>
<td>E de Stancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Henchard</td>
<td>Farfrae (&amp; Newson)</td>
<td>0 Elizabeth-Jane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophy Twycott</td>
<td>Randolph Twycott</td>
<td>0 Sam Hobson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jude Fawley</td>
<td>Arabella</td>
<td>0 University of Christminster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Time</td>
<td>Sue</td>
<td>0 Sue (and himself)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### B. Unrealistic Characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>&quot;Destroyer&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;Redeemer&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eustacia Vye</td>
<td>Clym</td>
<td>0 Damon Wildeve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Chundle</td>
<td>0 curate (as &quot;destroyer&quot;)</td>
<td>E curate (as &quot;redeemer&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy Summers</td>
<td>hangman</td>
<td>0 countryfolk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tess Durbeyfield</td>
<td>Alec d'Urberville</td>
<td>0E Angel Clare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue Bridgehead</td>
<td>Phillotson</td>
<td>0E Jude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jocelyn Pierston</td>
<td>what Jocelyn imagines to be the love-goddess</td>
<td>0 society (through illness of Jocelyn)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

O = not in individual's "field" at crucial time
E = in individual's "field"
EO = first in, then out of, "field"
OE = first out of, then in, "field"

In summation, complicated as these abstract formulations appear, they attempt (in Murphy's words) "a step toward greater realism." The "field" approach is being used to show that Hardy's isolates, whether superfluous or unrealistic (with respect to their society), are not conquered or molded by their environments or by malevolent forces in the universe, as critics have said. These solitary figures are actually participating in a series of dynamic relationships with people and things around them.
Each of these twelve isolates shares with his environment a common "field." But they interact with their environments to only a limited extent. Speaking abstractly, there is "restricted merging" between individual and environment, in the "field." In the individual's environment are two particular elements, one having the effect of a destroyer and the other having the effect of a redeemer. The dynamic relationships between individual, "destroyer," and "redeemer," when visualized against the background of the "field," determine whether or not the individual will become (or will remain) isolated from his fellows, and if so, to what extent.  

Since the "destroyer" and the "redeemer" may not desire the effects produced upon the individual by their actions, we must guard against attaching an unnecessary volitional significance to the activities of these two figures. We are more concerned with the effects, than with the intentions, of the "destroyer" and the "redeemer."

And now, what of Hardy's stories themselves? How does the "field" theory clarify The Well-Beloved, "Old Mrs. Chundle," The Mayor of Casterbridge, and all the others? We shall attempt to apply our formulations to the careers of the twelve isolates in our study, so that we may perhaps see what Hardy was really getting at in his variations on the theme of social fragmentation.
II. THE "FIELD" THEORY AS APPLIED TO HARDY (Cont'd)

B. THE "FIELDS" OF HARDY'S ISOLATES

Superfluous Characters

Clym Yeobright

Like a number of other Hardy characters, Clym Yeobright is a product of a "mixed marriage," that is, he is the offspring of parents representing different strata of society (his father was a small farmer, his mother a curate's daughter). Precocious as a child, and having a greater social status than most of the people with whom he came in contact, Clym had early made a strong impression on the other inhabitants of Egdon Heath.

He had been a lad of whom something was expected. Beyond this all had been chaos. That he would be successful in an original way, or that he would go to the dogs in an original way, seemed equally probable. The only absolute certainty about him was that he would not stand still in the circumstances amid which he was born.¹

¹The Return of the Native, p. 198.

Clym, possibly because of his genteel upbringing and his above-average intelligence, has little in common with the simple illiterate rustics who are his neighbors. His widowed mother, apparently a chronically discontented woman
(perhaps her solitary life on the heath has something to do with her dissatisfied nature), wants him to go far beyond the level of attainment of the Egdonites, and cannot rest easy unless she is assured that he is attempting to do this. As a young man, then, Clym leaves Egdon and enters the world of business, finding himself after a time manager of a large diamond establishment in Paris.

Clym has never really merged with his social environment, although he has made himself very much at home in the heath itself. As a heath youth his "field" was largely limited to the terrain itself, because he did not (we gather from the story) participate very actively in heath life, and because he also did not develop many facets of his personality. Hardly less limited is his "field" when he is a successful business man in Paris. He hates the artificiality and effeminacy of the rich and idle society he must cater to, finding nothing therein to which he might relate his own ideals and interests. Clym apparently has two strong needs—to identify himself with some particular group, and to put his active mind to use, not in a business way, but in an intellectual way. Thus, imbued with the desire to enlighten and instruct the only people with whom he has ever felt anything at all in common—the Egdonites—Clym returns home.

But Clym's merging with his environment is restricted
As for his look, it was a natural cheerfulness striving against depression from without, and not quite succeeding. The look suggested isolation, but it revealed something more. As is usual with bright natures, the deity that lies ignominiously chained within an ephemeral human carcase shone out of him like a ray.²

²Ibid., p. 162

Life on the heath, Hardy implies, like life in general, is a difficult and saddening thing. The more Clym thinks about this, the more readily he falls prey to a kind of mental consumption which devours his vitality and his natural good looks.

Clym is not only too introspective for his own welfare, but insufficiently aware of the needs of his fellow Egdonites and too much imbued with the desire to exert his intellectual superiority. Despite his strong affinity for the other inhabitants of the heath, he is quite out of touch with Egdon life.

Yeobright loved his kind. He had a conviction that the want of most men was knowledge of a sort which brings wisdom rather than affluence. He wished to raise the class at the expense of individuals rather than individuals at the expense of the class. What was more, he was ready at once to be the first unit sacrificed.

... We can hardly imagine bucolic placidity quickening to intellectual aims without imagining
social aims as the transitional phase. Yeobright's local peculiarity was that in striving at high thinking he still cleaved to plain living --nay, wild and meagre living in many respects, and brotherliness with clowns.

... The rural world was not ripe for him ...

... To argue upon the possibility of culture before luxury to the bucolic world may be to argue truly, but it is an attempt to disturb a sequence to which humanity has been long accustomed. ...

3Ibid, pp. 203-204.

A striking example of Clym's indifference to the real needs of the poor benighted Egdonites is his attitude toward the soil of the heath. It is better, feels Clym, who loves the desolation of the heath, that the soil be arid than fertile:

... when he looked from the heights on his way he could not help indulging in a barbarous satisfaction at observing that, in some of the attempts at reclamation from the waste, tillage, after holding on for a year or two, had receded again in despair, the ferns and furze-tufts stubbornly reasserting themselves.


Although Clym's superfluity to the heath society is not apparent to him, it is to the others. More perceptive in some ways than the educated ex-Parisian, the Egdon rustics realize that Clym will be wasting his efforts if he
attempts to bring education to the heath.

'. . . I shall keep a school as near to Egdon as possible, so as to be able to walk over here and have a night-school in my mother's house. But I must study a little at first, to get properly qualified. Now, neighbours, I must go.'

And Clym resumed his walk across the heath.

'He'll never carry it out in the world,' said Fairway. 'In a few weeks he'll learn to see things otherwise.'

'Tis good-hearted of the young man,' said another. 'But, for my part, I think he had better mind his business.'

---


Eustacia's grandfather, too, opposes schools in general (see p. 125).

Interestingly enough, much as Clym seeks to "redeem" the society of Egdon Heath from its ignorance and rusticity, he himself desires to be "redeemed" by association with it. There are no people other than the heath dwellers capable of curing Clym's sense of isolation. Away from them he is rootless and without purpose, back among them he can "find himself." It is not association in an equalitarian sense that Clym wishes, however, but association in a hierarchical sense, with himself the intellectual and spiritual leader, and the Egdonites the followers. At all events, the heath society has the effect of a potential redeemer on Clym, as he has the effect of a potential redeemer on it.
In a belated burst of masculine emotion, Clym falls in love with another lonely heath inhabitant, Eustacia Vye. Eustacia craves only a "great love" and a life in some exciting city such as Paris, but Clym does not realize this and assumes, mistakenly, that she will be satisfied with merely being his wife and helping him carry out his plans for bringing education to the heath. Since she has had an education, Clym feels, she might make it possible for him to raise his aspirations considerably higher. As he tells his mother, who violently opposes any relations between him and Eustacia,

"She is excellently educated, and would make a good matron in a boarding-school. I candidly own that I have modified my views a little, in deference to you; and it should satisfy you. I no longer adhere to my intention of giving with my own mouth rudimentary education to the lowest class. I can do better. I can establish a good private school for farmers' sons, and without stopping the school I can manage to pass examinations. By this means, and by the assistance of a wife like her--'

'O, Clym!'

'I shall ultimately, I hope, be at the head of one of the best schools in the county.'6

6Ibid., p. 227.

Their marriage is a highly unsuccessful one. Eustacia becomes disgruntled when she realizes that Clym does not intend to leave the heath, and, when his eyes become af-
fected from overstudy and he takes to furze-cutting to occupy himself, she can barely restrain her disgust. In her disaffection for Clym and particularly for his ill-natured mother, Eustacia unwittingly sets in motion a chain of events that results in the old lady’s death. Clym’s fortunes are now at their lowest ebb. Denouncing his wife for killing his mother and for being with another man (the latter charge was true), Clym brings about the termination of their marriage. It appears that Eustacia has exercised a destructive effect upon him: by indirectly causing the death of his mother and by conducting herself improperly as his wife, she has destroyed his happiness. And, when Eustacia accidentally drowns before a repentant Clym can win her back to him, he is utterly grief-stricken, and his personality is even less stable than it had been when he and Eustacia separated. Although his educational plans have not been abandoned, Clym’s merging with his environment is now more restricted than ever.

He had but three activities alive in him. One was his almost daily walk to the little graveyard wherein his mother lay; another, his just as frequent visits by night to the more distant enclosure which numbered his Eustacia among its dead; the third was self-preparation for a vocation which alone seemed likely to satisfy his cravings— that of an itinerant preacher of the eleventh commandment.
Eventually, Clym finds a slight measure of relief. After preparing himself as well as his poor eyesight and his shattered spirits will allow him, he becomes an "itinerant preacher of the eleventh commandment":

He left alone creeds and systems of philosophy, finding enough and more than enough to occupy his tongue in the opinions and actions common to all good men. Some believed him, and some believed not; some said that his words were commonplace, others complained of his want of theological doctrine; while others again remarked that it was well enough for a man to take to preaching who could not see to do anything else. But everywhere he was kindly received, for the story of his life had become generally known.8

As a preacher with an audience wherever he travels in the heath country—hamlet, village, or town—Clym merges with his environment more than he has ever done. Modest though his instructional activities may be compared to his earlier plans, he is doing what he has long wanted to do: bring an inspiring message before his fellow inhabitants of Egdon Heath. There is little if any financial reward, apparently, in his kind of work, but to Clym that is not important. He is at least attempting to attain a state of
communion with society, and is therefore following his deepest desires.

But Clym's merging with his environment is still quite restricted, although not nearly so much as before. His message falls on unresponsive ears because it, like Clym himself, is really superfluous to the people. The people are resistant to ideas of moral uplift delivered by a man who is not a preacher and does no other demonstrably useful work. In a certain sense they are not out of his "field" entirely, for they provide him with audiences wherever he travels. Yet they do not harken to what he says; they do not accord him the honor of making him their intellectual and spiritual leader. A lay preacher is an anomaly in Clym's Wessex, the Wessex of the 1840's, and

9Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p. 72.

Clym as a lay preacher is particularly unaware of the physical needs of his audiences, so that he can hardly be expected to persuade them that he understands their intellectual and spiritual needs. Just as the Egdonites are not altogether outside Clym's "field," so they are not altogether within it. It is perhaps most accurate to say that they are at the periphery of his "field," since they enter into a relationship with him, but neither a close nor a mu-
tually communicative one. Whether Clym would have merged to a greater extent with his environment had he been a schoolteacher it is difficult to say. One suspects, however, that he is not quite as superfluous to his fellows as a doer (even if he only does lay preaching) than he was as a planner of seemingly impractical educational projects. Clym's "redemption" as a functional member of society—a person with a definite position and occupation—is far from complete, but it represents a major advance over his earlier condition of isolation.

Seen from a "field"-analysis standpoint, Clym is a person cut off from his contemporary materialistic society. I am using the word "society" now in a larger sense, for Clym rejects the values of the heath dwellers as well as of the Parisians. Mere personal gain, mere physical subsistence from day to day, are unthinkable aims in life to Clym. Life must have a real purpose, he feels, mankind (particularly his own familiars) must be told what life is all about. Specifically, the lower class must be given the wisdom traditionally possessed by the more intelligent of the upper class. As he tells his mother upon his return from Paris,

'There is no chance of getting rich. But with my system of education, which is as new as it is true, I shall do a great deal of good to my fellow-creatures.'
'Dreams, dreams! If there had been any system left to be invented they would have found it out at the universities long before this time.'

'Never, mother. They cannot find it out, because their teachers don't come in contact with the class which demands such a system—that is, those who have had no preliminary training. My plan is one for instilling high knowledge into empty minds without first cramming them with what has to be uncrammed again before true study begins.'

10The Return of the Native, pp. 238-239.

This "high knowledge" seems comparable with what he provides the heath dwellers once he becomes an itinerant preacher: "morally unimpeachable subjects" involving "the opinions and actions common to all good men."

Clym is like many reformers of the period, continental as well as English. Hardy speaks, in fact (p. 203), of "his studious life in Paris, where he had become acquainted with ethical systems popular at the time." In attempting to bring new educational methods to the people Clym is following in the footsteps of earlier pedagogical reformers: Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Herbart. Unlike many of his contemporary reformers, however, Clym is not a utopian. He does not visualize harmonious communities that have eliminated hate, competition, want, and personal property. Born a number of years after the French Revolution, Clym is not a fiery idealist like Shelley or the early Coleridge, eager
to make the world over to his liking. He merely wants to educate, to enlighten.

But Clym, in common with many like him, does not understand the people he wants to improve. Clym's decision (made while he was in Paris) to become an educator may be understood in the light of Hardy's statement that "The happiness of a class can rarely be estimated aright by philosophers who look down upon that class from the Olympian heights of society." Since he is concerned with spiritual development in a group whose economic and other physical problems had not yet been taken care of, he is bound to be separated from these people. The difficulty of growing crops on the heath, the poor communication between the heath communities and larger population center like London, the isolation of each heath community itself—these factors would make it practically inevitable for a reformer like Clym to be a superfluous figure, a person without any clearly defined role in the life of the society. Yet Hardy indicates (p. 195) that Clym is a harbinger of a new trend: "Mentally he was in a provincial future, that is, he was in many points abreast with the central town thinking of his
date." Since the forerunner is by nature isolated from the definite group, Clym is alone, and by that very fact is not nearly so convincing to his people as he would be in the company of a few other ethical or spiritual reformers.

It is worth noting that a number of actual "enlighteners," like Clym, attached something of a religious connotation to their messages. It may be (although I can only surmise this) that with a loss or diminution of religious faith Clym turned toward a faith in humanity or a selected portion of humanity as did Comte, Carlyle, Emerson, Arnold, Nietzsche, and others. Clym's "moral lectures or Sermons on the Mount" appear to be secular versions of what were conceived as clerical messages. Without stretching the point too far, it would seem also that Clym is at one with the above-mentioned figures in conceiving of a great leader who would be a kind of saint, hero, representative man, saving remnant, or superman. This leader is Clym himself. The actual "enlighteners" did not generally imagine themselves to be the saviors of society or the heralds of the new age, but Clym conceives the idea that society needs redemption--on a secular if spiritual level--and casts himself in the role of the "redeemer." There is no conflict between this view and the view I have held in my "field" analysis of Clym, wherein I have tried to show that society is his potential "redeemer"--if he can only merge with it,
have it in his "field." Clym is only seeking roots, seeking people sufficiently like himself with whom he can communicate (preferably as a leader).

According to my argument, then, Hardy is showing us in Clym a pathetic, isolated figure desiring to save and to be saved—to save society from the consequences of its ignorance and backwardness (Egdon Heath society is of course ideal for such a project), and to be saved from estrangement and purposelessness. Clym is not thwarted by fate, chance, or society, but rather by those elements in his personality (immaturity, impracticality, etc.) and those in the personalities of his fellow Egdonites which, combined with the physical conditions of the heath, make difficult a "meeting of minds" in rural Wessex of the 1840's.
William Dare

William Dare, as the baseborn and unrecognized off-spring of a member of the noble but decadent de Stancy family, is without social status, roots, or visible means of support. He merges with his environment only to the extent of attempting to take from it what he needs for his sustenance or desires for his satisfaction. His father, a captain in the militia and an unsteady, impractical person,\(^1\)

\(^1\)Captain de Stancy is not unlike his father, who dissipated the family fortune and lost the ancestral castle.

gives him financial assistance and sententious advice from time to time, but the wilful and highly imprudent Dare treats him like a foolish erring boy. Despite his ignoble position in society, Dare has seen and done more than most men far older and of high social rank. Somehow--Hardy does not explain--Dare has travelled all over the world while still very young. He knows many languages, possesses considerable technical knowledge in a number of different fields, and is always seeking useful information wherever it may be found. Possibly, even, he has had some contact with the anarchist movement, for he carries a gun, "'as all cosmopolites do,'" has an intimate knowledge of the conspiratorial center at Geneva, and voices radical ideas a-
"I am a citizen of the world," Dare says. "I owe no country patriotism, and no king or queen obedience. A man whose country has no boundary is your only true gentleman." (A Laodicean, pp. 158-159.)

Obviously, however, Dare is really outside of things. Before he discovered his illegitimacy and noble origin, he had led a normal, well-adjusted life, but since then his conduct has been, as his father tells him, "intolerable." Certainly his conduct is often at least injudicious, but this is in large measure the result of his superfluity to those around him. Nowhere is his superfluity more glaring than in his self-interested attempts to marry his unwilling father off to Paula Power, the wealthy heiress who now owns Stancy Castle. One of the arguments Dare uses to bring the girl before his father's attention is that the de Stancys (of whom he considers himself a member) are in need of the physical resources represented by the Powers.

'... The truth is, captain, we aristocrats must not take too high a tone. Our days as an independent division of society, which holds aloof from other sections, are past. This has been my argument (in spite of my strong Norman feelings) ever since I broached the subject of your marrying this girl, who represents both intellect and wealth—all, in fact, except the historical prestige that you represent. ...'
In order to facilitate the marriage, Dare attempts to bring ruin to a young suitor of Paula's, the architect George Somerset. He stops at nothing to disqualify Somerset as a candidate for Paula's hand—deceit, trespass, theft, misrepresentation, forgery, all are useful expedients to Dare in his campaign against Somerset. Dare succeeds up to a point. Paula, shocked and disgusted at what she considers Somerset's misconduct, is amenable to Captain de Stancy's proposal of marriage. Eventually, however, she discovers Dare's chicanery, and determines to have him prosecuted under the law. De Stancy, at the risk of having her break off the marriage plans, reveals that Dare is his illegitimate son. Paula, who will have no more of father or son, agrees not to press charges against Dare if he will leave the environs of Stancy Castle.\footnote{Earlier, when it appeared that Dare's trickery would be discovered, he accurately described his position: "I am superfluous now." (Ibid., p. 359.)}

\footnote{Earlier, when it appeared that Dare's trickery would be discovered, he accurately described his position: "I am superfluous now." (Ibid., p. 359.)}

Up to this point de Stancy has had the effect of a redeemer upon Dare. The Captain, well within Dare's "field," has provided the basis for his son's hopes for becoming a
respectable member of society. If his father and Paula would only marry, Dare has reasoned, wealth and rank (through legal adoption) would then be his. In other words, Dare would then be able for the first time to really merge with his environment. Even when Dare's plans fail, de Stancy acts as a redeemer--by preventing Dare from being taken by the law,\textsuperscript{16} and therefore from being even more of

\textsuperscript{16}Characteristically, the brazen Dare, who has blamed his conduct on the circumstances of his birth, indicates to his father that Paula need not have been informed of the father-son relationship and that he would have been willing to take his chances with the law. Dare and his father subsequently sever relations, but Dare appears unconcerned, because he is not in a position to "use" his father for the time being.

an isolate than he has been.

Paula, earlier in Dare's "field" and vital to his plans for merging with his environment, becomes, in effect, Dare's destroyer. Her animosity to Dare (i.e., her leaving his "field") once she realizes his unscrupulous nature, results in her making it impossible for him to "merge" for some time to come. Although Dare pretends to be indifferent to Paula's "destructive" act toward him, he retaliates by surreptitiously setting fire to Stancy Castle, and thereby restricts even further his merging with his environment. Now he must be not only a nameless "nobody" and
an outcast, but a fugitive as well.

Dare's career is far more complex than appears on the surface. I am not referring to his mysterious background and knowledge, nor to his supposedly diabolical nature, which prompted at least one commentator (Guerard) to regard him as an equivalent of the devil. Rather, I allude to the underlying reasons for his failure to merge with his environment. The question may well be raised, had Dare not behaved in an antisocial fashion, would he then have "merged"? Before we can answer this we must consider Dare's position. Once Dare discovered his true identity—and his "field" became almost completely altered from what it had been before he knew of de Stancy—he might have done one of three things. He might have obeyed his father, accepting from him occasional financial assistance (de Stancy is only a halfhearted provider at best) and guidance in choosing a suitable occupation. Or, he might have resented the circumstances of his birth and his father's failure to publicly acknowledge him, and by way of retaliation taken "all he could get" from society (and possibly his father). Or, again, he might have conducted himself with propriety and in a diplomatic fashion attempted to persuade his father to legitimize and properly provide for him.

Well-behaved as Dare may have been earlier, once he learns who he is, the traits of docility and patience leave
his "field" (i.e., his personality undergoes a reorganization), and he becomes aggressive and self-seeking to the point of not recognizing any laws as binding. Thus he chooses the second alternative and "goes it alone," utilizing any opportunities that might provide him with financial or other advantages. Merging with his environment when his personality is like this will be difficult at best. But the other two courses of action would not have greatly facilitated "merging" either. The first would have left him dependent on an unreliable and somewhat indifferent father. The third course would have had much the same effect on him. In any event, Dare's early feeling of stability and security vanished when he learned that his supposed parents were not his real parents and that his present home was only an adoptive residence. Theoretically, it might have been possible for Dare to get along without his father's help, despite the stigma and other disabilities attendant upon being baseborn. But since he was very young when he discovered his identity (in the story he is apparently about twenty), and was therefore too immature to weigh the consequences of one kind of behavior as opposed to another, it is understandable that he would become aggressive in his behavior. A child raised in poverty, as Dare was, and suddenly told that he is the illegitimate son of a member of a noble family, can hardly be expected to take the news with
equanimity and quietly continue his humble mode of existence. In the final analysis, however, Dare reacted in his own way, not as anyone in his position would have done.

