

التمرد ضد المجتمع في رواية (جود الغامض)

لتوماس هاردي

طالبة الدراسات العليا: امل غسان امين

قسم اللغة الإنكليزية و آدابها - كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية - جامعة البعث

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ملخص

يتناول هذا البحث موضوع التمرد على المجتمع الفيكتوري في رواية (جود الغامض) لتوماس هاردي. تعد هذه الرواية احتجاجاً شديداً على الأعراف الاجتماعية السائدة والمرجعيات المتزمته التي ظلمت الكثير من الناس من خلال فرض قوانين تحاصر الإرادة الحرة للرجال والنساء في الحب والجنس والزواج. ولهذا كان هناك هجوم حاد على المجتمع الفيكتوري من خلال تمكين الإرادة البشرية من الحصول على حريتها وانتصارها في النهاية.

يقدم توماس هاردي في رواية "جود الغامض" شخصيات متمردة على المجتمع في محاولة منه لتحقيق أحلامها وإثبات وجهات نظرها في الحياة. فهو يبرز الطموحات الثقافية لجود فاولي والتي تعطلها طموحاته الجنسية. لم يكن تمرد جود من خلال سعيه لتحقيق آماله العظيمة فقط بل أيضاً من خلال مخالفته لأخلاقيات مجتمعه عند إتباعه الأفكار المتقدمة لقريبته سو برايدهد. فهما يبدوان في النهاية كضحية للمجتمع الذي قام بعزلهما بسبب سماتهم الغريبة.

تسلط هذه الرواية الضوء على الأسباب والنتائج السلبية للظلم الاجتماعي. وبالفعل فإن التمرد ضد ظلم المجتمع قد يؤدي إلى إرساء الحرية والعدالة الاجتماعية بين جميع الناس في كل الأوقات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التمرد، المجتمع، الأعراف، التقاليد، الظلم، الدين، الزواج، الحب، الطموح، الحرية.

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Rebellion against Society in Thomas

Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*

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Abstract:

This research will examine rebellion against society in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