If, then, Dare could hardly have "merged" to any extent, whatever his behavior, what does the "field" analysis show? Is he not merely at the mercy of his environment, a plucky fighter against a cruelly oppressive society? This, I believe, is far from the case. However restricted Dare's "merging," he is not completely cut off from his environment. Dare, like all of Hardy's other characters, has some relations with those around him. These relations may not be cordial, they may not be indicative of more extensive relations to come, but they constitute "ties" with society. Society has not, after all, undertaken to stone Dare to death or to brand him with the sign of Cain. Had something of this sort happened, a "field" analysis of Dare might have been pointless. Ignoble though his origin and unpromising though his prospects may be, Dare is able to move about freely and derive a means of subsistence, and therefore we may consider him as merged to some extent, however slightly, with his environment. The "field" analysis attempts to show the measure of his relations with society. Dare's antisocial conduct may thus be seen not as Dare's way of "striking back," but as Dare's way of trying to "merge," that is, trying to get what he wants so that he,
like all of those around him, will have a secure place in the world in which he finds himself. The travels abroad (which have taught him much about the world), the wheedling of funds from his father, the plan to marry the latter to Paula Power, the campaign against Somerset--these are all expedients for bettering Dare's position, for bringing him closer to a source of stability and security. Dare abounds in energy and imagination, yet lacks judgment and patience. Most of the people in Dare's immediate environment (his father, the latter's sister, Paula, her aunt), while they are of only average intelligence and are not particularly alert to things going on around them, are perceptive enough, when evidence becomes available, to realize that Dare has been guilty of grave misconduct. Thus, when it becomes known that Dare has attempted to forge Somerset's name to a telegram in order to obtain money from Paula, those who have been nominally friendly toward Dare reverse their attitude toward him. Even his father, while he would not harm Dare, does not wish to continue his former relations with the young man. Thus Dare's "expedients," his attempts to "merge" more extensively in his own way, prove highly unsuccessful because of the reaction between his immature personality and the more or less normal personalities of those around him.

Thus the "field" analysis of the baseborn and unscrup-
Dare has attempted to show that he is peremptorily cut off from those around him, at the end of A Laodicean, not because society is unalterably opposed to those who are born out of wedlock or who attempt to break the law, but because of a complex series of human interactions involving Dare, his father, and Paula in a variety of circumstances. Neither Dare nor society is to be blamed, either for Dare's misconduct or for his difficulties as one who is illegitimate. It is important to point this out because Hardy commentators have occasionally attempted to vindicate certain unsavory characters by saying that they are "more sinned against than sinning." Even if this platitude is translated into secular terms ("more wronged than wrongdoing") it cannot do justice to a complex situation like that of Dare. To implicate here either the isolate or society is difficult and even perhaps pointless; to go beyond the notion of guilt and value, to transcend partisan prejudices, is no less difficult but far more illuminating, and possibly more equitable as well.

Hardy's picture of Dare as a superfluous isolate who through his actions becomes even more superfluous ought properly to be studied against the background of the nineteenth-century revolutionary movements, particularly the anarchist conspiracy in Geneva. As I have said, Dare may have been associated with the anarchist movement, for there
are a number of indications that he has had some contact with them. More important than his "cosmopolitan" ways and his statements about new conditions and the anachronism of the titled class (which he nevertheless desires to be affiliated with) is his intimate knowledge of the activities of the Geneva conspirators (this is revealed in Book the Fifth, Chapter XI). The "field" analysis of Dare has minimized this aspect of Dare's background, but it deserves a considerable amount of attention.

Hardy was for many years concerned with social problems. His unpublished first novel, The Poor Man and the Lady (1868), was socialistic in nature. According to Hardy's official biography,

The story was, in fact, a sweeping dramatic satire of the squirearchy and nobility, London society, the vulgarity of the middle class, modern Christianity, church restoration, and political and domestic morals in general...

Although Hardy like Dare was wistfully attracted to the aristocracy, he was sensitive to the needs of the people...
and spoke up whenever he thought that social abuses were being perpetrated. A keen observer of contemporary conditions, he was aware of the social and political upheavals of the later nineteenth century, as his writings show. According to a recent critical biography,

During Hardy's last year in London [1867] there had been frequent working-class demonstrations in industrial towns, and riotous meetings in Hyde Park. During this same year...two memorable things occurred, the formation of the London Working Men's Association and the passage of the Reform Bill. Whether Hardy was involved to any serious extent in the ferment of this year is doubtful, but his sympathies were with the workingman and the reflection of these sympathies is revealed in this immature work [The Poor Man and the Lady].

19Evelyn Hardy, Thomas Hardy: A Critical Biography (London: The Hogarth Press, 1954), pp. 95-96. Yet Hardy's politics were neither Radical nor Tory, but "Intrinsicist." That is, he opposed "privilege derived from accident of any kind"—aristocratic or democratic. See EL, p. 268.

Hardy's treatment of Dare in connection with the anarchists thus reflects a long-held interest in contemporary social conditions and popular movements. Dare's styling himself a "citizen of the world" highlights his isolation and makes it in a sense comparable with that of the Geneva anarchists,20 for a person owing no country allegiance is a

20I say "in a sense" for we are concerned with Dare primarily as a would-be de Stancy, not as a citizen of the
person enjoying no country's protection, a person without durable roots that unite him with society. Dare may profitably be compared with those of a number of other contemporary literary isolates of base origin involved in some kind of underground political activity such as the anarchist movement: Henry James's Hyacinth Robinson in *The Princess Casamassima*, Conrad's Razumov in *Under Western Eyes*, Gide's Lafcadio in *Les Caves du Vatican*. 21

As the "field" analysis of Dare and the supplementary commentary have shown, Hardy, in depicting him, was not merely creating another melodramatic villain, complete with diabolical manners, as some critics have inferred. Hardy was presenting the complexities of a very common social problem, particularly in Wessex—illegitimacy—and was, moreover, calling attention to the larger social forces which were producing revolutionary rumblings on the Continent. Hardy did not sympathize particularly with the superfluous Dare or with society, nor did he sympathize with those driven to seek revolutionary means for improving so-
ciety. But Hardy did throw light on the contemporary so-
cial unrest that resulted from and then intensified the
widespread poverty, rootlessness, and isolation.
Michael Henchard

Michael Henchard is a violent-tempered, fiercely energetic man of mediocre intelligence and brooding temperament. Too unstable to keep in check his emotional reactions, he cannot adjust to the ordinary stresses and strains of life, and is, moreover, lacking both in judgment and in consideration for others. It is hardly surprising, in view of his tremendous power of self-assertion and concomitant lack of self-control, that he forms close human ties, amasses a vast amount of property, and exercises forceful leadership, only to lose in a relatively short time everything he has gained.

In many ways Henchard is the most isolated, the most superfluous, of all of the Hardy characters in this study. Once his fortunes begin to ebb, figuratively speaking, his merging with his environment, formerly extensive, suddenly becomes sharply restricted. This condition grows worse until he has only a vegetative, or physiological, connection with his environment, and, before long, even that connection is broken. It is not, however, from the story's events alone that the reader becomes deeply aware of Henchard's isolation, but also from Hardy's frequent comments on Henchard's character. Throughout *The Mayor of Casterbridge* Hardy makes it plain that Henchard is the kind of person
who does not get along well with people and, furthermore, is not at peace with himself. Perhaps the best-known of these passages is the one in which Hardy speaks of character in relation to fate:

Character is Fate, said Novalis . . . Henchard might not inaptly be described as Faust has been described—as a vehement gloomy being who had quitted the ways of vulgar men without light to guide him on a better way.22

22The Mayor of Casterbridge, p. 131.

A number of commentators have regarded the statement "Character is Fate" as an indication that the bitter and isolated—but somehow likeable—Henchard brought on all of his misfortunes and therefore was to be blamed for the tragedy of his life.23 Other commentators, deriving a different meaning from the book, attribute Henchard's troubles to outside forces, such as "Fate" or society.24 But Har-

24Particularly in the case of Henchard (because of the "Character is Fate" statement), this sort of interpretation can lead to serious confusion. Cf. Webster, On A Darkling Plain:

Hardy makes it clear that Henchard is mistaken in
attributing malignity to Fate, that the events he believed the design of an evil power developed without any consciously sinister motivation. Yet there are times when even Hardy appears to feel a sinister intelligence in control . . . (p. 147)

We feel that it is an honor to belong to the same race with a man who so courageously resists an implacable and sinister Fate. (p. 150)

. . . Henchard is more sinned against than sinning . . . We feel that even his character is not his fault. The seemingly sinister power that designed the cruel process of sexual selection and the law of battle by which men live, which controls even accident, also dictated Henchard's impulses. (pp. 149-150)

dy's philosophical asides throughout The Mayor are not to be taken too literally—for example, the passage quoted above is an allusion to Novalis, not an affirmation of a Hardyan credo. Unless we begin our analysis of Henchard with the assumption that blame lies neither with him nor with "outside forces"—in fact, that it is pointless to talk of blame here—we shall never be able to understand him. Hardy's statement (quoted in Chapter Two) that "Life is what we make it as Whist is what we make it" may be taken as the gloss on Henchard's story. Preserving the image of a card game, we might say that Henchard does not get good cards, but unfortunately he makes matters worse by the way he plays his cards.

At the age of twenty-one, Henchard is an unemployed
hay-trusser with a wife (Susan) and child. While under the influence of alcohol, he sells his family to a sailor named Newson because he feels that they have hindered his success. Henchard now is merged only very slightly with his environment. Without work, without those who have been closest to him, he no longer has any real ties to society.

But Henchard had not entirely intended to sell his wife and child: the sale had arisen primarily from one of his common emotional outbursts. Although he had spoken earlier to Susan of the possibility of a sale, he had not been quite serious; but in the two years of their marriage he had given Susan "nothing but temper." Whenever threatened by any danger or irritation Henchard reacts by manifesting a "fight or flight" behavior pattern, which re-

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25 Wife-sale was not unknown in Wessex, and an actual instance of this in the early nineteenth century gave Hardy the idea for the episode in the story. See the "Preface" to *The Mayor*.

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26 Modern psychiatry has discovered that when individuals are subjected to more stress than they can cope with, they "break down" and either withdraw in some way (often irrationally) or aggressively "counterattack" the source of danger (frequently also in an irrational manner). This neurotic mode of adjustment, which is shown by Henchard, is called the "fight or flight" reaction. See Leon J. Saul, *Emotional Maturity: The Development and Dynamics of Personality* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1947), p. 5.
sults in social estrangement, guilt-feelings or shame, continued hostility, and self-punishment. Thus once Henchard recovers from his drunken stupor and finds himself without his family, he is smitten with embarrassment, blames Susan for her simplicity and meekness in allowing the sale, and vows on a Bible at a church altar not to touch liquor for twenty-one years.

During the next nineteen years Henchard proceeds to advance his fortunes, and by age forty he is the most important citizen in the thriving market town of Casterbridge. As mayor and leading corn merchant (as well as churchwarden), he is merged very extensively with his environment, though he has incurred some animosity among the townspeople, because of his temper and his harsh business practices (for example, selling the millers and bakers spoiled wheat). What Hardy calls Henchard's "one talent of energy" has carried the former migratory farm hand and wife seller to a position of the greatest prominence in rural Wessex. Since the inhabitants of Casterbridge appear to be a rather placid and unenterprising lot, it is not altogether surprising that Henchard has been able to exert such a superiority of force over them.

In a relatively short time Henchard is even more "merged." He encounters a canny young Scot, Donald Farfrae, becomes greatly attracted to him, and hires him as
manager. Susan and her daughter (by Newson) come to Cast-
erbridge, humbly "claiming kin," and Henchard duly remar-
ries Susan (without letting the townspeople know that he
had once sold her) and adopts the girl, whom he imagines to
be his own Elizabeth-Jane. Now he is settled and success-
ful in his personal relations as well as in his public re-
lations.

At this point, when Henchard is at the apex of his
success and prosperity, he begins to undergo a reversal of
fortune. He and Farfrae disagree about Henchard's harsh
treatment of an employee, he realizes that Farfrae (because
of his sagacity) is rapidly surpassing him in the esteem of
the community and therefore brings on the dissolution of
their partnership, his wife dies, and, after making the
discovery that Elizabeth-Jane is not his real daughter, he
alienates her from him. Following this, Henchard loses his
former mistress (and intended wife), Lucetta, to Farfrae,
fails to retain his position of respect in the community
once the early sale of his family becomes known, and under-
goes bankruptcy. Farfrae, on the other hand, is now a
prominent grain dealer almost as important in Casterbridge
politics as Henchard had been. The ruined Henchard, having
no other means of earning a living, becomes one of Far-
frac's laborers.

The wealthy and winsome Farfrae buys Henchard's house
and furniture, as well as his business. Henchard's sup-
planter in love, domestic holdings, business, and politics,
Farfrae takes on the aspect of a "destroyer," for in a
sense he has plundered and laid waste his former friend and
employer. Having been persuaded by Henchard not very long
before to remain in Casterbridge and accept a position as
his manager--i.e., to be in Henchard's "field"--Farfrae is
still in Henchard's "field," but their positions in life
are now largely reversed:

At the beginning of the winter it was rumoured
about Casterbridge that Mr. Farfrae, already on
the Town Council, was to be proposed for Mayor in
a year or two.

... the piece of news acted as a reviviscient
breath to that old view of his--of Donald Farfrae
as his triumphant rival who rode rough-shod over
him.

'A fellow of his age going to be Mayor, in-
deed!' he murmured with a corner-drawn smile on
his mouth. "... Here be I, his former master,
working for him as man, and he the man standing
as master, with my house and my furniture and my
what-you-may-call wife all his own."

Not only is Farfrae a major cause of Henchard's super-
fluity (although Henchard allows and even facilitates many
of the destructive influences that befall him), but there
is another "destroyer" contributing to Henchard's superflu-
ity. This is the sailor Newson, who comes to Casterbridge
to claim his daughter, after the poor and lonely Henchard becomes reconciled with Elizabeth-Jane. Henchard, in order to keep Elizabeth-Jane, who is now a "redeemer" to him (she is the only spiritually sustaining contact he has with his environment), tells Newson that the girl is dead, and the sailor leaves. As for Elizabeth-Jane, believing that she is really Henchard's daughter, she has been in a sense taking care of him, and intends to continue to do so. But Henchard knows that Newson will return, and that the deception will be discovered, as a result of which Elizabeth-Jane will repudiate him. As a result his feeling of isolation and superfluity is now intense:

His mood was no longer that of the rebellious, ironical, reckless misadventurer; but the leaden gloom of one who has lost all that can make life interesting, or even tolerable. There would remain nobody for him to be proud of, nobody to fortify him; for Elizabeth-Jane would soon be but a stranger, and worse. Susan, Farfrae, Lucetta, Elizabeth—all had gone from him, one after one, either by his fault or by his misfortune.

In place of them he had no interest, hobby, or desire. 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.

The whole land ahead of him was as darkness itself; there was nothing to come, nothing to wait for. Yet in the natural course of life he might possibly have to linger on earth another thirty or forty years—scoffed at; at best pitied. The thought of it was unendurable.
Ibid*, pp. 340-341. Hardy's statement about "hard fate" may be taken as metaphorical, since he makes it plain throughout the story that a combination of individual and environment, circumstances such as Henchard's temper and poor judgment interacting with the sensibilities of those with whom he is associated and with uncertain agricultural conditions, underlie Henchard's difficulties.

Farfrae, whose wife has died as a result of a public "skimmity-ride" (a demonstration mocking her former relations with Henchard), resumes his early courtship of Elizabeth-Jane, which had been interrupted when he and Lucretta had fallen in love. Now as before, Henchard is not in favor of the match, and leaves Casterbridge, his "merging" now reduced to an almost unprecedented level, since he has neither associations nor belief in self to sustain his existence. His customary behavioral response to danger—guilt feelings, fight or flight, self-punishment, etc.—is clearly indicated in his bitter soliloquy:

'If I had only got her with me—if I only had!' he said. 'Hard work would be nothing to me then! But that was not to be. I--Cain--go alone as I deserve—an outcast and a vagabond. But my punishment is not greater than I can bear!'29

While Henchard is away, Farfrae and Elizabeth-Jane forward their marriage plans, and Newson returns, having
discovered Henchard's deception. When the girl is made to realize that Henchard has kept her from her true father, she becomes incensed, and determines to forget the absent man, who now means nothing to her. Henchard's other "destroyer," Newson, now in his "field" again, facilitates the wedding preparations.

When Henchard returns, in time for the wedding festivities, Elizabeth-Jane repudiates him. He had kept her from her true father, she charges--first by deceiving her as to her relationship to Newson, and second by sending Newson away with a story of her death. Henchard cannot bear to defend himself against these accusations and wan-

30 It is important to remember that the "field" is a figurative expression for a hypothetical area of individual-environment interaction. Thus, since Newson "takes away" what has been Henchard's--Elizabeth-Jane--Newson, like Farfrae (for similar reasons), may be considered within Henchard's "field," even though Henchard is not at the moment with them.

31 One possible rebuttal, as Hardy states it (p. 377), indicates an individual-environment relationship, in the manner of our "field" formulations: "... he had himself been deceived in her identity at first, till informed by her mother's letter that his own child had died ... " Thus neither Henchard nor anyone else was actually to blame, since the circumstances leading to the deception are too intricately interwoven.
lers away, now less "merged" than he has ever been in his
life, and, in fact, ready to die.

Sometime later, Elizabeth-Jane, experiencing remorse
at her alienation of Henchard, attempts (with the aid of
her husband, Farfrae) to find him, but when she does it is
too late. In his hour of greatest need Elizabeth-Jane, his
potential "redeemer," his last hope on earth, had left his
"field."32 The superfluous Henchard, with nothing in his

32 The girl's withdrawal of support has what appears to
be a destructive effect on Henchard, but she is not really
a "destroyer" figure. Farfrae and Newson, who in a sense
"take" all of Henchard's possessions (however much he may
have facilitated their "taking"), have a genuine destruc­tive
effect on him; Elizabeth-Jane, who might have "saved"
Henchard from complete isolation, earlier had refused to do
so, and thus is only a potential, or unsuccessful, "redeem­er," but not a "destroyer." Moreover, Henchard regards
Farfrae and Newson as his supplanters (and, by extension,
his destroyers), but does not so regard Elizabeth-Jane.

"field" to make him want to retain a connection with his
environment, has sickened and died.

This "field" analysis of Henchard has only touched on
a significant feature of the period in which he lived--the
large-scale agricultural unrest which affected the lives of
countless thousands of rural dwellers, blighting them with
poverty, rootlessness, isolation, crime. Underlying this
unrest was, in Hardy's words ("Preface" to The Mayor), "the
uncertain harvests which immediately preceded the repeal of
the Corn Laws [1846]." Henchard's bankruptcy was greatly hastened by his poor business judgment, which made him indulge in heavy grain speculations without studying all of the market conditions, and by his superstitious nature, which made him rely, just before harvest time, on the advice of a weather prophet. Hardy thus describes the agricultural and economic situation with which Henchard (and countless others) could not cope:

The time was in the years immediately before foreign competition had revolutionized the trade in grain; when still, as from the earliest ages, the wheat quotations from month to month depended entirely upon the home harvest. A bad harvest, or the prospect of one, would double the price of corn in a few weeks; and the promise of a good yield would lower it as rapidly. Prices were like the roads of the period, steep in gradient, reflecting in their phases the local conditions, without engineering, levellings, or averages.

The farmer's income was ruled by the wheat-crop within his own horizon, and the wheat-crop by the weather. Thus, in person, he became a sort of flesh-barometer, with feelers always directed to the sky and wind around him. The local atmosphere was everything to him; the atmospheres of other countries a matter of indifference. The people, too, who were not farmers, the rural multitude, saw in the god of the weather a more important personage than they do now. Indeed the feeling of the peasantry in this matter was so intense as to be almost unrealizable in these equable days. Their impulse was well-nigh to prostrate themselves in lamentation before untimely rains and tempests, which came as the Alastor of those households whose crime it was to be poor.33

33Ibid., pp. 211-212.
More important even than the Corn Laws as a source of unsettled agricultural conditions was the widespread condition of rural depopulation resulting in the wholesale migration to the cities and towns. At the beginning of *The Mayor*, Henchard, who was not a mere laborer, but a "skilled countryman" (a hay-trusser), is shown in the predicament of having no work and no immediate prospects of obtaining work, wherever he might travel. Hardy, in a letter to Rider Haggard in 1902, mentions the migration to the towns:

>In this consideration [the tendency toward migration] the case of the farm-labourers merges itself in that of rural cottagers generally, including jobbing labourers, artizans, and nondescripts of all sorts who go to make up the body of English villagery. . . . The prime cause of the removal is, unquestionably, insecurity of tenure. If they do not escape this in the towns it is not fraught with such trying consequences there as in the village, whence they may have to travel ten or twenty miles to find another house and other work. 34

34 *RV*, p. 95.

At the time of the story this "insecurity of tenure" was relatively mild, compared with the situation a few decades later, but there was already under way a marked tendency toward shortening the period during which laborers and cottagers might retain their positions or holdings. The large landowners, seeking an improvement in agricultur-
al (and, therefore, financial) methods, leased more and more to smaller farmers, who in turn hired migratory laborers, skilled and unskilled. (The enclosing of common lands, much to the detriment of those without remunerative holdings, has already been mentioned in Chapter One.) These unattached laborers were hired only on a yearly basis (from Lady Day to Lady Day), and had neither roots nor any other real security. Village life too was undermined, as the petty tenants (often lifeholders) were gradually driven away by the pulling down of cottages as the tenancies expired. The landowners attempted, by not renewing the contracts of tenure, to insure their own continued prosperity, to which the villagers—many of whom were morally lax and most of whom were unnecessary to the landlords—were considered a hindrance.

Henchard, then, early found himself with a wife and child, but with neither a dependable source of income (despite his skill) nor a shelter for himself and his family.35

35Hardy reveals (p. 4) how difficult it was to obtain a cottage in the town of Weydon-Priors. As the turnip-hoer tells Henchard,

'Pulling down is more the nater of Weydon [than is letting cottages]. There were five houses cleared away last year, and three this; and the volk nowhere to go—no, not so much as a thatched hurdle; that's the way o' Weydon-Priors.'
Out of a situation like this the hay-trusser determined to merge with his environment, however difficult that might be. His efforts, impelled by his fierce energy and little else, carried him to great heights, but when a certain point was reached, he could go no further, nor even retain his holdings. "Fighting" or "fleeing" (figuratively speaking) in response to every irritation of untoward circumstance, he merged less and less with his environment, until finally he was superfluous to all, and could not even bear to live with himself.
Sophy Twycott

A simple country servant-girl, Sophy is taken out of her native village by her husband and former employer, the vicar of Gaymead (who marries her out of gratitude for her faithful service to him), and transported to a London suburb, where he has obtained another incumbency. This arrangement suits the vicar, because Sophy's rustic backwardness will not be a hindrance to him in the metropolis. "Mr. Twycott knew perfectly well that he had committed social suicide by this step [marriage to Sophy], despite Sophy's spotless character, and he had taken his measures accordingly."36 To Sophy, however, moving from Gaymead to the London suburb has the effect of imprisonment. Knowing nothing of cultural refinement or urban modes of living, and practically unable to walk because of her crippled condition, she is reduced almost to a vegetative existence.

Her only source of pleasure or self-fulfillment is her young son, whose education, as well as every other complex family problem, is entirely out of her hands.

Sophy's "restricted merging" with her environment is indicated in Hardy's description of her life after her hus-

band's death:

... she really had nothing to occupy her in the world but to eat and drink, and make a business of indolence, and go on weaving and coiling the nut-brown hair, merely keeping a home open for the son whenever he came to her during vacations.  

37 Ibid., p. 42.

When her son Randolph acquires a certain amount of aristocratic schooling, he loses his "wide infantine sympathies" and begins to drift away from her, and she becomes superfluous to him. Now her "field" contains only those environmental elements with which she cannot help coming in contact: minor tradesmen, under-clerks, and her servants.

Ironically, her son, to whom she had once been close, destroys her one chance for happiness. When he hears that she wants to marry a childhood suitor, who is a rustic like herself, he peremptorily forbids the match. Sam Hobson, Sophy's would-be "redeemer" from a life of loneliness and unhappiness, is unable to enter her "field" until she comes to an understanding with her son about the marriage. Since Randolph refuses, Sam's efforts to redeem Sophy from a life of "restricted merging" with her environment are unavailing. Randolph, now within Sophy's "field" to the extent that he blocks her marriage (she is too simple and meek to
have her own way even in her private affairs), thus acts as her "destroyer" by causing her to remain isolated and superfluous until her death.

In "The Son's Veto" Hardy again shows the effects of a particular "mixed marriage" and illustrates the widespread social mobility that was an important source of Victorian progress and Victorian unrest and isolation. A member of the lower portion of the lower class, Sophy marries into the upper portion of the middle class. This marriage brings her a certain amount of social advancement, but also makes it very difficult for her to merge with her environment, to have roots in any specific social group. After her husband's death her aristocratic son forbids her to marry into her own class, from which she has been separated by her first marriage, and yet she has never been accepted as a member of her husband's class.

Whatever the defects of a union like that of Sophy and the vicar, "mixed marriages" were making it possible for yeomen's families to become allied with the prosperous middle class, and for members of the latter to affiliate with the aristocracy. Galsworthy's Forsytes, to cite only one literary instance, made the transition from yeoman class to aristocracy in but a few generations. Hardy described a number of cases of "mixed marriage." I have already referred to Clym Yeobright's parents. Two other instances in
Hardy's fiction are the parents of Swithin St. Cleeve (in Two on A Tower), and Ethelberta Chickerel (in The Hand of

One of the local inhabitants says of Swithin—whose father was a curate and whose mother was a farmer's daughter—to the lady of the manor (Two on A Tower, p. 12), "'what with having two stations of life in his blood he's good for nothing, my lady. He mopes about—sometimes here, and sometimes there; nobody troubles about en.'"

Ethelberta), the butler's daughter who twice marries into a class far above her own.

Although the social isolation felt by Sophy was not uncommon among the parties to, or offspring of, "mixed marriages," such a marriage itself does not appear inevitably to cause estrangement. Sophy might, like Hardy's Ethelberta, have so impressed the members of the upper class with her energy and intelligence that they could overlook her servant-class origins. Since Sophy had not been able to do this, however, the vast social gulf that separated her from her vicar-husband and her gentleman-son deepened all the more. Despite her love and solicitude for his welfare, the subservient and superfluous Sophy was "a mother whose mistakes and origin it was his painful lot as a gentleman to blush for." Thus the "field" analysis of Sophy

Ibid., p. 43. Italics mine.
has shown that her "merging" is restricted not because she is dull-witted or socially inferior to the members of her family--certainly not because of Randolph's aristocratic snobbery--but because of the interactions of her weak personality and low social status with the strong personalities and high social status of her husband and son.
Jude Fawley

Jude Fawley, a product of a broken home, is cared for as a child by his great-aunt Drusilla. This old woman, a cantankerous and embittered misanthrope, does not want him and tells him how superfluous he is. The sensitive boy, apparently taking her literally, comes to regard himself as extraneous to the world. Thus Hardy describes Jude's isolation and superfluity as, hired by a farmer to brighten away birds, Jude sympathizes with them instead:

They seemed, like himself, to be living in a world which did not want them. Why should he frighten them away? They took upon them more and more the aspect of gentle friends and pensioners—the only friends he could claim as being in the least degree interested in him, for his aunt had often told him that she was not.40

40Jude the Obscure, p. 11.

Drusilla fills Jude with stories about how unfit the Fawleys are for marriage, warning him never to enter into matrimony himself. Jude's self-respect and self-reliance having been undermined by his great-aunt, he does not develop emotionally as he should and remains immature throughout his life. Jude is sensitive to the sufferings of animals, and always does what he can to alleviate their pain, but is not so considerate when, as an adult, his fam-
ily is dependent on him for support. Never is he able to merge with his environment beyond a very limited extent, having neither the resilience to recover from setbacks nor the foresight and determination to circumvent obstacles. As though his aunt's warnings against marriage were well-founded, Jude is never able to adjust satisfactorily to legal or even to common-law marriage.

Much of Jude's lifelong superfluity and failure in a world with which he is unequipped to deal is therefore due to the warping influence of his childhood and to his own strong penchant for self-indulgence (including his weakness for alcohol). He is never able to achieve his great ambition in life, attendance at the University of Christminster. Not only is he poor and scholastically unprepared (although he has done much studying on his own), but he lacks the ability to plan effectively and is highly susceptible to distractions.

From time to time Jude travels to Christminster so that he can be near the University. Even after he knows for certain that he will never enter the University (because he lacks the funds and the qualifications) and even when he has a woman and children dependent on him for support, he is magnetically drawn to Christminster. Consequently, he does not devote himself sufficiently either to academic study or to his occupation of stonemason. As a
would-be scholar and, to some extent, as a workingman the inconstant and unstable Jude is superfluous to his society, but is not perceptive enough to realize this fact.

Jude's superfluity is clearly indicated in Hardy's description of the young man's first arrival at Christminster:

It was not till now, when he found himself actually on the spot of his enthusiasm, that Jude perceived how far away from the object of that enthusiasm he really was. Only a wall divided him from those happy young contemporaries of his with whom he shared a common mental life; men who had nothing to do from morning till night but to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest. Only a wall—but what a wall!

Every day, every hour, as he went in search of labour, he saw them going and coming also, rubbed shoulders with them, heard their voices, marked their movements. The conversation of some of the more thoughtful among them seemed oftentimes, owing to his long and persistent preparation for this place, to be peculiarly akin to his own thoughts. Yet he was as far from them as if he had been at the antipodes. Of course he was. He was a young workman in a white blouse, and with stone-dust in the creases of his clothes; and in passing him they did not even see him, or hear him, rather saw through him as through a pane of glass at their familiars beyond. Whatever they were to him, he to them was not on the spot at all; and yet he had fancied he would be close to their lives by coming there.

But the future lay ahead after all; and if he could only be so fortunate as to get into good employment he would put up with the inevitable. So he thanked God for his health and strength, and took courage. For the present he was outside the gates of everything, colleges included: perhaps some day he would be inside. Those palaces of light and leading; he might some day look down on the world through their panes.
In short, Christminster is "the centre of the universe" to Jude, and his desire to end his days there is ultimately fulfilled. But, as Jude later says, "'I'm an outsider to the end of my days.'"42

The University of Christminster thus acts as a potential redeemer to Jude, providing him with a burning ideal that lifts him above the seemingly trivial preoccupations of a mundane existence. But the University is outside Jude's "field," and thus provides him with no more than an ideal. Unfortunately for Jude, there are destructive elements within his "field." Ironically, however, Jude is harmed first by the presence of one and then by the absence of the other (that is, the other's leaving Jude's "field" after having been his mainstay has a harmful effect on him). These "destroyers" are women—Arabella Donn, a coarse and vulgar girl who twice tricks him into marrying her, and his cousin Sue Bridehead, a highly intelligent but extremely neurotic and maladjusted girl.43
Jude . . . is destroyed by two women of opposite natures [Arabella and Sue]." Evelyn Hardy, Thomas Hardy, p. 251.

Arabella, who wants a man for a source of support and a sexual partner, forces the impecunious and emotionally immature Jude into marriage. He had been planning to seek admission to the University but marriage forces him to neglect his studies in order to provide for a family. Since this sort of regimen is not congenial to Jude's temperament, and since life with Arabella is extremely unpleasant, Jude is far more restricted in his merging with his environment than he had been before his marriage.

There seemed to him, vaguely and dimly, something wrong in a social ritual which made necessary a cancelling of well-formed schemes involving years of thought and labour, of foregoing a man's one opportunity of showing himself superior to the lower animals, and of contributing his units of work to the general progress of his generation, because of a momentary surprise by a new and transitory instinct which had nothing in it of the nature of vice, and could be only at the most called weakness. He was inclined to inquire what he had done, or she lost, for that matter, that he deserved to be caught in a gin which would cripple him, if not her also, for the rest of a lifetime?44

44'Jude the Obscure, pp. 70-71.
Jude and Arabella soon part, however. After a rit of depression (intensified by his great-aunt’s telling him of the ill success his parents and uncle and aunt had in marriage) which almost culminates in suicide, Jude pursues his plans for going to the town of Christminster.

In Christminster he meets and falls in love with the girl who is to be his other "destroyer," Sue. He and Sue, who come to represent Platonic counterparts of each other, enjoy a deep and satisfying spiritual relationship marred somewhat by Sue's vacillation in her desire to be with Jude. Out of a mistaken sense of duty she marries an elderly schoolmaster, and for a time gives Jude to understand that their (Platonic) relationship is over. But Sue finds herself more strongly drawn toward Jude than toward her husband, whom she cannot bear to live with (despite a paradoxical compulsion to do so). She subsequently becomes Jude's partner, sharing with him a number of fairly tranquil years. A son of Jude's by Arabella, Father Time, is thrust upon them, and other children are born of their union, but life is far from perfect: Sue's antipathies toward sex and marriage are difficult even for the unstable Jude to sympathize with, and their being unmarried occasions a certain amount of social disapproval. Since he has given up not only his obsessive plans for attending the University of Christminster, but his subsequent plans for
taking minor orders in the Church, he can only seek his living as a stoneworker, which he does desultorily. Sue remains his mainstay and his only source of genuine satisfaction, despite her neurotic fears and doubts.

At a particularly low point in their lives, when, poor and weary, they travel to Christminster and find themselves practically without suitable accommodations (Sue is pregnant for the third time), Father Time in a fit of despondency kills the children and himself. Subsequently, driven by guilt and remorse, Sue decides she can no longer live with Jude.

Sue's "destruction" of Jude begins at this point. As his companion she has had the effect of a "redeemer" upon him. Should she leave him (i.e., leave his "field"), however, his only source of psychological support will be removed, and he will succumb to despair. His only recourse will then be to satisfy the cravings of his senses, a mode of behavior that can only lead to his actual destruction.

'O Sue!' said he with a sudden sense of his own danger. 'Do not do an immoral thing for moral reasons! You have been my social salvation. Stay with me for humanity's sake! You know what a weak fellow I am. My two Arch Enemies you know --my weakness for womankind and my impulse to strong liquor. Don't abandon me to them, Sue, to save your own soul only! They have been kept entirely at a distance since you became my guardian-angel! Since I have had you I have been able to go into any temptations of the sort, without risk. Isn't my safety worth a little sacrifice of dog-
matic principle? I am in terror lest, if you leave me, it will be with me another case of the pig that was washed turning back to his wallowing in the mire!'45

45Ibid., pp. 426-427. Sue's power to "redeem" Jude is somewhat comparable with Elizabeth-Jane's power to "redeem" Henchard. Yet whereas Henchard appears to require only some human object to love or to hate (see The Mayor of Casterbridge, p. 142), and is not particular who that person is, Jude requires Sue and only Sue as his life-support. And, too, Elizabeth-Jane, chosen by Henchard as a potential "redeemer" because there seems to be no one else more suitable, does not have the "destructive" effect upon Henchard of the two men--Farfrae and Newson--who "take" from him all he possesses including Elizabeth-Jane herself. Sue, on the other hand, like Farfrae and Newson with Henchard, "takes" all Jude possesses--his source of stability and security. Thus I consider Elizabeth-Jane a would-be "redeemer" and Sue a "redeemer" turned "destroyer."

Returning to Phillotson (whom she had divorced, as Jude had divorced Arabella), Sue remarries him.

Once Sue leaves his "field" Jude's spirits begin to give way and he becomes increasingly vulnerable to the stresses and strains of life. Arabella ensnares him into marriage a second time, and he becomes (as might be expected) highly restricted in his merging with his environment. Sick in body (from the effects of long years of stonecutting) as well as in spirit, Jude loses his will to live, and voluntarily hastens his death by travelling in the rain to see Sue, who forces herself not to respond to him. Just as Sue has hastened Jude's breakdown of health
by leaving his "field," so Arabella, in a comparable fashion, completes the process of "destroying" Jude. While Jude is on his deathbed, Arabella, supposedly ministering to his needs, leaves him to enjoy herself at the Christminster "Remembrance Day" games. Jude dies as he has lived throughout most of his life—solitary, superfluous, and neglected.

A "field" analysis of Jude has, in some ways, a more important task than have similar analyses of most of Hardy's other major characters. In the book, the last and the most serious of his novels, Hardy was dealing primarily with two important practical problems—the results of unsatisfactory marriages, and University admission for a poor student—and commentators have read Hardy's treatment of these problems in such a way as to come to the conclusion that Jude was the helpless and passive victim of a number of forces or agents. Among these "opponents" of Jude, according to the writers, are Jude's bad heredity (which made him unfit for marriage), and the University of Christminster officials, who wished to keep the poor from obtaining a higher education.45 Guerard, for example, disagrees with

45I may have given the impression that Jude is the victim of Arabella and Sue. However, I have consistently employed the term "destroyers" in a figurative sense; it is only through Jude's interactions with the two women that
they exercise a destructive effect upon him.

Hardy, but derives from *Jude the Obscure* the message that "things not men are to blame":

*Jude is a victim of his society and inheritance and of a bad luck for which he is only in part responsible.*


Hardy himself has given the commentators some grounds for such a view. Writing to a reviewer in 1895, he stated,

[*Jude the Obscure*] is concerned first with the labours of a poor student to get a University degree, and secondly with the tragic issues of two bad marriages, owing in the main to a doom or curse of hereditary temperament peculiar to the family of the parties.

47 *L*, p. 40. The reviewer is not named.

But, it may be strongly argued, the "doom or curse of hereditary temperament" is nowhere made clear in the novel. A close reading will give the impression that Jude (and Sue as well) had been so warped by the effects of a broken home and exposure to the warped and morbidly pessimistic great-aunt Drusilla (who at least twice tells the sensitive Jude
that he ought to be dead) as to be effectively conditioned against living harmoniously with a member of the opposite sex. If my assertion is correct, Hardy's comment is quite misleading. He has, it is true, frequently disclaimed any attempt at a consistent philosophy (one such disclaimer is given in the "Preface to the First Edition" of Jude). More importantly, however, he has made a "Freudian" statement in the 1912 "Postscript" to the "Preface," and this comment may explain why the novel does not bear out what he says about it:

And no doubt there can be more in a book than the author consciously puts there, which will help either to its profit or to its disadvantage as the case may be.48

48Jude the Obscure, p. xii.

What Hardy has "put there," with regard to Jude, is a portrait of a hypersensitive, self-abasing, compassionate, impractical, childish young man torn between his vaunting aspirations and noble ideals, and his insistent sensual passions. Merging with this figure is the background of the portrait, composed of the people in Jude's "field"—his great-aunt, Arabella, Sue, Phillotson, etc., and the Wessex towns in which he lives and plies his trade, particularly the town of Christminster, whose University is al-
most, but not quite, in his "field." Since the "field" is a hypothetical area of individual-environment interaction, and not a terrestrial or atmospheric region with measurable boundaries, it is possible to speak of the University of Christminster as being outside Jude's "field," while considering the town of Christminster as being within his "field."

with Arabella is unsuccessful because her vulgar and mercenary personality is incompatible with his immature but scholarly personality. Jude's irregular union with Sue is unsuccessful because Sue suffers remorse, at a crucial point in her life, and subsequently decides to leave him. Had Hardy shown Jude married, successively, to a dozen or more women—the larger the number the more statistically reliable would be the conclusion—and unsuccessful with each, then one might suspect that Hardy was presenting a "hereditary taint" thesis, however unscientific would be the underlying postulate about a genetic "marriage factor."

But Hardy has shown Jude affiliated with only two women (one at a time) under trying circumstances, each of the women, whatever her attraction to Jude, having tendencies strongly counter to his. The argument that Jude is heredi-
tarily unfit for marriage may thus be seen to be not only untenable but almost amusing. Using our "field" terms, we might say that Hardy has not shown that Jude cannot—because of heredity—merge extensively as a husband with the domestic aspect of his environment. Hardy has only shown that Jude has not so "merged," in two specific cases wherein quite extenuating circumstances are involved.

One additional point about this matter of marriage and heredity deserves to be made. Drusilla's arguments against marriage for the Fawleys on hereditary grounds—at one point she even indicates that most people find marriage unsatisfactory—take on considerable significance in view of the rigid divorce laws in Hardy's England. Since divorce was ordinarily obtainable only on the grounds of adultery—unless an act of Parliament were sought—marriage was a terrifying institution to a number of Victorians. The very thought that one's marriage had to be for life, barring infidelity on either side, might have the effect, on a sensitive and querulous person like Drusilla, of making marriage appear beyond any doubt undesirable. And, whether through fear of the rigid divorce laws, credence to an old family tradition, or the observation of unsuccessful marriages in the family, or any combination of these factors, the misanthropic Drusilla developed the conviction that heredity unfitted the Fawleys for marriage. Her transmission of that
deeply held notion to Jude and Sue played, apparently, an important part in their unsatisfactory relations with the opposite sex and their feeling of isolation from the rest of mankind.

Thus one of the two important problems raised in *Jude* -- the effect of heredity on marriageability -- has been shown, by means of the "field" approach, to be highly misleading and, in fact, based on a faulty premise. The other problem -- University education for poor students -- together with certain ramifications remains to be discussed and insofar as practicable, referred to a "field" analysis. The view that Jude is victimized by the cruelty and indifference of the University of Christminster officials\(^\text{51}\) is hardly more tenable than that of the one involving heredity. *Jude the Obscure* was something of a social protest against the difficulties faced by the poor in trying to obtain a University education (the date of the story is about 1860-1870), but as Hardy indicates, Jude's own frailties and inadvertencies contributed heavily to his failure to obtain admission to the University of Christminster.\(^\text{52}\) A larger issue

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\(^{51}\) The letter from the Master of Bibliolli College, advising Jude to "stick to his trade" (p. 138) has lent considerable support to this view.
Moreover, according to Hardy (p. 482), admissions policy appeared to be changing, so that those now excluded might soon have an opportunity of gaining entrance to the University.

is raised, however, by Hardy's discussion of the difficulties Jude encounters in his attempts to enter the University. Jude feels himself one of the vast group of people seeking new opportunities in every area of life, one of the rootless, dissatisfied, restless contingent that felt most keenly the psychological and material problems underlying Victorian isolation.

Jude's statement of his own peculiar "Victorian dilemma" occurs in the remarkable scene, shortly before the death of his children, in which he delivers an address to the common folk of Christminster. As so often happened in the nineteenth century, social reformers, lay prophets, and the like revealed an underlying religious connotation in their utterances. Clym's doing this has already been mentioned. Jude's "sermon" likewise has the character of a secular transcription of an ecclesiastical homily, for the ideas of mundane guilt, grace, repentance, and salvation expressed therein appear related to doctrinal elements in a theological discourse. (And, too, one of his hearers treats Jude's speech almost as though it had been a church sermon.) Because of its importance as an index to Jude's
It is a difficult question, my friends, for any young man—that question I had to grapple with, and which thousands are weighing at the present moment in these uprisings times—whether to follow uncritically the track he finds himself in, without considering his aptness for it, or to consider what his aptness or bent may be, and re-shape his course accordingly. I tried to do the latter, and I failed. But I don't admit that my failure proved my view to be a wrong one, or that my success would have made it a right one; though that's how we appraise such attempts nowadays—I mean, not by their essential soundness, but by their accidental outcomes. If I had ended by becoming like one of these gentlemen in red and black that we saw dropping in here by now, everybody would have said: "See how wise that young man was, to follow the bent of his nature!" But having ended no better than I began they say: "See what a fool that fellow was in following a freak of his fancy!"

However, it was my poverty and not my will that consented to be beaten. It takes two or three generations to do what I tried to do in one; and my impulses—affections—vices perhaps they should be called—were too strong not to hamper a man without advantages; who should be as cold-blooded as a fish and as selfish as a pig to have a really good chance of being one of his country's worthies. You may ridicule me—I am quite willing that you should—I am a fit subject, no doubt. But I think if you knew what I have gone through these last few years you would rather pity me. And if they knew—he nodded towards the college at which the Dons were severally arriving—"it is just possible they would do the same.

'I may do some good before I am dead—be a sort of success as a frightful example of what not to do; and so illustrate a moral story,' continued Jude, beginning to grow bitter, though he had opened serenely enough. 'I was perhaps, after all, a paltry victim to the spirit of mental
and social restlessness, that makes so many unhappy in these days!"

"... "And what I appear, a sick and poor man, is not the worst of me. I am in a chaos of principles—groping in the dark—acting by instinct and not after example. Eight or nine years ago when I came here first, I had a neat stock of fixed opinions, but they dropped away one by one; and the further I get the less sure I am. I doubt if I have anything more for my present rule of life than following inclinations which do me and nobody else any harm, and actually give pleasure to those I love best. There, gentlemen, since you wanted to know how I was getting on, I have told you. Much good may it do you! I cannot explain further here. I perceive there is something wrong somewhere in our social formulas: what it is can only be discovered by men or women with greater insight than mine,—if, indeed, they ever discover it—at least in our time. "For who knoweth what is good for man in this life?—and who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?" 53

53 Ibid., pp. 392-394.

So complex are the reasons for his "failure," as indicated by Jude, that it is necessary to make use of a mode of analysis like the "field" approach to understand what they are and how they interrelate to produce the specific result. Hardy does not appear to blame Jude, the University officials, or any other person or object, but rather to show a kind of "field" existing between Jude and his environment containing the inextricable elements of each that led to Jude's isolation from the University and his super-
fluity as a person.

Jude speaks of the contemporary problem of following uncritically the track one finds oneself in or, instead, reshaping his course on the basis of his aptness—"I tried to do the latter, and I failed." But Jude neither considered adequately what his aptness might be, nor reshaped his course on the basis of his supposed aptness. He did not appear to find the job of stoneworker uncongenial, although he desired above all an academic career, nor did he appear to consider sufficiently how unfitted he was—because of his unstable personality—to be a scholar, a University lecturer, or a clergyman. Consequently, it is only natu-

54 Although Jude at one point (see p. 231) recognized that he was not suited to the clergy (the clergy was his second choice after attendance at the University of Christminster), he was too vacillating in his feelings to keep this recognition in mind subsequently.

ral that his attempt to reshape his course in conformity with his aptness would be unsuccessful, for his "level of aspiration" (to use a term of the psychologists working with "field" theory) outreached his social circumstances as well as his strength of personality. And, in saying that his poverty and not his will "consented to be beaten," Jude is hardly being accurate, for his lack of determination and
his susceptibility to his sensual promptings prevented him from working effectively on his own behalf to attain his goals. (The term "beaten" provides an unjustified—or unintentional—connotation of physical conflict on Jude's part.)

Jude is correct, however, in indicating that the rich can succeed, despite their vices or affections, while the poor—those "without advantages"—cannot. But Jude appears not to be arguing for a communist society wherein all will have equal opportunities, but for a society in which "impulses," "affections," "vices" will not be detrimental to success. Had he been more realistic he would have seen that in order to gain academic success despite adversity (i.e., in order to merge with his environment of Christminster despite obstacles to such merging) the most wholesome features of his personality, and not the worst features, would have to be brought forward. Thus, in the second paragraph of the quoted "sermon," Jude reveals a number of other personality defects which will hamper "merging"—a tendency toward recrimination, self-abasement, and self-pity. The strains of self-pity continue and are followed by an admission of confusion and doubt—not uncommon among sensitive Victorians like Jude—a self-defense, and an attack on the laws and conventions of society. Thus, with statements like "a sick and poor man," "chaos of principles,"
"following inclinations which do me and nobody else any harm, and actually give pleasure to those I love best," and "something wrong somewhere in our social formulas," Jude attempts to vindicate himself and implicate society. Actually, he succeeds only in sketching a picture of the social reorganizations taking place in his time, set against the background of human frailties and resistance to change. He reveals himself to be like the society he cannot manage to either join or to hold out against: weak, but desiring better things—hampered by limiting factors within and without, but knowing that change must take place at some future time, however distant—causing harm (to people particularly vulnerable, like his family), yet assuming that he is doing good instead.

The lonely, isolated, purblind Jude is therefore only one of a vast number of Victorians who contributed to the causes and suffered from the effects of the "mental and social restlessness" of the times. Jude, like many others in a comparable position, did not bring the most positive features of his personality into his "field" so that he could cope with his environment; on the other hand, the environment had more significant elements in it than people like Jude could normally deal with, although they were in part responsible for those elements.
Father Time

Father Time, the product of Jude's and Arabella's first marriage, duplicates in large measure his father's childhood. The victim of a broken home, living with relatives who do not want him, and possessed of an abnormally sensitive temperament, the boy has neither a clear and wholesome view of the world around him nor an adequate belief in himself as a person. In outlook and appearance he is far in advance of his years, and, in fact, hardly seems a part of his everyday surroundings.

He was Age masquerading as Juvenility, and doing it so badly that his real self showed through crevices. A ground swell from ancient years of night seemed now and then to lift the child in this his morning-life, when his face took a back view over some great Atlantic of Time, and appeared not to care about what it saw.55

As one might guess, the rootless and friendless boy merges with his environment hardly at all, and is at least as superfluous as was Jude when a child.

Nor are conditions better when he is sent by his mother to live with Jude (who is maintaining a residence with Sue). Although Jude and Sue welcome the poor homeless lad when he comes to them, their own lives are subject to the hardships

55Ibid., p. 332.
of poverty and social disapproval of their cohabitation, and Father Time is hardly better off than he was before. He is taunted in school because his "parents" are not married, and he does not feel that he has a place anywhere. Instead of love and affection from Jude and Sue, Father Time experiences privation and uncertainty. Perhaps because his life is so unpleasant he broods on death and related matters, feeling keenly and painfully that he is superfluous to those around him.

The only people in Father Time's "field" as the years go by are Jude, Sue, and the two children born to them. Jude and Sue are bulwarks against complete solitude and destruction, but they really do not enable him to merge with his environment to a very great extent. And when Father Time, apparently experiencing simultaneous concern for his family and "sibling rivalry," reacts violently to the news that Sue is again pregnant, one of those bulwarks—Sue—is no longer in his "field."

The boy burst out weeping. 'O you don't care, you don't care!' he cried in bitter reproach. 'How ever could you, mother, be so wicked and cruel as this, when you needn't have done it till we was better off, and father well?—To bring us all into more trouble! No room for us, and father a-forced to go away, and we turned out to-morrow; and yet you be going to have another of us soon! . . . 'Tis done o' purpose!—'tis—'tis!' He walked up and down sobbing.

'Y-you must forgive me, little Jude!' she pleaded, her bosom heaving now as much as the
boy's. 'I can't explain--I will when you are older. It does seem--as if I had done it on purpose, now we are in these difficulties! I can't explain, dear! But it--is not quite on purpose--I can't help it!' 'Yes it is--it must be! For nobody would interfere with us, like that, unless you agreed! I won't forgive you, ever, ever! I'll never believe you care for me, or father, or any of us any more!'56

56Jude the Obscure, p. 403.

Thus Father Time no longer regards Sue as a source of parental protection, but rather as an enemy who has attempted to restrict his merging with his environment. Out of the dilemma that results he identifies himself with the two children of Jude and Sue:

He got up, and went away into the closet adjoining her room, in which a bed had been spread on the floor. There she heard him say: 'If we children was gone there'd be no trouble at all.'57

57Loc. cit.

During the following morning, when Sue is out of the house and Father Time is alone with the two children, he determines to consummate his identification with them. They will be in his "field," as Sue and, presumably, the rest of the world are not. Thus, he hangs them and himself, be-
cause, as his suicide note says, "we are too menny." 58

58 Ibid., p. 405.

Thus, although he takes his own life, Father Time is in a sense destroyed by Sue, because of the effect of her supposed biological imprudence upon his morbid temperament. But in his final act of murder and suicide the superfluous and profoundly isolated boy is no longer alone in his "field." He finds real identification with, and redemption through, human beings who will not reject him or make him feel that he is an unwanted burden. His "redeemers," ironically enough, are two small children who cannot really communicate with him but are conceived as fellow sufferers and victims of the adult world's cruelty and indifference. Father Time's immolation of the children and himself enables him at last--for the final instant of his life--to merge with his environment, to know that he is really at one with those immediately around him. But, obviously, this kind of "merging" is the "merging" of group death, not of group life.

According to our "field" analysis, the suicidal child brings no more of his personality into his "field" than a morbid pessimism, and is therefore all the more susceptible to the disturbing effects of his superfluity and poverty
and to Sue's own despairing statements. As she tells Jude after the children are found hanged,

'... I said the world was against us, that it was better to be out of life than in it at this price; and he took it literally. And I told him I was going to have another child. It upset him. Oh how bitterly he upbraided me!'\(^{59}\)

\(^{59}\)Ibid., p. 408.

Sue blames herself for having brought on the murder-suicide, but Jude exculpates her and attributes the child's deed to his unusual temperament.

No,' said Jude. 'It was in his nature to do it. The doctor says there are such boys springing up amongst us—boys of a sort unknown in the last generation—the outcome of new views of life. They seem to see all its terrors before they are old enough to have staying power to resist them. He says it is the beginning of the coming universal wish not to live. He's an advanced man, the doctor: but he can give no consolation to——'.\(^{60}\)

\(^{60}\)Ibid., p. 406. This remarkable explanation for the child's morbid precocity, as untenable as the Wessex folk beliefs in witchcraft, has something in common with Hardy's description of another prematurely aged thinker—Clym Yeobright—and others who arrive at a stage in life comparable with Clym's. According to Hardy (The Return of the Native, p. 222):

He had reached the stage in a young man's life when the grimness of the general human situation first becomes clear; and the realization of this causes ambition to halt awhile. In France it is not uncustumary to commit suicide at this stage;
in England we do much better, or much worse, as the case may be.

Despite Sue's and Jude's difference of opinion as to the precise cause of Father Time's act, it appears obvious from the story (and is even indicated by the two above-quoted statements) that the child's pathological temperament interacted with his unwholesome environment so as to produce chronic despair and, at a crucial moment of such interaction, an act of wholesale bloodletting.

What is the significance of Father Time? Does he really illustrate the increasing tendency toward suicide, at a time of unprecedented social and intellectual restlessness? The most plausible conclusion appears to be that he illustrates Hardy's views on the harmful effects of the stringent divorce laws.

Despite the remedial legislation which, throughout the nineteenth century, was granting more and more rights to the lower classes of society, certain of the time-honored restrictions persisted. Notable among these was the restriction on easy divorce. Since divorce was ordinarily obtainable only on grounds of adultery, many couples (like Hardy and his first wife) who found themselves painfully incompatible but who would not consider any adulterous relationships had no recourse but to stay together or to live
separately. In either case great hardship was caused the parties because they were legally prevented from enjoying a wholesome marital relationship with a member of the opposite sex. This dilemma, as well as its solution, adultery, resulted in considerable social tension and social isolation, as the basic stabilizing factor of English society, the family, lost more and more of its solidity. Particularly under the impetus of wholesale village depopulation and migration to the overcrowded cities, the family came to represent less a societal norm than a hypothetical social group.

Hardy's statements about the debilitating effects of marriage (under the English system) on the relationship between male and female are among his commonly expressed views. In a brief note, written in 1912, Hardy stated:

... the English marriage laws are, to the eyes of anybody who looks around, the gratuitous cause of at least half the misery of the community...

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61 Thomas Hardy, "Laws the Cause of Misery," in Life and Art by Thomas Hardy, p. 120.

Jude the Obscure deals throughout with the disintegrative, isolating effects of undesirable marriages on individuals.62

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62 As I have said, at one point in the story Jude and Sue
succeed in divorcing their respective spouses (on grounds of adultery), but the "Platonic" couple do not then marry. Their irregular union is fairly successful until Sue's conscience impels her to remarry her ex-husband, as a result of which she and Jude both become profoundly unhappy.

One such individual is Father Time, the product of a highly unsuccessful marriage which should (in justice to the husband) have been dissolved early, before the child was conceived. The incompatibility of Jude and Arabella, and the difficulty of obtaining a divorce had resulted in their separation (which was initiated by Arabella). The delayed result of the forced marriage was an unwanted and unloved child, born after Arabella had left Jude. Arabella had later contracted a bigamous second marriage, and as there was no room for the child, sent him to Jude. Jude, an immature man who had never been able to carry out either his academic plans or his occupational duties successfully, was never "cut out" to be a parent. He was ill-equipped to provide a home for a child, particularly since he had formed an illicit union with a neurotic, maladjusted woman --Sue-- who feared and hated the institution of marriage. Even though Jude and his consort had divorced their respective spouses (with adultery as the grounds), the couple, particularly Sue, did not desire to repeat the marriage ceremony and invite the consequences of another mistaken legal union. Father Time, then, after a difficult and
painful early childhood, came to live with a couple who did not have a home in the real sense of the word, who were stigmatized because of their liaison, and who were not adequate "parents" to him. All of these unwholesome conditions faced by the child had their ultimate origin in the demoralizing effects of the divorce laws on sensitive but immature people.

In describing Father Time's appearance after his death, Hardy reveals not only the misery and isolation of a warped individual who (as the "field" theory has attempted to show) failed to merge in a wholesome fashion with his hazardous mid-Victorian environment, but the terrible effects of one of the features of that environment—the divorce laws:

The boy's face expressed the whole tale of their situation. On that little shape had converged all the inauspiciousness and shadow which had darkened the first union of Jude, and all the accidents, mistakes, fears, errors of the last. He was their nodal point, their focus, their expression in a single term. For the rashness of those parents he had groaned, for their ill-assortment he had quaked, and for the misfortunes of these he had died.65

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65Jude the Obscure, p. 406.
In this chapter I have employed the "field" approach to examine one of the two important types of Hardy isolate: the superfluous character, the individual who is useless to those around him. In the next chapter I shall apply the same method to the other type: the unrealistic character, the individual who, while not useless to those around him, nevertheless makes an error of judgment which results in a condition no less isolating.
CHAPTER FIVE

Unrealistic Characters

Eustacia Vye

Eustacia Vye is a voluptuous, lonely young woman of half-English, half-Greek extraction.

Eustacia Vye was the raw material of a divinity.

. . . She had the passions and instincts which make a model goddess, that is, those which make not quite a model woman. . . .

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

She had Pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries, and their light, as it came and went, and came again, was partially hampered by their oppressive lids and lashes; and of these the under lid was much fuller than it usually is with English women. . . . Assuming that the souls of men and women were visible essences, you could fancy the colour of Eustacia's soul to be flame-like.

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\[1\] The Return of the Native, pp. 75-76.

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An orphan whose only relative—her grandfather (retired from service in the Royal Navy)—lives on the heath, Eustacia is compelled to live there too, although she hates it. This "Queen of Night," who, Hardy hints, has inherited her strange and exotic qualities from her Corfiote father,\[2\]

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\[2\] Ibid., p. 76: "It was felt at once that that mouth did not come over from Sleswig with a band of Saxon pirates whose lips met like the two halves of a muffin. One had fancied that such lip curves were mostly lurking underground
in the South as fragments of forgotten marbles." Hardy also intimates (pp. 71-72, 78-79) that her gloominess and dignity may be inherited, although not necessarily from her father.

merges only slightly with her environment, for she has practically no social contacts on the heath.

But celestial imperiousness, love, wrath, and fervour had proved to be somewhat thrown away on netherward Egdon. Her power was limited, and the consciousness of this limitation had biassed her development. Egdon was her Hades, and since coming there she had imbibed much of what was dark in its tone, though inwardly and eternally unreconciled thereto. Her appearance accorded well with this smouldering rebelliousness, and the shady splendour of her beauty was the real surface of the sad and stifled warmth within her.3

3Ibid., p. 77. One commentator, apparently reading Hardy's naturalistic description of Eustacia in a sense other than what was intended, regards her as the victim of the (anthropomorphized) heath. Thus, according to Henry Charles Duffin, Thomas Hardy, 3d ed. rev. and enl. (Manchester: At the University Press, 1937), p. 129: "the smouldering fire of her darkly-beautiful soul is intensified by a great--greater because impotent--hatred of this austere monster that holds her relentlessly back from the indulgence of her fierce passions."

Eustacia is impelled by two very powerful needs: to leave Egdon Heath for a romantic city like Paris and to have a lover. In his discussion of her latter need Hardy leaves no doubt that during her lifetime Eustacia was affected not by the ordinary feminine desires for a husband
or sweetheart, but by a nymphomaniacal craving:

To be loved to madness—such was her great desire. Love was to her the one cordial which could drive away the eating loneliness of her days. And she seemed to long for the abstraction called passionate love more than for any particular lover.

She often repeated her prayers; not at particular times, but, like the unaffectedly devout, when she desired to pray. Her prayer was always spontaneous, and often ran thus, 'O deliver my heart from this fearful gloom and loneliness: send me great love from somewhere, else I shall die.'

Eustacia's abnormally intense sexual desire (generally underemphasized by the Hardy commentators) must be stressed, for, as one of the most significant features of her personality, it influences her action throughout the story. Since she possesses this intense feeling, and since it is a man rather than a particular man that she seeks, it is only natural that she will not for long retain an interest in the man whose affections she captures. And, once her attachment for her lover wanes, there is only emptiness remaining for her, heath or no heath, until the next lover is encountered. This condition of mind and body makes Eustacia resentful. She comes to blame a 'creature of her mind,' "Destiny," and, more importantly, counterattacks
with social nonconformity.

She thought of [Destiny's interference in making her love inconstant] with an ever-growing consciousness of cruelty, which tended to breed actions of reckless unconventionality, framed to snatch a year's, a week's, even an hour's passion from anywhere while it could be won. . . .

. . . A blaze of love, and extinction, was better than a lantern glimmer of the same which should last long years. . . .

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

. . . She was a girl of some forwardness of mind, indeed, weighed in relation to her situation among the very reward of thinkers, very original. Her instincts toward social nonconformity were at the root of this. . . .

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\[^5\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 79-80. Italicus mina. Eustacia rested while others worked (and vice versa), and was religious at some time during the week, instead of on Sunday. The view of Destiny is, of course, her own.}\]

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In a passage quoted in Chapter Two, Hardy indicates the subtle interaction between Eustacia's personality and her environment. Her nonconformist views, he says, "were to some extent the natural begettings of her situation upon her nature," and the heath environment "made a rebellious woman saturnine." [^6]

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\[^6\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 81.}\]

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We have now seen two basic causes for Eustacia's isolation—her being compelled to live on the lonely heath and
her inconstancy in love. Hardy adds a third, which is to a certain extent related to the other two. Although she wants a man, Eustacia is also fastidious, aspiring, and exacting: she will have either an exalted union or nothing.

Eustacia had got beyond the vision of some marriage of inexpressible glory; yet, though her emotion were in full vigour, she cared for no meaner union. Thus we see her in a strange state of isolation.

The passionate, lonely Eustacia is highly unrealistic in choosing her lovers. With very few men to pick from, and electrified by her passions, she deludes herself into thinking that each of the two men she gives herself to will be her "great love." Through the second of these two men in her "field" (at different times) she merges far less with her environment than she has done previously, and ultimately meets her downfall.

The first man is Damon Wildeve, a mediocre, weak-willed person who has given up his plans for becoming an engineer. Much to Eustacia's dismay, in the course of their passionate relationship he proves inconstant. When he returns to her, she comes to realize how really unsatisfactory he is as a lover, and turns to one who, she hopes,
will redeem her from a wasted life in Egdon—the erstwhile Parisian Clym Yeobright. Clym does not want to return to Paris but wants to remain on the heath and become an educator, as he explains to Eustacia. Quite unrealistically, she assumes two things: either he will change his views about not returning to Paris, or, if he does not, she will not mind, because he is really the man she wants. As she tells him,

''Don't mistake me, Clym: though I should like Paris, I love you for yourself alone. To be your wife and live in Paris would be heaven to me; but I would rather live with you in a hermitage here than not be yours at all. It is gain to me either way, and very great gain. There's my too candid confession.' 8

8Ibid., p. 235.

But Clym, despite his professed love for her and his good intentions, is far more interested in his studies than in Eustacia's needs and desires. Their marriage, which is highly unsuccessful, comes to exercise a stifling effect on her, particularly after Clym's eyesight becomes affected and he takes to furze-cutting for a living. And, after she fails to admit to her house Clym's mother (who, although not on speaking terms with Eustacia, was coming to make amends), and the old lady, returning homeward, is stung by
an adder and dies, her marriage with Clym is threatened more seriously. Clym discovers that Wildeve was in the house at the time his mother arrived, and accuses her of causing his mother's death. A violent scene takes place between them, in the course of which Clym appears to take on the role of her destroyer. At one point he comes close to physically harming her, but desists:

'Phew— I shall not kill you,' he said contemptuously, as if under a sudden change of purpose. 'I did think of it; but--I shall not. That would be making a martyr of you, and sending you to where she is; and I would keep you away from her till the universe come to an end, if I could.'9

9Ibid., p. 388.

At another point Eustacia indicates quite clearly how Clym's influence has restricted her merging with her environment:

' . . . I have lost all through you, but I have not complained. Your blunders and misfortunes may have been a sorrow to you, but they have been a wrong to me. All persons of refinement have been scared away from me since I sank into the mire of marriage. Is this your cherishing—to put me into a hut like this, and keep me like the wife of a hind? You deceived me--not by words, but by appearances, which are less seen through than words. But the place will serve as well as any other—as somewhere to pass from—into my grave.'10
Since she can now have hardly any "field" at all if she remains in Clym's hut (so destructive to her spirit is their violent quarrel), Eustacia leaves him and returns to her grandfather's house, where at least a slightly increased amount of merging with her environment will be possible. This move is only a temporary expedient, however. Shortly after, she encounters Wildeve, and he proffers his aid in getting her away from Egdon. Wildeve, admittedly a rather unsavory character, thus appears now in the guise of a redeemer. He is sorry that his continued interest in Eustacia has compromised her, and is willing to make amends by means of the large fortune he has just inherited.

"I ought never to have hunted you out; or, having done it, I ought to have persisted in retaining you. But of course I have no right to talk of that now. I will only ask this: can I do anything for you? Is there anything on the face of the earth that a man can do to make you happier than you are at present? If there is, I will do it. You may command me, Eustacia, to the limit of my influence; and don't forget that I am richer now. Surely something can be done to save you from this! Such a rare plant in such a wild place it grieves me to see. Do you want anything bought? Do you want to go anywhere? Do you want to escape the place altogether? Only say it, and I'll do anything to put an end to those tears, which but for me would never have been at all."

"I have a place in my mind. If you could help me as far as Budmouth I can do all the rest."
Steamers sail from there across the Channel, and so I can get to Paris, where I want to be. Yes," she pleaded earnestly, 'help me to get to Budmouth harbour without my grandfather's or my husband's knowledge, and I can do all the rest.'

\[1\]Ibid., pp. 405-406.

But Wildeve, unfortunately for Eustacia, does not have a chance to re-enter her "field." On her way to meet him one night so that she can effect an escape, she falls into a weir and is drowned. (Clym, who had intended to attempt a reconciliation with her, tries to save her, as does Wildeve. Neither is successful, and Wildeve drowns.) Thus the sensual and mysterious, but unrealistic, Eustacia, whose merging with her environment has for long been pathetically restricted, is in a sense destroyed by a person no less socially isolated than herself, yet as much at home in the heath as she has not been. Only in death does she merge with the one person in her environment--her former lover Wildeve--who had purposely endeavored to redeem her from an intolerably limited "field."

Thus, according to the "field" analysis, Eustacia's passionate nature and unrealistic attitude, interacting with her lonely heath surroundings and the imperfections of the two men in her life, prevent her from "merging." Underlying her lifelong isolation, however, is a familiar
Hardyan problem—the "mixed marriage." It is perhaps indicative of the conditions of the time that so many of the English married out of their class and some, out of their nationality. Despite the greater social mobility made possible by changes in economic and political circumstances, certain restrictions of movement inevitably resulted (the transplanted rural dwellers living narrow, confining lives in the cities, for example).

Eustacia's isolation on the heath is ultimately traceable to the social mobility of her parents. Her mother, a well-to-do lady visiting at the seaside resort of Budmouth (early in the century, apparently), had met there a foreign military bandmaster—a Corfiote—and had married him. Sometime after Eustacia was born, her mother died. Her father then took to drink and he, too, subsequently died. Eustacia was then left in the care of her grandfather, who lived retired on Egdon Heath. Her memories of the gay life she led at Budmouth make the quiet, uneventful heath all the more unbearable to her, and she longs for the social mobility she, like her mother, had once known. If she cannot enjoy an exalted marriage, she desires at least to keep a shop in Paris so as to be near the world of fashion. But failing in her attempts at social mobility, this product of a "mixed marriage" is obliged to remain in her constricted "field," merging only slightly with an environment that is
entirely foreign to her although she was born and bred only a few miles from it.
Mrs. Chundle

Mrs. Chundle is an aged, partially deaf recluse who lives on the outskirts of a rural parish. Most restricted in her merging with her environment, she practically never leaves home except to go to market. One day the new young curate comes upon her house in the course of a stroll. Discovering her hermit-like mode of existence, he begins taking an interest in enlarging her "field"—at least insofar as her attending church is concerned. But one of the most important causes of her restricted merging with her environment—her inability to hear well—makes it pointless for her to go to church. The curate, undaunted by this difficulty, promises to provide an ear-trumpet for her if she will attend, and, impressed with his efforts on her behalf, she agrees. When the hearing aid proves ineffective, he prevents her from severing her connection with the church (which she threatens to do), by installing a speaking-tube from her seat to his lectern, so that her hearing difficulties may be alleviated. Mrs. Chundle is delighted with the results, and promises to come to Church regularly. She also asks the curate, whom she had at first been suspicious of, to come and read to her once in a while. She is, in her opinion, being redeemed by the young man.12

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12 Hardy thus describes the look on her face as she sits
in her seat beneath the pulpit on the first Sunday after the speaking-tube has been installed: "a look of great complacency that her soul required a special machinery to save it, while other people's could be saved in a commonplace way." ["Old Mrs. Chundle" (New York: Crosby Gaige, 1929), p. 16]

But in this view Mrs. Chundle is highly unrealistic. The curate is interested primarily in church attendance, not in saving souls. Far from being firmly in her "field," the curate is now in effect moving outside it. Although she does not realize it, the curate has become offended because her bad breath has been coming through the speaking-tube and disturbing the delivery of his sermons. Determined not to be subjected to her breath, whether she attends church or not, he has the contrivance taken down, but without telling her. She sends for him, but he delays going to her house. When he does go, he discovers that she has just died, without knowing of his changed attitude toward her, and believing that he has been trying to redeem her as a member of the church. A neighbor of Mrs. Chundle's tells the curate about the old lady's death:

"... Well, you see, sir, she was over seventy years of age, and last Sunday she was rather late in starting for church, having to put her bit o' dinner ready before going out; and she was very anxious to be in time. So she hurried overmuch, and rumed up the hill, which at her time of life she ought not to have done. It upset her heart, and she's been poorly all the week since, and that made her send for 'ee. Two or three times
she said she hoped you would come soon, as you'd promised to, and you were so staunch and faithful in wishing to do her good, that she knew it was not by your own wish you didn't arrive. But she would not let us send again, as it might trouble 'ee too much, and there might be other poor folks needing you. She worried to think she might not be able to listen to 'ee next Sunday, and feared you'd be hurt at it, and think her remiss. But she was eager to hear you again later on. . . . 'I've found a real friend at last,' she said. 'He's a man in a thousand. He's not ashamed of an old woman, and he holds that her soul is worth saving as well as richer people's.' . . .


Thus, through the curate's influence, the aged Mrs. Chundle attempts to merge with her environment, but so weakens herself in the process (by hastening to church) that she dies. She had come to think of the curate as a redeemer concerned with her salvation. But he actually had a destructive physical effect on her, and a potentially destructive psychological and spiritual effect as well. By attempting to discourage her attendance at church, he was making it practically impossible for her to continue merging with her environment. But, unaware that her "redeemer" had been moving outside her "field," the unrealistic Mrs. Chundle bequeathed him all of her humble possessions. To her he was the "shepherd" who found her as a strayed sheep and made it possible for her to return to the fold.
Slight though the story of Mrs. Chundle is, it has great significance for a study of Victorian isolation. In the space of only a few pages, and by retelling a true story that a friend had told to him, Hardy managed to reveal some of the deficiencies of the contemporary English clergy, particularly its failure to observe the eleventh commandment and thereby forestall isolation on the part of those drifting away from the Church.

Mrs. Chundle was like a number of other humble rural dwellers in the nineteenth century (the widow Edlin in Jude the Obscure, for example) in being indifferent to religion. The Church was no longer in her "field." It was not that she had been exposed to Strauss or Darwin or Bradlaugh—poor and deaf, she had simply lost interest in attending church, and, so far as the complacent rector was concerned, had ceased to be a significant member of her parish. She did not appear to regard her isolation as harmful, however, for until the curate came to her house, she was apparently quite contented with her own thoughts and activities. The curate, in urging her to attend church, made her think that he was concerned with her spiritual welfare, that he wanted to end her state of isolation. What is significant here is not so much the curate's underlying indifference to her welfare, or his lack of spirituality, but the fact that he misleadingly conveyed to Mrs. Chundle the feeling that he,
as a representative of the Church, cared.

When commentators say that the Church slumbered during the eighteenth century, they allude not only to the Church's indifference or hostility toward science and modern philosophical systems, but to the Church's losing contact with very many of its communicants. Sectarianism (particularly Methodism), deism, or outright unbelief began to weaken the ties of the population to the Church largely because the clergy were concerning themselves not with the needs of their people but with acquiring lucrative livings (often plural livings) and with enjoying various pleasures (for example, foxhunting). The nineteenth century saw the awakening of the Church from this slumber, but in a number of parishes the clergy remained indifferent to the needs of at least some of their parishioners, humble folk like Mrs. Chundle who seemed too insignificant to bother with.

Since Mrs. Chundle could be brought back within the fold so readily (i.e., was, after a little persuasion, quite willing to merge with her environment), it is an ironic commentary on the attitude of the curate that had she not died she would have been discouraged from remaining within the fold, simply because she had inadvertently offended him. Hardy, in presenting the curate's reactions to the news of Mrs. Chundle's death and of her leaving him all her humble possessions, wrote as follows:
The curate went out, like Peter at the cockcrow. He was a meek young man. \textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. 27.

In denying Mrs. Chundle, the curate was in effect denying Christ. While he and his kind would doubtless inherit the earth, she and her kind would doubtless inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.
Timothy Summers

Timothy Summers is a poor unemployed "watch-and-clock-maker" living in the village of Shottsford during the early part of the century (circa 1620). Driven by the necessity of providing food for his starving family, Timothy steals a sheep in broad daylight, defying the farmer's wife and son and the others present. The theft represents an unrealistic action in the sense that Timothy has behaved as if his family's distress conferred on him the right to possession of the sheep. But no such right was actually conferred (Timothy might, presumably, have sought some form of "poor relief" from his parish). Therefore, when Timothy seized the sheep, he was taking possession of it by force and not by law.

As a result of his theft, Timothy is imprisoned in Casterbridge jail and sentenced to be hanged. In "field" terms, his merging with his environment is almost entirely restricted at this point. But Timothy, unwilling to submit to such a punishment, escapes from jail and makes his way across the countryside. Seeking shelter from a rainstorm, he gains admission to a shepherd's cottage, where he finds a christening party in progress.

Timothy's ingratiating conduct at the shepherd's cottage has a favorable effect on the company and enables him
during the time he is there to merge extensively with his environment. (The countryfolk do not know he is an escaped criminal traveling under an assumed identity.) All are within his "field," even the new hangman, who comes to the cottage by chance (he is on his way to the Casterbridge jail) and finds the members of the party—including the fugitive Timothy—very agreeable. Timothy's brother (traveling to Casterbridge to attend Timothy's hanging) also comes to the shepherd's door, but, upon a silent appeal from Timothy, he hurriedly leaves without saying anything, lest he betray Timothy's identity inadvertently.

Then the alarm from Casterbridge jail sounds, warning of an escape, and Timothy is in great danger of being apprehended—and thus of being prevented from merging, as a freeman, with his environment. The alert and resourceful Timothy manages to remain inconspicuous. When the others leave the cottage to pursue the "escaped criminal" (whom they think to be the last figure to appear at the shepherd's door), Timothy too leaves. But before he makes his actual escape, Timothy returns to the cottage (while the others are still away) to take more refreshment. The hangman then returns, also seeking more refreshment. Timothy preserves his assumed identity, ingratiates himself further with the hangman, and leaves with impunity.

Although Timothy might subsequently have been discov-
ered and turned over to the law—the hangman is, of course, still his potential destroyer and is still within his "field"—he is redeemed by the countryfolk he has met at the shepherd's cottage and by their neighbors. They are willing that a person like himself go free, and therefore do not seek to apprehend him:

Next day, accordingly, the quest for the clever sheep-stealer became general and keen, to all appearances at least. But the intended punishment was cruelly disproportioned to the transgression, and the sympathy of a great many country-folk in that district was strongly on the side of the fugitive. Moreover, his marvellous coolness and daring in hob-and-nobbing with the hangman, under the unprecedented circumstances of the shepherd's party, won their admiration. So that it may be questioned if all those who ostensibly made themselves so busy in exploring woods and fields and lanes were quite so thorough when it came to the private examination of their own lofts and out-houses. Stories were afloat of a mysterious figure being occasionally seen in some old overgrown trackway or other, remote from turnpike roads; but when a search was instituted in any of these suspected quarters nobody was found. 15


Since Timothy successfully hides his real identity under an ingratiating assumed identity, the people who come to be in his "field" as he flees Casterbridge jail—the hangman and the countryfolk—take on an altogether different character, with respect to Timothy, than would ordinar-
ily be the case. The hangman, his potential destroyer, becomes a friendly party acquaintance. The countryfolk, despite the fact that he means nothing to them personally, become his redeemers. Formerly one who is to be prevented (by being hanged) from merging with his environment at all as a result of his unrealistic act, Timothy is now allowed to overcome the obstacles to his "merging," by not being turned over to the law.

Timothy's plight as an isolate outside the law had a counterpart in the lives of many agricultural laborers, petty craftsmen, and vendors in the early part of the century. Rural lower-class society was disintegrating because its traditional rights in land were being curtailed\(^{16}\) and

\(^{16}\)I.e., through the enclosure of common lands and the unwillingness of wealthy landowners or tenant farmers to renew contracts of tenure for small landholdings.

the factories and mines were attracting vast numbers of rural inhabitants. Village industry, under these circumstances, deteriorated or fluctuated widely as other social and economic conditions varied. It was not surprising, then, that Timothy, as a village "watch-and-clock-maker," might suddenly find himself without employment.

But hazardous economic conditions were not all of Timothy's problems. Capital punishment for minor crimes like
laws, to whom "the intended punishment was cruelly dispro-
portioned to the transgression."
Teas Durbeyfield

Teas Durbeyfield is a poor, simple country girl in late adolescence whose family has greatly deteriorated over the centuries. Her father, an improvident and ignorant trader, is descended from the noble and once-famous d'Urbervilles, but in outlook and capacities is hardly to be distinguished from her childish mother. In order to help her needy family, Tess yields to her mother's urging and goes to the home of people who are supposed to be wealthy relatives (the d'Urbervilles), "claiming kin." There she encounters the young and dashing Alec d'Urberville, her supposed cousin. The unrealistic and rather unintelligent Tess, while not trusting Alec, assumes that he means her no real harm, and accepts a position in Alec's home. Alec, taking advantage of Tess's helplessness one night in the woods, has his way with her. From this time onward, her merging with her environment becomes drastically restricted, but not, as the story shows, merely because she is a "fallen woman" in a supposedly moral society. Her limited understanding plays a very important role in her subsequent life. She will now be "as a stranger and an alien" in her own land, and, in fact, wherever else she may travel.

An immeasurable social chasm was to divide our heroine's personality thereafter from that previous self of hers who stepped from her mother's
door to try her fortune at Trantridge poultry-farm.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{18}Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 91.

Alec, as Tess's seducer, may be said to have a destructive effect upon her (see p. 47), particularly since a long series of unpleasant events follows the "attack" and her subsequent pregnancy. But though in our "field" analysis Alec is considered as her "destroyer," it must be pointed out that Tess's personality had a great deal to do with the act of violation. Tess's vulnerability to Alec is typical of her lack of acuity and her inability to understand men or her own feelings. When she is leaving Alec's home, a few weeks after the seduction, she reveals her underlying feelings:

\begin{quote}
'... If I had gone [to Trantridge poultry-farm] for love o' you, 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.'

He shrugged his shoulders. She resumed--
'I didn't understand your meaning till it was too late.'\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., p. 97.

Shortly after making this statement Tess gives Alec permis-
tion to kiss her, saying, "'See how you've mastered me!'"
Aleo kisses her on each cheek and expresses the fear that
she will never love him.

'I have said so often. It is true. I have never
really truly loved you, and I think I never
can.'

If this does not sufficiently indicate to the most sympa-
thetic reader that Tess's supposed rape is in part attrib-
utable to her own actions, Hardy provides an explanation
that removes all doubt. Thus, when Tess returns home and
tells her mother what has happened, her relations with Alec
are summed up as follows:

She had never wholly cared for him, she did not at
all care for him now. She had dreaded him, winced
before him, succumbed to adroit advantages he took
of her helplessness; then, temporarily blinded by
his ardent manners, had been stirred to confused
surrender awhile: had suddenly despised and dis-
liked him, and had run away. That was all.

But though the emotionally immature Tess was latently
attracted to Alec, she had not been warned about men and
their ways—her mother had actually hoped that Tess would be able to ensnare Alec into marriage—and Tess was therefore able to reproach her mother for not having prepared her to deal with Alec's kind. However, since Tess was, after all, a country girl living in a region where seductions were not uncommon, she should have known something about protecting herself. Her lack of such knowledge appears to be due more to her general lack of perceptiveness than to her mother's failure to guide and instruct her.

Thus far we have discussed certain features of Tess's personality: her immaturity, lack of perceptiveness, and responsiveness to the opposite sex. The first two, as the story indicates, may be due in part to the warping influence of her childish and irresponsible parents. Another feature of her personality must also be taken into account—her melancholy self-reproaching tendency. From at least the time when she takes the family horse and cart to deliver a load of hives (this is shortly before she goes to the home of the d'Urbervilles), and the horse is accidentally killed, Tess feels herself unworthy and oppressed by a sense of guilt. Throughout her life this morbid tendency continues, augmented, after her succumbing to Alec, by a desire to end her life. Hardy makes a number of references to the effect of heredity on Tess, but this matter may be more effectively discussed after her entire career has been
surveyed by means of the "field" approach.

Tess, limited by a number of personality defects (immaturity out of proportion to her years, a tendency toward self-punishment, etc.) and, possibly, by her unfavorable home environment, appears vulnerable to every possible unfavorable turn of events. As a result, her "merging" remains restricted. Pregnant with Alec's child, she withdraws from her own kind (although she is once again at home), preferring to be alone with her thoughts. After the child is born, Tess remains aloof. Her state of isolation continues after the child dies, but about two years later she accepts a position as dairymaid at a dairy some distance from her home.

At the dairy she meets young Angel Clare, who, though a minister's son and intended by his parents for a ministerial career, is preparing to become a farmer instead. Tess falls in love with him so fervently and regards him in so unrealistic a light that he becomes a sort of deity to her.

She loved him so passionately, and he was so god-like in her eyes; and being, though untrained, instinctively refined, her nature cried for his tutelary guidance.\(^{22}\)

\(^{22}\)Ibid., p. 233. See also p. 246.

Angel, deeply in love with Tess, wishes to marry her. But
so strong is the girl's feeling of having committed a sin (by yielding to Alec) that for a time she will not allow herself to agree. Angel's entreaties weaken her resistance—Tess indicates to him that the only unusual thing in her background is her descent from a once-noble line—and she finally yields. Shortly before the marriage she sends him a letter "telling all," but the letter is misplaced. Other efforts to tell him verbally fail when he happily states that recitation of faults is to be deferred until they are husband and wife.

After the wedding Angel reveals that he once "fell"—in Hardy's words, "plunged into eight-and-forty hours' dissipation with a stranger." Tess, now more unrealistic in her attitude toward her saintly Angel than ever, thinks that he will forgive her "sin," because it is "just the same," or, that if he will not, her revelation will be grounds for divorce so that he can free himself of her. Neither assumption, she discovers, is true. Angel's overly refined feelings (which get the better of his impassioned idealism) will not allow him to forgive her "trespass" as

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23 Ibid., p. 286. Italics mine. These three words are of great importance, because they appear to indicate Tess's recognition of the fact that she was not raped by Alec, but gave herself to him.
she has forgiven his, and, although divorce is out of the question, he leaves her, heartbroken and forlorn. Thus the one person who might have enabled Tess to merge with her environment remains in her "field" only long enough for her to become entirely dependent upon him.

After a number of hardships Tess again encounters Alec, who wants her for his own and tries to persuade her that her only course is to accept his assistance. Tess resists Alec for a time, hoping that Angel will come back. Her merging with her environment is painfully restricted now, but if Angel returns to claim her, that condition will be greatly alleviated. Although he has deserted her, Tess continues to regard him in the light of a potential redeemer and protector (as her letter to him in Chapter XLVIII clearly indicates). After her father's death her family is evicted from their small holding and left destitute. Yielding to Alec's arguments, particularly since he appears the only one who can do anything for her family, she becomes his mistress. Finally Angel, after an unsuccessful attempt to settle in America, returns home, ready to forgive and forget. When he seeks out Tess, however, he finds her living with Alec.

But now Tess begins to feel how acutely restricted her merging with her environment is, all because of the man who has had such a destructive effect upon her. Desiring rath-
er that Angel be in the "field" than Alec, and overcome by her emotions since this does not seem possible, she kills Alec, thinking that now Angel will "redeem" her with his forgiving love:

'I have done it!—I don't know how,' she continued. 'Still, I owed it to you, and to myself, Angel. I feared long ago, when I struck him on the mouth with my glove, that I might do it some day for the trap he set for me in my simple youth, and his wrong to you through me. He has come between us and ruined us, and now he can never do it any more. I never loved him at all, Angel, as I loved you. You know it, don't you? You believe it? You didn't come back to me, and I was obliged to go back to him. Why did you go away—why did you—when I loved you so? I can't think why you did it. But I don't blame you; only Angel, will you forgive me my sin against you, now I have killed him? I thought as I ran along that you would be sure to forgive me now I have done that. 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!'

Under the circumstances, of course, Angel cannot remain within Tess's "field" for long, and cannot "redeem" her. The most he can do is give her love and understanding sympathy until the police come to take her away. Her hanging follows.

As this "field" analysis of Tess has shown, a simple,
unrealistic country girl lacking in judgment, perception, and level-headed self-appraisal, and finding herself in unfavorable circumstances at the very outset, will be likely to encounter very great difficulty in "merging," particularly when she puts her trust in men whose weaknesses of personality are at least as great as her own.

The analysis has purposely deferred treating Tess's heredity—which Hardy makes so much of—until her entire career has been surveyed. There are two reasons for this. First, since heredity is mentioned in a number of different connections throughout Tess, it is not feasible to settle the question of its importance in the book before Tess's relations with her environment are examined fully. Second, heredity—as Hardy deals with it here—is not so important that a "field" analysis of Tess must take account of it at the outset.

When Hardy wrote Tess, between 1888 and 1891, the young science of heredity was very much in the public eye. Darwin and Spencer discussed the inheritability of gout, nervousness, and a bias toward suicide; a large number of theorists analyzed the superiority or inferiority of certain ethnic or class groups on the basis of heredity; and writers like Zola in their literary works explained human character on the basis of heredity. It was not until the
turn of the century, however, that the guesswork underlying the accepted views on heredity (many of these views having their origins in ancient folk beliefs) gave way to scientific substantiation. From that time on, some of the earlier notions on heredity—fondly held by certain scientists and popular writers—were held to be erroneous. Among these discarded ideas, current in Hardy’s day, were the following: acquired characteristics are inherited, and heredity is of major importance in determining human behavior. Just as the basis for heredity—genes and chromosomes—was not generally known before the end of the century, so the subtle interaction between heredity and environment in determining human behavior was not known. This is not to say that most literary figures described their characters primarily in terms of hereditary endowments—Hardy certainly did not. But references were made, in literary works, to hereditary processes where none actually existed, merely because the authors did not know whereof they spoke: they either echoed the nineteenth-century scientific views on heredity or merely followed ancient folk traditions on the inheritance of traits. Hardy, for example, indicated (in The Mayor of Casterbridge) that Elizabeth-Jane’s attraction to the sea might be due in part to the fact that her blood was a sailor’s. Hardy also wrote of prenatal influence and the prominence of family traits in sleep or un-
der stress. I have already spoken of the tradition in the Pawley family (in Jude the Obscure) that the Pawleys were (presumably because of heredity) unfit for marriage. Although Hardy did not himself argue this view in the book, the fact that Wessex countryfolk like the Pawleys harbored such notions explains in part Hardy's occasional advocacy of similar ideas.

Tess contains numerous references to heredity. After her baby is born, Tess is described as "an almost standard woman, but for the slight incautiousness of character inherited from her race."\(^2\)\(^5\) When she fails to oppose Angel's

\(^2\)\(^5\)Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 114.

decision to leave her, this submission, according to Hardy, is "perhaps . . . a symptom of that reckless acquiescence in chance so apparent in the whole d'Urberville family."\(^2\)\(^6\)

\(^2\)\(^6\)Ibid., pp. 323-324. Italics mine.

Hardy further intimated, by showing Angel's attitude toward her character (pp. 297, 492) and by introducing a legend of a phantom coach which haunts members of the d'Urberville family when they have committed a crime, that Tess may have inherited a criminal tendency from her father's family.
These references, with the exception of the first, are more suggestive than factual, however, and do not demonstrate hereditary influence. Likewise, Hardy's comments about Tess's inheriting her vigor and comeliness from her mother (pp. 20, 48, 132, and 135) are not direct assertions by the author, with the exception of the following (on p. 48):

"She had an attribute which amounted to a disadvantage just now; and it was this that caused Alec d'Urberville's eyes to rivet themselves upon her. It was a luxuriance of aspect, a fulness of growth, which made her appear more of a woman than she really was. She had inherited the feature from her mother without the quality it denoted."  

I take this statement to mean that Tess had womanly contours before her emotions had fully developed from those of girlhood to those of womanhood. But, as the story appears to indicate, Tess was already able to respond, however mildly, to the opposite sex.

The only one of the statements which might appear to present evidence that Tess's conduct is attributable to her heredity—"the slight incautiousness of character inherited from her race"—ceases to have any real meaning, when read in the light of Tess's actions. The girl was perhaps incautious when she allowed Alec to have his way with her in the woods, but she had been greatly fatigued before the seduction occurred. And, too, physical attraction to Alec
may well have had something to do with that (supposed) incautiousness. Moreover, Hardy did not state that her heredity made her particularly susceptible to men. At no other time was Tess unusually incautious, so that a case might be made—if the reader suspended his disbelief in Hardy's outmoded views on heredity—for her hereditary lack of caution; then, too, her early life with her indigent and childish parents may well have failed to foster in her a proper degree of caution under difficult conditions. But Hardy has indicated explicitly that Tess had no specific hereditary trait distinguishing her from those around her. In the passage describing her attempted visit to Angel's family for help, he wrote:

... she could not feel by any stretch of imagination, dressed to her highest as she was, that the house was the residence of near relations; and yet nothing essential, in nature or emotion, divided her from them: in pains, pleasures, thoughts birth, death, and after-death, they were the same.28

28Ibid., p. 380. Italics mine. The importance of heredity in Tess is stressed in Duffin's Thomas Hardy (p. 49) and Webster's On A Darkling Plain (pp. 175-176, 179).

Two specific points must be made about Tess in regard to isolating factors in later nineteenth-century29 England.

29According to Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p. 182, the story
The first concerns Angel's attitude toward her, as well as the attitude of society. Underlying Angel's unwillingness to accept Tess's moral relapse as she accepts his is the Victorian attitude toward women. Without many of the ordinary civil rights that the poorest man enjoyed, the Victorian woman was given the duty of leading a morally pure existence under all circumstances. Failure to do this engendered strong social disapproval, in some cases verging on ostracism. Despite his advanced views—his rejection of his father's evangelical Christianity and his violent dislike of the aristocracy—Angel cannot at first alter his conception of what a woman should be, and therefore adheres to the Victorian double standard of morals. When Tess argues that similar cases have occurred, matters having been patched up afterwards between husband and wife, and that the wife has not loved the husband as she loves Angel, the inconsistent Angel disdainfully replies that different societies have different manners. It is not until he has been purged of his narrow prejudices by the hardships of life as a Brazilian immigrant, the broadminded views of a cosmopolitan Englishman he meets in Brazil, and the rigors of candid soul-searching that Angel changes his views and is ready to accept Tess on her own terms, thereby discard-
ing the double standard.

Angel's early attitude toward Tess may be compared with the attitude of Tess's society. That portion of society which is of a higher social stratum is not particularly kind to her. Yet Tess's own social group does not ostracize her, despite its recognition that she is neither a maiden nor a wife. But the attitude of society in general toward Tess is not one of condemnation, as a number of commentators have felt.  

The story shows clearly that Tess is cut off from those around her almost as much by her own self-abasing (and, later, suicidal) tendencies as she is by social disapproval, which is neither unanimous nor uniformly severe, and certainly does not represent condemnation. In the passage describing Tess with her baby among the field hands it is made clear that society was not opposed to Tess:

She might have seen that what had bowed her head so profoundly—the thought of the world's concern at her situation—was founded on an illusion. She was not an existence, an experience, a passion, a structure of sensations, to anybody but herself. To all humankind besides Tess was only a passing thought. Even to friends she was not more than a frequently passing thought.
The second point about Tess and the isolating factors of English life during the time the action of the story takes place is that Tess's family, by its mode of life, was subject to great uncertainty in its living accommodations. John Durbeyfield, as an unsteady village trader and a life-holder (his was the last of the three lives for which the small landholding in the Durbeyfield family had been granted), was not a desirable tenant to his landlord, the farmer who was himself a tenant of the man owning all of the surrounding land. Improvements in agricultural methods, as I have pointed out, were accelerating the removal from villages of all of those not playing a part in the cultivation of the land, and in such a situation the Durbeyfields had, as tenants, nothing constructive to offer. Thus, after John's death (and before Tess gives herself to Alec a second time), the members of the once-noble family are evicted. Hardy has given a cogent account of these changing conditions in land-tenancy and their effect on people like the Durbeyfields:

A depopulation was . . . going on. The village [of Marlott] had formerly contained, side by side with the agricultural labourers [who now sought annual employment at different farms rather than remain in one place all of their lives], an inter-
eating and better-informed class, ranking distinct-
ly above the former—the class to which Tess's fa-
ther and mother had belonged—and including the
carpenter, the smith, the shoemaker, the huckster,
together with nondescript workers other than farm-
labourers; a set of people who owed a certain sta-
bility of aim and conduct to the fact of their be-
ing life-holders like Tess's father, or copy-holder-
s, or, occasionally, small freeholders. But as
the long holdings fell in they were seldom again
let to similar tenants, and were mostly pulled
down, if not absolutely required by the farmer for
his hands. Cottagers who were not directly em-
ployed on the land were looked upon with disfavour,
and the banishment of some starved the trade of
others, who were thus obliged to follow. These
families, who had formed the backbone of the vil-
lage life in the past, who were the depositaries
of the village traditions, had to seek refuge in
the large centres; the process, humorously desig-
nated by statisticians as 'the tendency of the ru-
ral population towards the large towns,' being
really the tendency of water to flow up-hill when
forced by machinery.

The cottage accommodation at Marlott having
been in this manner considerably curtailed by dem-
olitions, every house that remained standing was
required by the agriculturist for his work-people.
Ever since the occurrence of the event which had
cast such a shadow over Tess's life, the Durbey-
field family (whose descent was not credited) had
been tacitly looked on as one which would have to
go when their lease ended, if only in the inter-
est of morality. It was, indeed, quite true that
the household had not been shining examples either
of temperance, soberness, or chastity. The father,
and even the mother, had got drunk at times, the
younger children seldom had gone to church, and
the elder daughter had made queer unions. By some
means the village had to be kept pure. So on
this, the first Lady-Day on which the Durbeyfields
were expellable, the house, being roomy, was re-
quired for a carter with a large family; and Widow
Joan, her daughters Tess and 'Liza-Iu, the boy A-
braham and the younger children, had to go else-
where.52

52Ibid., pp. 448-449. Hardy had some years earlier giv-
en a very similar account of changing conditions in the villages. See "The Dorsetshire Labourer," pp. 45-47. In 1902 he again discussed conditions among rural dwellers in a letter to Rider Haggard. See IV, pp. 93-96.

It is ironic that Tess, whose presence in Marlott had much (but not everything) to do with the eviction of her family, had gone there in response to an urgent request from her sister for help. (Tess's mother was dangerously ill and her shiftless father was unequal to the task of caring for the family—not long after Tess's arrival home he died, while her mother recovered.)

So complex, according to our discussion, are the factors underlying Tess's career, that it is possible to understand clearly what happens to her only by taking into account the interactions of her very limited personality with her very limited personal—but not geographical—environment. A rough summation of her life quite in keeping with our "field" analysis is found in a definition of tragedy Hardy wrote in 1878 (quoted in Chapter Two, p. 83).

The tragedy of the "pure" but quite unrealistic (and not very intelligent) Tess 'arises from a situation that comes of ordinary human passions, prejudices, and ambitions, by reason of her taking no trouble to ward off the disastrous events produced by these feelings.' Whatever Tess of the D'Urbervilles is—Victorian melodrama, tragedy, or portrait
of a pure woman—it does not appear to be what one critic called it, "an indictment of Providence—a parable whose moral is that it is not possible to justify the ways of God to men."33

33 David Cecil, Hardy the Novelist (London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1943), p. 132. I have not meant to imply that all Hardy critics up to the present are unanimous in their misreading of Hardy or that they all agree, in general, with the Hardy criticism that has preceded them. Cecil, for example, is scathingly ridiculed in a very ungracious fashion by Q. D. Leavis, in "Hardy and Criticism," Scrutiny, XI (1943), 230-237.
Sue Bridehead, Jude's "citified" cousin, is as restricted in her merging with her environment as he in his. Rebellious and ill at ease in a world of social and religious conventions and moral prohibitions, the freethinking, sexually repressed girl is in a constant state of frustration, so limited is the area of her total personality which she can bring into her "field." Among the numerous traits which exercise a detrimental effect upon her is her unrealistic attitude toward men. Sue seriously expects to find one or more men in her environment who will provide her with platonic love, whom she can live with and exchange ideas with, but who will make few other demands on her. Marriage is abhorrent to her and she attempts to avoid it, insofar as she is able. This unrealistic attitude is related to her pronounced tendencies toward sadism, masochism, and morbid guilt feelings. She cannot help causing the men in her life pain, then blaming and abasing herself until she is pained in return. And so, paradoxically, although she may form an alliance with any man she happens to meet and like, her abnormal views on the male-female relationship make it difficult for her to merge extensively with her environment—that is, to lead a personally satisfying life. A striking illustration of this (one of a number in
the book) is her relationship with a divinity student. As she tells Jude:

'... My life has been entirely shaped by what people call a peculiarity in me. I have no fear of men, as such, nor of their books. I have mixed with them— one or two of them particularly— almost as one of their own sex. I mean I have not felt about them as most women are taught to feel— to be on their guard against attacks on their virtue; for no average man— no man short of a sensual savage— will molest a woman by day or night, at home or abroad, unless she invites him. Until she says by a look “Come on” he is always afraid to, and if you never say it, or look it, he never comes. However, what I was going to say is that when I was eighteen I formed a friendly intimacy with an undergraduate at Christminster, and he taught me a great deal, and lent me books which I should never have got hold of otherwise.'

'... We used to go about together— on walking tours, reading tours, and things of that sort— like two men almost. He asked me to live with him, and I agreed to by letter. But when I joined him in London I found he meant a different thing from what I meant. He wanted me to be his mistress, in fact, but I wasn't in love with him— and on my saying I should go away if he didn't agree to my plan, he did so. We shared a sitting-room for fifteen months; and he became a leader-writer for one of the great London dailies; till he was taken ill, and had to go abroad. He said I was breaking his heart by holding out against him so long at such close quarters; he could never have believed it of woman. I might play that game once too often, he said. He came home merely to die. His death caused a terrible remorse in me for my cruelty— though I hope he died of consumption and not of me entirely. I went down to Sandbourne to his funeral, and was his only mourner. He left me a little money— because I broke his heart, I suppose. That's how men are— so much better than women!'
Two men, far more important to her than the divinity student, come to occupy important positions in Sue's "field" and to exercise, on the one hand, a destructive effect upon her, and on the other, a redeeming effect. Although in love with her cousin Jude, she is compelled, almost against her will, to marry a man whom she cannot stand physically, the elderly schoolmaster Phillotson. (Marriage itself is as repugnant to her as is Phillotson.) So repulsive is Phillotson to her, in contradistinction to Jude, that she leaves him to live with Jude. But despite the strong affinity (vitiated, or perhaps enlivened, by morbid jealousy and sadism) that she has for Jude, and despite his redeeming effect on her—he "saves" her from having to live with Phillotson—Sue is not wedded in spirit to Jude for life, as he is to her. When her children perish at the hands of Father Time, she is stricken with guilt feelings. Developing a strong interest in religion, she returns to Phillotson, remarrying him. Destructive to her spirit as is life with the schoolmaster, she is sufficiently motivated to turn her back on Jude—thus excluding her potential "redeemer" from her "field"—and remain domiciled with a man whom she can hardly abide and who drastically restricts her
"merging."

Since Sue has in her "field" only that portion of her total personality which is most abnormal and self-harming, it may be desirable to look further into what it is in her that reacts with the limited personalities of the men she encounters to restrict so painfully her merging with her environment.

From the story, the reader may get the impression that Sue, like Jude, experiences difficulties in relations with the opposite sex because of the hereditary unfitness of the Fawleys for marriage. Thus, before Sue's first marriage to Phillotson, she and Jude discuss their awkward position with respect to each other:

'... it was always impressed upon me that I ought not to marry—that I belonged to an odd and peculiar family—the wrong breed for marriage."

'Ah—who used to say that to you?'

'My great-aunt. She said it always ended badly with us Fawleys."

'That's strange. My father used to say the same to me!"

They stood possessed by the same thought, ugly enough, even as an assumption: that a union between them, had such been possible, would have meant a terrible intensification of unfitness--two bitters in one dish.36

36 Ibid., p. 201. Yet Sue replies, "'0 but there can't be anything in it! ... Our family have [sic] been unlucky of late years in choosing mates—that's all!'"
It is obvious from the story of Jude and Sue, however, that they are both products of broken homes and other unwhole-
some influences, and are, moreover, people whose strong e-
motions and desires frequently override their judgment. (I have, in fact, dealt with this matter at some length in
discussing Jude.) Unless, therefore, this sort of person-
ality weakness may be taken as evidence of an hereditary "taint" in their family (which is quite unlikely), there
appears to be no justification whatever for Hardy's state-
ment quoted in Chapter Four, that the novel "is concerned
... with the tragic issues of two bad marriages, owing in
the main to a doom or curse of hereditary temperament pecu-
liar to the family of the parties."36

36Iv, p. 40. But see Hardy's prefatory comments in Jude
the Obscure, pp. viii, xii. Webster, in On A Darkling
Plain, says (p. 185), "By heredity, both Jude and Sue be-
long to a family that does not live freely and happily in
marriage bonds."

Some more specific basis than heredity must be found
for Sue's instability. Perhaps Guerard is right in saying
that "The origin of Sue's epicene reticence lies somewhere
in her childhood."37 Not only was she ebulliently free in

37Guerard, Thomas Hardy, p. 112.
her actions then, even though her great-aunt attempted to repress her unnaturally, but she was also inconsistently compulsive about not entering too freely into relations with the opposite sex.\(^3\) So much more pleasing to her was the life of relative freedom she had had as a child than the life of constraints and conventions she is forced to contend with as an adult that, as she tells Jude, she longs to get back to the life of her infancy and its freedom.\(^4\) Whereas she had already shown signs of conflict as a child—evidenced for example by her alternating tomboy and coquette behavior—she was not nearly so repressed by adult authority then as in her own adult life. As she grew out of childhood her rebellious nature never permitted her to adjust to the obligations of adult living and to such social institutions as marriage. She tells Jude, after she has become Phillotson's wife:

'I have been thinking . . . that the social moulds civilization fits us into have no more relation to our actual shapes than the conventional shapes of the constellations have to the real
star-patterns. I am called Mrs. Richard Phillotson, living a calm wedded life with my counterpart of that name. But I am not really Mrs. Richard Phillotson, but a woman tossed about, all alone, with aberrant passions, and unaccountable antipathies. . . . 40

Jude the Obscure, pp. 246-247. See also p. 263.

Sue's neurotic uncertainties about Phillotson and men in general appear to reflect the Victorian woman's ignorance of sexual matters. Her abnormal antipathy to marriage and the sex act may be in part the result of repressive Victorian social conventions—of which she was already aware as a child—acting upon what Hardy called (IX, p. 42) her "unusually weak and fastidious" sexual instinct. 41

Thus an eminent contemporary psychiatrist wrote, in 1937,

In the Victorian age it was the cultural pattern for a woman to feel sexual relations as a humiliation, a feeling that was attenuated if the relation was legalized and decently frigid. This cultural influence has become weaker in the last thirty years but is still sufficiently strong to account for the fact that women more frequently than men feel that sexual relations hurt their dignity. This too may result in frigidity or in keeping away from men altogether, despite wishes for contact with them. The woman may find secondary satisfaction in this attitude by way of masochistic fantasies or perversions, but she will then develop a great hostility toward men because of her anticipation of humiliation.

Karen Horney, The Neurotic Personality of Our Time (New
Immediately preceding this statement is a commentary on the tendency of women to subdue and humiliate men which may be read side by side with Sue's confession to Jude (Jude the Obscure, p. 426) about her desire to subdue him. Many of Hardy's heroines, in fact, do not love their suitors but merely "love to be loved."

The possibility is worth noting that Sue's original attraction to Phillotson may be due to her conceiving him as a father-substitute. Her father, who had had a strong influence upon her when she was a child, would not allow her to live with him after her (platonic) affair with the divinity student. Phillotson represents stability, paternal protection, and age, the qualities her father represented. Once she becomes a substitute-teacher in Phillotson's school she allows herself to become drawn to him and, eventually, to promise to marry him. She has a very strong aversion to taking this step but forces herself to go through with it. Her absolute inability to perform her marital duties to Phillotson now becomes quite understandable if this hypothesis of his being a father-substitute is correct. Sue would then be acting as if in obedience to an instinctive incest-taboo and would seek every opportunity of severing, or at least mitigating the effects of, her relationship with him.

Phillotson's destructive effect upon her is clearly indicated not only in the descriptions of her suffering as
his wife—particularly at the end of the story, when she forces herself to share his bed— but also in Jude's reactions to her mating with Phillotson. When he first sees Sue walking with the schoolmaster, who places his arm around her waist, Jude exclaims, "'O, he's too old for her—too old!'" And, on his deathbed, thinking of Sue, now Phillotson's wife in fact as well as in name, Jude murmurs, "'And I here. And Sue defiled!'" But despite his attempts to protect her from Phillotson, Jude is only an ineffectual redeemer at best. Sue ceases to allow him a place within her "field," once she feels the full emotional effect of the loss of her children. Her conflict in regard to the two men in her life is finally resolved, however unrealistic the solution appears. Sue has chosen, at whatever cost to herself, the destructive effect of unnatural
married life with a man somewhat like her father over the redeeming effect of a natural unmarried life with a man who is her platonic counterpart.

Sue, then, for her own deep reasons, allows herself at the end to be prevented from merging to any but the slightest extent with her environment. For the second time she becomes the wife of a man with whom she feels intolerably restricted from participation with the outside world. Although life with Jude had entailed a certain amount of restriction of merging with her environment—because of social disapproval of their irregular relationship—she had been relatively happy. Jude was, by and large, the most important man ever to enter her "field." If guilt feelings already in her mind long before she met Jude had not become intensified at the death of her illegitimate children, he would have continued to occupy a position of primacy.

Sue's rebelliousness and her neurotic, sexually repressed nature have been dealt with at some length in the foregoing "field" analysis. A full treatment, admittedly a desideratum for a complex character like Sue, would require a book almost as long as Jude the Obscure itself.

Another aspect of Hardy's delineation of Sue must now be observed, for it has an important bearing on the problem of nineteenth-century isolation. Sue is, in a number of ways,
a "new woman," that is, she refuses to accept the traditional inferior role of the female of the species in Western civilization and instead is determined to follow her own inclinations in all important matters. Although Sue is remarkable for her self-assertion (to say nothing of her other unusual features) at a time—the second half of the century—when few women so asserted themselves, she is hardly a pioneer in female emancipation. Hardy must have know this, and it is almost unbelievable that he should have taken seriously what a German reviewer said about Sue:

After the issue of Jude the Obscure as a serial story in Germany, an experienced reviewer of that country informed the writer that Sue Bridehead, the heroine, was the first delineation in fiction of the woman who was coming into notice in her thousands every year—the woman of the feminist movement—the slight, pale 'bachelor' girl—the intellectualized, emancipated bundle of nerves that modern conditions were producing, mainly in cities as yet; who does not recognize the necessity for most of her sex to follow marriage as a profession, and boast themselves as superior people because they are licensed to be loved on the premises. The regret of this critic was that the portrait of the newcomer had been left to be drawn by a man, and was not done by one of her own sex, who would never have allowed her to break down at the end.

Whether this assurance is borne out by dates I cannot say. . . .

45"Postscript" to the "Preface to the First Edition" of Jude the Obscure, pp. xi-xii.
In 1801, almost a century before Sue appeared, the American author Charles Brockden Brown had written a novel about the emancipated woman, Clara Howard. In 1859 another American writer, John Neal, who had previously written and lectured on women's rights, followed up his earlier stories of emancipated and contentedly unmarried women with *True Womanhood*. In this novel Julia Parry, the heroine, somewhat resembles the German reviewer's description of Sue Bridehead. Julia is inclined toward missionary work, and rejects an ardent suitor because he is not a religious man. "'I do not believe,'" she tells him, "'that marriage is a condition absolutely indispensable for the happiness of woman, or for the development of true womanhood; nay, more--I do not believe that I shall ever be married.'"\(^{46}\)


Fifty years after *True Womanhood* appeared the classic affirmation in literature of woman's right to live as she pleased, Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. In 1881 an English writer, Olive Schreiner, in *The Story of an African Farm* attempted to portray the gradually emerging type of modern woman who refused to be bound by the prescriptions and prescriptions of the male ruling class. As for *Jude the Obs-
source, whatever its unique features (if any), it was only one among numerous literary works of its time dealing with the "new woman." 47

47 It is important to observe that however unfamiliar the "new woman" in English literature might have been to some readers (particularly foreign ones) in the 1890's, her ancestry was ancient, antedating by a number of generations her godmother Mary Wollstonecraft. Ben Jonson's Epicoene (1609) gives an interesting picture of emancipated women in early Stuart times. Truewit's description of these epicene women makes them appear not very different from Sue: "A new foundation, sir, here i' th' town, of Ladies that call themselves the Collegiates, an order between courtiers and country madams, that live from their husbands and give entertainment to all the wits and braveries o' th' time, as they call 'em; cry down, or up, what they like or dislike in a brain or a fashion, with most masculine, or rather, hermaphroditical authority; and every day gain to their college some new probationer."

I have pointed out in Chapter One that the "new woman" was generally not altogether emancipated. However valiantly she might assert her independence, ties remained to keep her mindful of the binding effect of society with its traditions and expectations. And with the double action of repellent and attractive forces making difficult any harmonious relationship with respect to her fellow human beings, the "new woman" was frequently in a strange position of isolation. She could not accept the minor role of wife-mother-domestic the directors of the nation--the men--gave her by fiat, and they, in turn, were unwilling for her to
be the leading lady.

Sue is only a partially freed "new woman." The conflict between a desire for complete freedom and for complete obedience to social convention appears to have made her profoundly neurotic, particularly since it is complicated by an additional conflict regarding religious belief. In "field" terms, extensive "merging" in Victorian England would be very difficult for any woman, however aggressive, since the male-dominated society expected the female to "know her place" and utilize only a limited area of her total personality. Someone like Sue, who could neither feel at ease whatever the "place" she assumed nor determine how much of her personality to bring into her "field," could not even merge nearly as well as the unemancipated Victorian woman. This painful uncertainty in Sue is clearly indicated in the passages concerning her stated reasons for marrying Phillotson. She had been ejected from a teachers' training school her fiancé Phillotson had enabled her to enter, because she had spent the night away from the school without permission. So insecure did she then feel, that, taking other factors into account, she determined to
go through with the marriage. As she explains her reasons to Phillotson,

'Because I thought I could do nothing else. You had got my promise a long time before that, remember. Then, as time went on, I regretted I had promised you, and was trying to see an honourable way to break it off. But as I couldn't I became rather reckless and careless about the conventions. Then you know what scandals were spread, and how I was turned out of the Training-School you had taken such time and trouble to prepare me for and get me into; and this frightened me, and it seemed then that the one thing I could do would be to let the engagement stand. Of course I, of all people, ought not to have cared what was said, for it was just what I fancied I never did care for. But I was a coward—as so many women are—and my theoretic unconventionality broke down. If that had not entered into the case it would have been better to have hurt your feelings once for all then, than to marry you and hurt them all my life after. . . . And you were so generous in never giving credit for a moment to the rumour.'

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50Jude the Obscure, p. 267. Italics mine.

Jude later challenges her emancipation, and she gives a slightly different explanation of her marriage, but an explanation that fills in one of the gaps left in her account to Phillotson.

'... I have sometimes thought, since your marrying Phillotson because of a stupid scandal, that under the affectation of independent views you are as enslaved to the social code as any woman I know!'

'Not mentally. But I haven't the courage of my views, as I said before. I didn't marry him alto-
gather because of the scandal. But sometimes a woman's love of being loved gets the better of her conscience, and though she is agonized at the thought of treating a man cruelly, she encourages him to love her while she doesn't love him at all. Then, when she sees him suffering, her remorse sets in, and she does what she can to repair the wrong.\footnote{Ibid., p. 290.}

Sue, the repressed, unrealistic "new woman," does not clearly understand, and hence fails to control, her emotional impulses to cause men pain and to seek to be pained by them in return. Nor does she understand men or even her society and its institutions. In her "field" there are so many of the morbid aspects of her personality, and so few of the wholesome aspects, that she does not merge with her environment whether she attempts to emancipate herself from, or acquiesce in, the role of woman in a rigid (but not, like herself, neurotic) Victorian society.
Jocelyn Pierston

Jocelyn Pierston is a sculptor who spends most of his life seeking the embodiment of the ideal woman, both in the flesh and in his sculpture. He is unrealistic in thinking that it lies within his power to find the essence of female desirability and perfection, at least in real life, because no woman remains perfect for very long (if she ever appears perfect at all) to an artist. Thus his decades-long search is entirely fruitless—he is unable to retain an interest in a possible "Well-Beloved" even when he finds her. And since he has been unable to find a human representative of the ideal woman, it is not surprising that he is unable to sculpture the ideal female. Thus neither manifestation of the ideal woman—natural or sculptured—lies within Jocelyn's "field."

Because he is an unrealistic sculptor devoted to a search for the ideal woman, Jocelyn is able to merge with his environment only to a slight extent, despite his popular success and his access to "high society":

... he would not have stood where he did stand in the ranks of an imaginative profession if he had not been at the mercy of every haunting of the fancy that can beset man. It was in his weaknesses as a citizen and a national-unit that his strength lay as an artist, and he felt it childish to complain of susceptibilities not only innate but cultivated.
Jocelyn's isolation as an artist who does not share the needs and desires of most people is depicted by Hardy through an imaginative literary device. Jocelyn is shown as the "Wandering Jew of the love-world." He is a lonely wanderer doomed, apparently, to endless peregrination, because he has offended a divine power.

The divine power Jocelyn offends is the goddess of love, variously represented as Venus, Aphrodite, Freyja, or Ashtaroth. Despite her destructive effect on him, he responds to the love-goddess throughout his life, until his near-fatal illness when he is past sixty. It is more exact to say that Jocelyn responds not to a real goddess of love --although Hardy frequently refers to one--but to the ideal of woman which appears, in Jocelyn's imaginative mind, to originate in Venus or one of her mythological counterparts. Jocelyn, then, by his lifelong pursuit of the "Well-Beloved" is in effect responding to an element in his own mind, an element which has correspondences with actual women he meets. His offense against the love-goddess is

53 According to Hardy's official biography, the theory upon which the novel is based is that of "the transmigration of the ideal beloved one, who only exists in the lover, from material woman to material woman." (IX, p. 59.) Cf. also
the "Preface" to *The Well-Beloved*. It is necessary to point out that Hardy in this story is, with Plato, equating the ideal and the divine.

therefore an offense against, or a strong disagreement with, a part of his own personality, with the result that Jocelyn is a man with divided aims, a man who is in conflict with himself about his relation to his environment and therefore cannot merge with it readily.

Hardy, in presenting a number of confusingly different, and apparently irreconcilable, transgressions by Jocelyn against the love-goddess and even against Christianity, is actually illustrating the profound inner conflict which makes Jocelyn, despite his artistic successes, an ineffec-tual and hopelessly "split" person. Jocelyn wants to settle down with a wife and be a useful citizen who participates in the general activities of his country—in effect, he wants to merge with his environment. But the inconstancy which causes him to flit from one female love-object to another somehow offends the love-goddess—the "Weaver of Wiles"—even though he feels he is doing her bidding by pursuing each temporary incarnation of the "Well-Beloved."

Thus, despite the apparent contradiction in attitude of Jocelyn's love-goddess, Jocelyn is affected adversely because he has not taken a wife: his art does not attain the highest level of perfection, he is in danger of choosing a
girl who is beneath him, and he is "urged on and on like the Jew Ahasuerus—or, in the phrase of the islanders themselves, like a blind ram." It is even hinted (p. 115)

that his attachment to the love-goddess, which has been making him a perennial bachelor, is a kind of idolatry and will incur Christian punishment in the form of his helplessness at the hands of an unworthy girl. To add further complication to Jocelyn's relations with his love-goddess, the suggestion is made that the mere act of following a particular representative of the "Well-Beloved" for a certain length of time evokes the wrath of the love-goddess because the customary transitory quality is missing from the love relationship.

Jocelyn's being divided against himself—that is, his having offended the love-goddess--has two important results. The first, as I have already pointed out, is his merging only slightly with his environment. Not only does he fail to marry and become a "national-unit," but he fails to derive from his artistic materials the precise effect he is seeking. Thus, although he meets and tries to court many women—including three generations of a single family—and attains considerable public success through his
sculpture, almost all the people with whom he associates do not remain in his "field" (if they are ever in it) for any length of time. He does not enter into significant relationships with them.

The second important result of Jocelyn's 'conflict' is his failure to grow old. Throughout the story Hardy refers to Jocelyn's emotional youthfulness.55 So long as he

55 Thus, when Jocelyn, now over forty, finds to his regret that he is unable to marry the second Avice Caro, who is half his age, he is described as being emotionally "not much older than she." (Ibid., p. 156.) On the same page Hardy poses this question: "When was it to end--this curse of his heart not ageing while his frame moved naturally onward? Perhaps only with life." The three sections of the book are entitled, respectively, "A Young Man of Twenty," "A Young Man of Forty," and "A Young Man of Sixty."

blithely pursues his "Well-Beloved" in life and in art, Jocelyn remains immune, at least in spirit, from the "ravages of time." He is in effect suspended in a state of temporal freedom while the rest of the world, moving but fettered, undergoes decay. The price Jocelyn has to pay for this special privilege has already been mentioned: he is divided against himself, and is consequently unable to integrate with society--that is, unable to merge with his environment.

Finally, however, Jocelyn is "redeemed" from the destructive effect of the love-goddess. The "redeemer" is
society, that aspect of the world so often outside the "field" of the artist. Jocelyn's "redemption" is apparently effected by a process of transformation. Before he is to be cured of what has ailed him throughout his life, he becomes ill in earnest and must recover from his physical disorder. Hardy calls this illness of Jocelyn's "a fever." The emotional effects of losing Avice the third—the granddaughter of his early sweetheart, Avice Caro—and attending the funeral of Avice the second, and the physical effect of exposure to a drenching rain at the funeral apparently combine to weaken Jocelyn's condition (he is now about sixty) and to make susceptible to an infectious agent. As a result of his malady—or, at least, following it—he becomes a mortal man:

Pierston was conscious of a singular change in himself . . . He was no longer the same man that he had hitherto been. The malignant fever, or his experiences, or both, had taken away something from him, and put something else in its place. During the next days, with further intellectual expansion, he became clearly aware of what this was. The artistic sense had left him, and he could no longer attach a definite sentiment to images of beauty recalled from the past. His appreciatively was capable of exercising itself only on utilitarian matters . . .

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56 Ibid., p. 209.

His lifelong obsession with the "Well-Beloved" leaves him,
and he is thankful to be rid of what he regards as having been a blight on his happiness. Settling down to a commonplace marriage with a former sweetheart, he becomes a useful member of the community, thus at long last merging with his environment to a certain extent. He is "redeemed" from a life of isolation and frustration because society is now within his "field." Hardy thus describes Jocelyn's social integration and utilitarian bias, once his artistic sense is no longer active:

His business was, among kindred undertakings which followed the extinction of the Well-Beloved and other ideals, to advance a scheme for the closing of the old natural fountains in the Street of Wells, because of their possible contamination, and supplying the townlet with water from pipes, a scheme that was carried out at his expense, as is well known. He was also engaged in acquiring some old moss-grown, mullioned Elizabethan cottages, for the purpose of pulling them down because they were damp; which he afterwards did, and built new ones with hollow walls, and full of ventilators.57

57Ibid., pp. 217-218.

In The Well-Beloved Hardy appears to be showing us the crime and punishment of artistic isolation. This object lesson, if such it is, may be summarized in "field" terms. The artist, unrealistic in excluding from his "field" everything but his own aesthetic and artistic interests, offends the Higher Powers, which may be taken to signify so-
ciety's demands as the artist senses them. The artist does not really satisfy himself in his work—although he may gain some popular success—and he becomes frustrated. Moreover, he is not happy in his "restricted merging" with his environment. Thus his artistic nature works a destructive effect upon him. Eventually the artist's "diseased" inner nature succeeds in breaking his health. When he recovers, he is freed from his spiritual sickness (i.e., the artistic tendencies which separate him from society) as well as from his physical sickness. Although old and worn by this time, he is now "redeemed" by his having brought society within his "field" and is merged with his environment, for he is now able to be a "citizen and national-unit."

This "fantastic little tale," as Hardy called The Well-Beloved, has generally been neglected or disparaged by the commentators, who have unduly emphasized the pursuit-of-the-ideal motif and the three generations of Avices Jocelyn falls in love with.58 A "field" analysis of the i-

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58 Duffin (Thomas Hardy, pp. 58-60), while apparently aware of the book's attempt to study Jocelyn's artistic temperament, raises the question of whether satire is involved, and treats Jocelyn very cursorily as a "rake with a theory." The Well-Beloved has not always fared even this well among the commentators.
dealistic (and, of course, unrealistic) Jocelyn is particularly useful, it seems to me, because some such method is required if the story is to receive the serious consideration it merits. However fancifully and inconsistently Hardy describes the workings of the love-goddess, we know that he need not be taken literally, and it is possible to interpret *The Well-Beloved* quite cogently in a naturalistic fashion, if only the relations between Jocelyn and his environment are properly taken into account.

One aspect of Jocelyn's relations with his society has not been stressed in the "field" analysis, his artistic communication. Jocelyn, as a sculptor by profession (before his last illness), might be expected to be interested in his public, and, if only to the extent of communicating with them, to attempt merging with his environment. However much the nineteenth-century artist felt constrained to express his inner feelings, he had the additional need to convey those feelings to an audience. Financial results aside, lack of artistic communication led generally to isolation from the public, consequent frustration, and, in a number of cases, a stifling of the artistic impulse. This lack of communication and resulting isolation explains to a considerable extent the development of the decadent movement at the end of the Victorian period (see Chapter One, pp. 58-60), and the later movements of surrealism and dada-
ism. Jocelyn's art, however, overly refined though it may have been, was classic rather than baroque or grotesque, as was much of the art (literary, visual, and plastic) of the above-mentioned movements. The profound irony in The Well-Beloved lies in the fact that Jocelyn's artistic greatness is manifested only when he is very restricted in his "merging" (i.e., when he does not pursue his feminine ideal in actual life or mingle actively in high society). The less communication of any sort he has with his fellows, apparently, the higher his artistic achievement. Thus, when he is about twenty, and the girl to whom he is engaged (i.e., his temporary "Well-Beloved") changes her mind and leaves him, he remains aloof for a time from womankind and devotes himself entirely to his art, with amazing results:

During the many uneventful seasons that followed Marcia's stroke of independence (for which he was not without a secret admiration at times), Jocelyn threw into plastic creations that ever-bubbling spring of emotion which, without some conduit into space, will surge upwards and ruin all but the greatest men. It was probably owing to this, certainly not on account of any care or anxiety for such a result, that he was successful in his art, successful by a seemingly sudden spurt, which carried him at one bound over the hindrances of years.

He prospered without effort. He was A.R.A. But recognitions of this sort, social distinctions, which he had once coveted so keenly, seemed to have no utility for him now. By the accident of being a bachelor, he was floating in society without any soul-anchorage or shrine that he could call his own; and, for want of a domestic centre round which honours might crystallize,
they dispersed impalpably without accumulating and adding weight to his material well-being.

He would have gone on working with his chisel with just as much zest if his creations had been doomed to meet no moral eye but his own. This indifference to the popular reception of his dream-figures lent him a curious artistic aplomb that carried him through the gusts of opinion without suffering them to disturb his inherent bias.

The study of beauty was his only joy for years onward. . . .

59 The Well-Beloved, p. 49.

Thus Jocelyn achieves artistic greatness in the course of following only his own bent. But eventually he begins seeking a real "Well-Beloved" again, and this has its effect on his art. He is still successful, yet his work is no longer as remarkable as it had been.

For all these dreams of a real "Well-Beloved" he translated into plaster, and found that by them he was hitting a public taste he had never deliberately aimed at, and mostly despised. He was, in short, in danger of drifting away from a solid artistic reputation to a popularity which might possibly be as brief as it would be brilliant and exciting. 60

60 Ibid., p. 51. Italics mine.

When Jocelyn's friend Somers praises him extravagantly for his work (Jocelyn is now about forty) there is an even
clearer hint that Jocelyn is now close to his public but far from his former level of artistic achievement:

"Pierston—you are our only inspired sculptor. You are our Praxiteles, or rather our Lysippus. You are almost the only man of this generation who has been able to mould and chisel forms living enough to draw the idle public away from the popular paintings into the usually deserted Lecture-room, and people who have seen your last pieces of stuff say there has been nothing like them since sixteen hundred and—since the sculptors "of the great race" lived and died—whenever that was..." 61

61 Ibid., p. 77.

Over the years Jocelyn's popular success wanes as his artistic abilities have waned. When, after his illness, at about the age of sixty, he loses his artistic sense entirely and sells the building in which he had worked, "in the course of time another sculptor [wins] admiration there from those who knew not Joseph. The next year his name [figures] on the retired list of Academicians." 62

62 Ibid., p. 214.

The last words of the story, and the most ironic, indicate clearly how isolated Jocelyn—the (unrealistic) sculptor-turned-"citizen and national-unit"—is from his
public, once his artistic genius and even his talents have worn away. In the capacity of "citizen and national-unit" he succeeds in merging with his environment to a certain extent, as he has wished to do for a number of years previously. But in the capacity of sculptor, or ex-sculptor, he now receives only condescension from what was once a major segment of his environment—the art-loving public. This group has formerly not been important to him, although he has been important to it (i.e., the art-loving public has not really been in his "field," but he, as a popular artistic success, has been in its "field"). Now, however, his importance to it is so slight that it does not even know he is alive (i.e., he is no longer in its "field"), and pays pious but, apparently, insincere tribute to his former creations.

At present he is sometimes mentioned as 'the late Mr. Pierston' by gourd-like young art-critics and journalists; and his productions are alluded to as those of a man not without genius, whose powers were insufficiently recognized in his lifetime.63

63Ibid., p. 218.
Does this "field" approach, with its concepts of superfluous and unrealistic characters, merging of individual with environment, and "destroyer" and "redeemer" figures, have any underlying significance for a study of isolation in a writer like Hardy? We shall now attempt to draw certain conclusions from the twelve "field" analyses in order to see what Hardy was really getting at when he dealt with the theme of the "collision between the individual and the general."
In this dissertation I have investigated the theme of social isolation in Thomas Hardy's fiction by a method entirely new--so far as I know--in Hardy criticism, the "field" approach. This mode of studying a writer's works is derived from the techniques of contemporary social psychologists like Gardner Murphy, who see the individual in terms of a "field" of relations and interactions between his personality and his environment. According to this view of human behavior, one cannot understand a person and his career by assessing all of his personality traits and drawing conclusions from the inventory. Nor will a tabulation of environmental elements and circumstances give such information. Nor, in fact, will a summary of personality traits and environmental factors produce the desired knowledge. The answer, however, is not impossible to find, at least not to the sanguine social psychologist and, perhaps, literary critic of the future. A person and his career may be understood, according to the "field" concept, by studying that part of his personality which appears to be merging, figuratively speaking, with certain features of his environment. "Merging" here signifies interacting and interrelating, not fusing or melting. No one, no matter how
"well-rounded" he is, reveals at any one time all or even most of his personality characteristics, just as no one interacts at any one time with everything—human or otherwise— that is in his environment. The "field" approach, while recognizing change in personality traits and environment, as well as limitations of personality and of environment, under different circumstances, is concerned with those features of personality and environment which appear to be most important in determining the events in an individual's career. Thus the "field" approach as I have applied it to Hardy's characters is not concerned with the uncountable multitude of "fields" each character has from the moment he enters the particular story until the moment he leaves it, but rather with the most significant personality and environmental elements that "merge" throughout the story. And, in general, the features of the environment most important to Hardy's isolated characters are almost always human. Even in the case of Jude Fawley's lifelong obsession with the University of Christminster, there is an underlying human element involved in the individual's attraction toward a specific portion of his environment, for Jude is interested in the advantages that the men in the University, with their books, can make available to him.

The "field" approach, called by Gardner Murphy "a step toward greater realism," as applied here to Hardy is obvi-
ously not an end in itself. It merely seeks to throw more light on the natures of his more important solitary figures—twelve in number, and at least half of them major characters—than has been thrown by the innumerable books and articles on Hardy written up to the present. These characters exemplify, in their respective careers, Hardy's treatment of the important nineteenth-century theme of the socially isolated individual.

Many of the Hardy commentators have taken literally his imaginative and highly inconsistent comments (sometimes made through the mouths of his characters) on Chance, Fate, Circumstance, Nature, society, etc., and have concluded that he showed in his writings the helplessness of man caught in the giant, unfriendly hands of forces far greater than himself. One such writer, inconspicuous among the many who have read Hardy in this fashion, wrote:

We can thus trace through the novels the general development, with many overlappings of ideas, of Hardy's expression of a consistent world-view through the notions of Chance and Time, Circumstance, Fate, Nature, Providence, Nemesis, and Will, tinged with metaphysical idealism.¹

¹Ernest Brennecke, Jr., Thomas Hardy's Universe: A Study of a Poet's Mind (Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1924), p. 49. Brennecke in this work attempts, by means of some parallel studies, the difficult feat of making a Schopenhauerian out of Hardy.
This position is indefensible, if held with regard to Hardy's fiction. His poems—many of them lyrics, and most of them written in the twentieth century, after he had stopped writing fiction—are another matter, as is his epic drama, *The Dynasts* (1904-1908). In his fiction he was plainly presenting the reactions of individual upon individual, under various circumstances, all of them natural, not the workings of unseen and unkind forces. The poems express transitory moods and frequently vent his imaginative, supernatural flights, and *The Dynasts* (in which certain Schopenhauerian elements may be detected) represents a literary experiment in which he sought to embody certain of his philosophic notions. I have already quoted Hardy's own

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2 This is explained clearly in his official biography. See *EL*, p. 232.

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views or otherwise referred to them, in order to demonstrate that his fiction does not depict supernatural or societal forces sporting with helpless human beings. Further support for this argument may be found in the two-volume official biography (this is practically an autobiography, for Hardy wrote most of it) and in the prefaces to Hardy's volumes of prose and poetry. But, I believe, the strongest support lies in the fiction works themselves.
Two particular statements by Hardy make me feel very strongly that he would not have objected to a "field" analysis of his fiction, particularly his stories of isolation. The first, quoted in Chapter Two, relates to his fundamentally monistic view of the universe and everything in it, including such abstractions as good and evil, tragedy and comedy. According to Hardy, "all things merge in one another." The concept of the "field," the area of interaction between the individual and his environment, is, like Hardy's universe, monistic. As applied to the study of a human being, real or fictional, the "field" approach studies the 'merging of all things in one another'--or, put another way, the relations between those features of the personality and of the individual's environment which mutually react.

The second statement by Hardy clearly agrees with the premise implicit in the "field" approach that one's environment is not a circumscribed geographical area varying in size with one's personal importance or freedom of movement. The term "environment," according to the formulations I have employed, is really another figurative expression, like the term "'field'" itself, and it refers to that group of contextual entities which have some relation, however vague, to the individual. As an example of the meaning of the term "environment" in a "field" analysis, we might con-
sider a room in a library. An electrician repairing the electrical system in the room has in his environment (in the "field" sense) the walls, ceiling, and floor, for this is his area of actual or potential activity, if we assume that he will cut into any portion of the "frame" of the room in order to get at the wiring. The studious scholar

3And his "field" consists of the specific area of the "frame" of the room in which he is working.

in the room, however, has in his environment the books in the room and, depending on the nature of his research project, perhaps the books in other rooms of the library as well. This special application of the term "environment," so important in a "field" analysis, is by no means foreign to Hardy, for in Tess he wrote:

It was amazing, indeed, to find how great a matter the life of the obscure dairy had become to him. And, though new love was to be held partly responsible for this, it was not solely so. Many besides Angel have learnt that the magnitude of lives is not as to their external displacements, but as to their subjective experiences. The impressionable peasant leads a larger, fuller, more dramatic life than the pachydermatous king. Looking at it thus, he found that life was to be seen of the same magnitude here as elsewhere.

4Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 198. For 'magnitude of life,' I think it would be safe to read 'degree of merging between the individual and his environment.'
As for the important question, which is more important, personality or environment, the answer is, neither. The "field" approach studies the interactions between the two, not the conquest of one by the other. This point is illustrated with remarkable cogency by a statement from Ruskin, who, at the age of fifty, wrote:

It is one of the strangest and greatest difficulties of my present life, that in looking back to the past, every evil has been caused by an almost exactly equal balance of the faults of others and of my own. I am never punished for my own faults or follies but through the faults or follies of others.  

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Quoted in Joan Evans, John Ruskin, p. 311. The quotation is taken from the 1903 Library Edition of The Works of John Ruskin, ed. E. T. Cook and A. Wedderburn, XXXVI, 600. For comparable views in Hardy, see Chapter Two, pp. 82-85.

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One assumption made in my "field" analyses of Hardy's characters must be mentioned. The less merging between individual and environment, I have indicated, the more isolated the individual is from his society, and therefore the worse off he is. The conclusion may then be drawn that it is desirable for the individual to "merge," and that the more he does the better it is for him. But how valid is this conclusion? For the fiction works dealing with isolation, the conclusion is quite valid. These stories and
novels do not deal with gladiators "merging" (to everyone's detriment) in an arena, they deal with ordinary human beings who for some reason have difficulty in "reaching" one another.

The "field" approach is by no means the only method for a clarification of Hardy's fiction works, nor can it adequately cover all important aspects of the particular novel or story. What Hardy's ultimate motive was in writing any given work, why he made use of coincidence and irony so frequently--these matters are properly deferred until a "field" analysis has been made. (Coincidences and ironic happenings may be readily handled in a "field" analysis.) It is a commonplace among Hardy commentators that the historian of Wessex had a tragic view of life, believing the world to be full of pain and suffering. Why he felt this way is a complex matter, involving his own particular "field," and I have indicated some of the possible factors in Chapter One, pp. 61-63. But whatever Hardy's views of life, in his fiction he presented clearly and naturalistically the interactions between the individual and his environment.

According to the "field" analyses of Hardy's twelve isolates, the solitary individual is essentially either superfluous to his environment (i.e., to the people in his environment) or is unrealistic about some portion of it.
Six characters—Clym Yeobright, William Dare, Michael Henchard, Sophy Twycott, Jude Fawley, and Father Time—have no clearly defined role to play in the society in which they live. They are unwanted or useless, so far as those around them are concerned. The remaining six—Eustacia Vye, Mrs. Chundle, Timothy Summers, Tess Durbeyfield, Sue Bridehead, and Jocelyn Pierston—make a fundamental error about something important (generally a human being) with which they come in contact, and are consequently as restricted in their "merging" as are the superfluous characters. The four women fail to understand clearly the men with whom they are associated, Timothy misunderstands (or appears to misunderstand) property rights, and Jocelyn misunderstands the women with whom he comes in contact. The process of attempted "merging" is illustrated by the interactions of the individual, superfluous or unrealistic, with two types of elements (generally human) in his environment. (Strictly speaking, of course, the interactions are between selected portions of the personalities of each of the human beings involved.) One type I have called the "destroyer," the other the "redeemer," because of the ultimate effect on the individual. The "destroyer" makes "merging" difficult; the "redeemer" makes "merging" relatively simple. The terms "destroyer" and "redeemer" are thus used figuratively.

Clym, the would-be educator of Egdon Heath, is harmed
by his marriage with Eustacia, who does not sympathize with his plans. Ultimately, he is "redeemed," after a fashion, from a life of solitude and uselessness by coming before his fellow inhabitants of the heath as an itinerant preacher of lay sermons. His "merging" is far from complete, since he is an ineffectual preacher, but the heath dwellers treat him kindly.

Dare, the unscrupulous illegitimate son of a member of a once-noble family, seeks to be "redeemed" from ignominy and poverty by having his father, Captain de Stancy, marry an affluent young heiress—Paula Power—who owns the ancestral home of the de Stancys. His father, Dare thinks, will then adopt him and make him wealthy. Upon Paula's discovery of Dare's flagrant misconduct, she causes him to be banished from Stancy Castle, thus destroying his chances for status and wealth, and thus making it impossible (at least for the present) for his father to "redeem" him as Dare had hoped. Now prevented from "merging," the disgruntled Dare leaves the scene, after first setting fire to Stancy Castle.

Henchard, the once-prosperous mayor of Casterbridge, loses to his former manager Farfrae his grain business, house, intended wife, and position in the community, to name no others. Henchard's one hope of "redemption" from a life of emptiness and futility, his foster daughter Elizabeth-Jane, begins to be lost to him when she decides to
marry Farfrae (whose wife has died). When Elizabeth-Jane meets her real father, Newson, whom Henchard has tried to keep from her, she completely rejects Henchard as a parent: he has proven false and, moreover, she has found the man who is her rightful father. Henchard, merged hardly at all with his environment, and destroyed, in effect, by Farfrae and Newson, becomes disconsolate and dies.

Sophy, the simple countrywoman whose late husband had been a vicar, is prevented from being redeemed (in effect) from a life of loneliness and inactivity. Her son, Randolph, a University "gentleman," by forbidding her marriage to a girlhood suitor, destroys her one chance of happiness, since she has never been able to merge with the environment of her husband or son.

Jude, the frustrated scholar, is hindered in his plans for attending the University of Christminster—which affects him so profoundly that it might be considered his potential redeemer—by two women, each having a destructive effect on him. The first, a vulgar sluttish person named Arabella, ensnares him into marriage, causing him to delay his preparations for entering the University, since he has to support her. The second, his cousin Sue, a neurotic and sexually repressed girl whom he lives with after he and Arabella separate, makes him happy, although the impractical Jude is too engrossed in her to persevere in his educational
plans. When Sue, his only source of spiritual support, leaves him, the dispirited Jude falls into the hands of Arabella again. Jude is "merged" hardly at all now: life with Arabella is so unbearable, particularly since Sue will not have anything further to do with him, that he allows his health to be weakened and hastens his early death.

Father Time, Arabella's unwanted offspring by Jude, is sent to live with his father, who is living with Sue. One day, after a protracted period of hardship with the impecunious and rootless couple, the child learns that Sue, who has already borne Jude two children, is pregnant again. He feels betrayed by Sue, because he thinks she has purposely made conditions worse for him and for the rest of the family. Desiring to alleviate his family's financial distress (and perhaps to get revenge on Sue), the child kills Sue's children and himself. By his act of "identifying" with the two children and killing the group, Father Time merges, however fleetingly, with his environment. Thus, although the children die with him, they "redeem" him—in the moments before his death—from a life of complete superfluity and misery.

Eustacia, the beautiful and sensual creature who lives on Egdon Heath, marries Clym, thinking he will provide the "great love" she desperately needs. Clym, absorbed in his own studies and plans, fails to fulfill her expectations,
and comes to have a destructive effect on her peace of mind. She leaves him and goes back to her grandfather's house. A former lover, Wildeve, offers to aid her in escaping from the heath and going to some romantic city. Before he can "redeem" her from an intolerable existence—with practically no "merging"—on the heath, she accidentally drowns (ironically, on her way to meet him so that they can set forth).

Mrs. Chundle, a solitary, deaf, old woman who has long ago ceased attending church, is persuaded by the young curate to begin attending once more (he provides her with the proper hearing equipment). Unintentionally she offends him, and he, in return—unknown to her—arranges matters so that she will not be likely to want to continue attending church. But Mrs. Chundle's "redeemer"-turned-"destroyer" does not succeed in preventing her from "merging." Having overtaxed her strength by hastening to church to hear him speak, she dies, thinking that he still has her spiritual welfare at heart.

Timothy, escaping from Casterbridge jail, where he is to be hanged for stealing a sheep, comes upon a shepherd's cottage and finds a party in progress. Making himself agreeable to the company, including the hangman who is to perform the hanging on the morrow, Timothy escapes detection. When the escape alarm is sounded, and the rustic folk discover that Timothy (now in hiding) is the escaped criminal, they
purposely avoid finding him, since he has won their favor (and since they think the punishment too severe). Far from being "destroyed" by the hangman, Timothy is "redeemed" by the countryfolk and, once out of the vicinity of Casterbridge, is able to merge—as a free individual—with his environment.

Tess, a simple country maid, is seduced by her supposed kinsman, Alec d'Urberville. As a result she incurs the censure of society and, what is more, finds herself susceptible to Alec's advances when she encounters him some years later. After her seduction, and before she meets Alec again, Tess falls in love with Angel Clare. Angel, although socially superior to Tess, wants her for his wife, and they marry. Once he learns of Tess's former relations with Alec, however, Alec leaves her, forlorn and helpless. After a time Angel, who has learned that his wife has suffered distress, returns to claim her and "redeem" her from her difficulties, but it is too late. She has succumbed to her "destroyer," Alec, and is living with him. Stricken by remorse at having allowed Alec to have his way with her again, Tess kills him, and hopes thereby to find happiness with Angel at last. Shortly after the murder, however, Tess is apprehended by the law and in due course is hanged. Never entirely willing to yield to Alec, Tess has been greatly restricted in her "merging" whenever she has allowed Alec her favors. At the end of her story, her husband's attempts to take her to live
with him (which would have the effect of enhancing her "merging") are successful for only a very brief period.

Sue, Jude's neurotic cousin, is driven to marry an elderly schoolmaster, although she loves Jude. Unable to stand her husband, who repels her physically, she lives with Jude for some years, but returns to the schoolmaster when her children (by Jude) are murdered. The schoolmaster, whom she forces herself to live with (and, eventually, to sleep with) exercises a destructive effect on her, so restricted is her "merging" when she is domiciled with him. Jude, who represents "redemption" from a painfully stultifying life with her husband, is unable, once she returns to the schoolmaster, to enhance her "merging" as he has once done. adamant in her resolution to live with the schoolmaster at whatever cost to her spirit, Sue rejects her former lover and potential redeemer.

Jocelyn, a consecrated artist, spends decades seeking the female ideal, in life and in his sculpture. A projection of his mind, the "goddess of love," urges him to seek this ideal, and, apparently, exercises a destructive effect upon him, because the longer he seeks the more his art suffers and the longer he is cut off from society. After an illness (when he is about sixty), Jocelyn's love-goddess ceases to trouble him. He apparently finds some measure of satisfaction--and, finally, succeeds in "merging"--through
being married and settled, and performing useful services for his community.

Before discussing the over-all significance of the "field" analyses, certain points about the isolates must be made. Hardy's lifelong concern with social problems is reflected in the numerous reformers and prophets of change in his fiction. His most outspoken opinions on what was wrong with England occurred in his unpublished first novel, The Poor Man and the Lady (the manuscript of which has long since disappeared), but a number of works used in our study contain candid views (expressed by the characters) on existing social abuses and other undesirable conditions. Clym, Dare, Jude, Sue, Father Time, and Jocelyn represent that small segment of the population either working for the betterment of society or stating openly that the status quo ought not to exist. Clym wants rural people lifted out of their torpor and ignorance, Dare (who may have been an anarchist) announces that the aristocracy is crumbling, Jude and Sue discuss University admission for poor students and the ancient institution of marriage as it appears in a modern age, Father Time rebels at the privations his growing family is obliged to undergo, and Jocelyn attempts to improve living conditions in a community little changed over the centuries.

Despite the fact that Victorian England was filled
with social unrest verging at times on revolution, no serious undermining of the nation's institutions actually took place (I have suggested reasons for this in Chapter One, p. 33). It is significant that many of the would-be reformers had serious defects (like want of judgment) which prevented them from serving their nation effectively, so that conditions were perhaps not quite so bad as these individuals feared. Shaw, disillusioned with the paltry achievements of the idealists, made them the butt of his dramatic ridicule, and extolled the few realists in society—those who simply saw things as they really were, and acted (self-expeditiously) on this observation. Hardy's six idealists mentioned above were no exception to the considerable body of ineffectual reformers and social improvers. Society was far from perfect, but so was each of the six characters, and the two imperfect entities did not "merge" to form one perfect entity.

The other six characters are affected directly or indirectly by the unwholesome social conditions, although they are not reformers or heralds of a new— and better— age. Henchard, though a skilled worker, is obliged to roam the countryside in search of work, during a period of uncertain harvests and the "pulling down" of cottages to consolidate landholdings. His own drive to power (the first step of which was the sale of his family) may have been a
compensatory response to these conditions. Sophy has married above her station, but, unlike some, cannot "carry it off," and has no place in a society still regulated in certain quarters by a rigid caste system. Eustacia, as the incompatible wife of a would-be social reformer, is unable to do her share towards preserving the home. Mrs. Chundle has her last remaining weeks on earth regulated by an insincere clergyman not really concerned with bringing back strayed Christians to the Church. The skilled workman Timothy, driven to desperation by the fact that his family is starving (during a time of temporary unemployment), commits a theft and is sentenced to death for it, so that the rights of property can be preserved, at whatever cost. Tess, yielding to a member of the nouveaux riches (whose father has improvised a family tree that will gain him the prestige his money alone cannot buy), encounters some difficulty from certain quarters, since (being a woman) she is on the wrong side of the double standard of morals. Some of the reformers and idealists too are affected directly by unwholesome social conditions—the illegitimate and rootless Dare, and the unstable Jude and Sue, both products of a broken home, and one of them—Jude—lacking the funds to follow his strong scholastic bent. "Merging," no easy matter under good conditions, is all the more difficult under bad ones.
Another point deserving mention is that certain of the isolates are emotionally unstable, particularly where their affections are involved. Clym is eager to marry Eustacia, yet does not make her a good husband, in part because he neglects her needs; Henchard, according to Hardy, practically needs some object to pour out his feelings upon, and since he is not always exhibiting affection when he does this, finds it most difficult to retain his human associations; Jude cannot resist alcohol, and, moreover, allows himself to become involved with two undesirable women—one a wanton and vulgar trollop, the other, Sue, a sexually maladjusted neurotic who fails to understand why society does not make provision for people like herself; Father Time—like Tess—is suicidal, and, at the end of his life, commits murder as well as suicide; Eustacia, as Hardy makes fairly obvious, is a nymphomaniac; Tess is a melancholic who, like Henchard, practically courts disaster; Jocelyn is as inconstant in his affections as is the proverbial bohemian artist, for he pursues women constantly, but rapidly loses interest in them. These personality weaknesses contribute heavily to the difficulties faced by the isolates in their attempts to "merge."

What is the actual significance of the stories of these isolates, according to our "field" approach? The significance is that two-sided communication between the
individual and his society is a difficult matter at best, but mutual communication between two people is vastly more difficult. I shall "boil down" the stories of the twelve isolates to a prototypal pattern in order to illustrate this.

In essence, the individual tries to merge with his environment through a "redeemer" figure, but if he is to be completely successful he must escape the effects of a "destroyer" figure. (Occasionally the individual does not understand the true nature of one or both of these figures.) The relationship between the individual and his "redeemer" is manifested through an attempt at communication—the transmission of messages by means of which the sender (the individual) seeks to gain a certain amount of control over the receiver (the "redeemer"). Thus, for example, Mrs. Chun-


dle is in effect the sender, trying to gain control over the curate (the receiver). Although he is in a position of authority over her, she seeks desperately to keep him within her "field." The same may be said, if the reader grants the underlying premise, of the other isolates and their re-
spective "redeemers." Only in Father Time's case is the attempted communication tacit and one-sided—the suicidal boy tries to "get in touch with" the two children by the act of killing them and himself.

The individual, however, generally fails to communicate effectively with the "redeemer" for two reasons. The first concerns different levels of communication. Often the individual has different moral values from those of the "redeemer" or conceives of himself as something quite different from what the latter thinks him to be. In either case the individual and the "redeemer" are not on the same level of communication. Thus Dare has moral values different from those of de Stancy, Mrs. Chundle has become different from what the curate expects her to be, and so on. As for the second reason, there is an outside agent interfering with the communication between the individual and the "redeemer." Thus Phillotson acts as the interfering agent in Sue's case, Alec in Tess's case, and so on.

It is obvious from the analyses of the twelve isolates, however, that some of the characters succeed to a certain extent in communicating with their "redeemers." Timothy, through the good impression he has made on the countryfolk at the shepherd's house, is allowed to evade the hangman and gain access to the vicinity beyond Casterbridge, where freedom lies. Jocelyn, after the illness
which appears to stifle one of the dominant tendencies of his mind, ceases to devote himself to the service of a projection of his fancy, the goddess of love. By his marriage to an early sweetheart, he establishes himself in the community and becomes a "national-unit," a public-spirited citizen. Clym, after Eustacia's drowning, goes before the public as an itinerant teacher and preacher. Father Time, through his identification with Sue's and Jude's two children, finds a group in which he has a place, and in which he can, through the death of the group, avoid the indifference (which to a child may have the effect of actual cruelty) of his guardians.

How can we explain these (qualified, to be sure) exceptions to the general tendency of Hardy's isolates to fail in communicating with an agent who can enable them to merge more extensively with their environment? Each of the four isolates (Timothy, Jocelyn, Clym, and Father Time) picks a "redeemer" amenable to entering his "field," figuratively speaking (Clym's "redeemer," society, is only slightly amenable). The "redeemer" has the effect of counteracting the effects of the interfering agent, which is making communication (and therefore merging) difficult between the individual and his environment. The other eight isolates, not having picked amenable redeemers, fail to communicate, and merge, with their environments.
In summation, we may say that in all of the stories examined in this dissertation Hardy seems to be arguing that the individual actor in life's drama does not understand the human beings he is closest to, and therefore has very great difficulty in communicating with them. Eustacia and Clym, never having had a "meeting of minds" before marriage, readily become incompatible after marriage, Mrs. Chundle's position of estrangement is the outcome of inadequate communication between herself and the curate, much of Tess's trouble is due to her lack of communication with Angel (see pp. 308-312 of Tess). The more Hardy's characters find out about each other, apparently, the lower are their chances for closeness or agreement. Either an outside agent interferes with their communication or they come to be on different levels of communication. A tendency toward estrangement enters the human relationship like a cankerworm, consuming the bonds of communication between husband and wife, parent and offspring, individual and society. The result is fragmentation, deracination, isolation. How can this condition by alleviated? Only, apparently, by making the communication one-sided or by sharply reducing it, paradoxical as this may appear. Then there will be less "interference," and the differences in level of communication will be less sharply felt. Clym preaches, his audience listens. Father Time acts to unite himself with
the children—figuratively speaking, they are passive. Timothy ingratiates himself with the countryfolk, they allow him to escape from the law, and, thereby, to reunite with society. Jocelyn as an ex-sculptor and philanthropist serves his community, the latter allows him to. But Hardy

7Jocelyn's public, many years ago very responsive to him, changes its attitude once he ceases being as isolated as he was when he won his early triumphs.

does not indicate that any of these characters are or will be happy in their increased merging with their environments—Father Time, in fact, dies at his own hands.

Is this failure of communication typical only of Hardy's isolates, or does it really underlie many of the other writings about isolation, in contemporary English, Continental, and American literature? Perhaps the communication difficulties of Hardy's characters are related in some fashion to similar concerns in the characters or in the nonfiction works of such writers as Tennyson, Schopenhauer, Dostoevsky, Arnold, Nietzsche, Ibsen, Crane, Conrad, Henry James, Joyce, Lawrence, Mann, and Kafka. If this is true, a deeper problem than that of faulty communication in Victorian Wessex may be involved.

From the end of the eighteenth century onward the application of scientific discoveries to the economy and
thought of the West, combined with rapid expansion of the population of Europe and America brought about a series of sweeping changes in every aspect of life. New hopes, new goals, new fears were multiplying, and large numbers of people found themselves playing very different roles in society from those they would have played a few generations earlier. This being the case, serious-minded individuals who were not at ease in Zion and who sought to express their personal feelings (doubts, dissatisfactions, and the like) about life—either through literature or through writings in social philosophy—were almost by that very fact cut off from most of their fellows, for the most part concerned with practical pursuits. It is a well-known fact that the nineteenth-century littérature could no longer depend on private patronage, royal or otherwise. Unless he changed his occupation or had an outside source of income, he had to acquire the mandate of the book-buying public or the lecture-hall audience (neither always reliable). If he tried to sell what he wrote, he was often forced, like Hardy, to alter drastically his mode of expression, in order to placate the reading public. Failing to make use of these hazardous expedients, he could look forward only to ignominious penury, for as one who devoted much of his time to abstract thinking he had no well-defined role in society. And, since he was himself in danger of fragmentation from
the social group, it is not unnatural that he was intensely and chronically concerned with the aggregation of fragmenting processes in modern society—the waning of traditional religious beliefs, and the social, economic, and political upheavals producing group rivalries and popular unrest.

It may be, then, that Hardy's concern with isolation reflects the view of life common to many other contemporary writers, but not to the general population involved in more immediate problems. Hardy described numerous characters who, as the "field" approach has shown, do not communicate satisfactorily, who are not "in touch." The characters of a number of other writers also suffer from this disability, as do some of the writers likewise. But the view of life which precedes Hardy's kind of intellectual preoccupation with such figures is hardly the view of life of the average person—of any period or country—engrossed in an interesting, dependably remunerative occupation or a satisfying domestic one. After all, the "world's work" went on in Victorian England as elsewhere, thanks to vast numbers of people who were part of one or more groups. Hardy's characters, of whom the isolates are emblematic, reflect his own feeling of "living in a world where nothing bears out in practice what it promises incipiently,"8 and also his own view

8EL, p. 201. This was written in 1882.
on the position of the literary artist:

The highest flights of the pen are mostly the excursions and revelations of souls unreconciled to life.\footnote{Ibid., p. 315. This was written in 1891.}
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AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I, Samuel Irving Bellman, was born in El Paso, Texas, September 28, 1926. I received my secondary school education in the public schools of that city. My undergraduate training was obtained at the University of Texas, from which I received the degree Bachelor of Arts in 1947. During the last semester of my undergraduate studies I was an assistant in the Department of Bacteriology. At Wayne University, in Detroit, Michigan, I did graduate work in the Department of English, receiving the degree Master of Arts in 1951. In October, 1951, I began graduate study in the Department of English at The Ohio State University. In the Spring Quarter of 1953 I was a University Fellow. During the academic year 1953-1954 I held the position of Graduate Assistant, and during the following year, while completing the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy, I held the position of Assistant Instructor, part time.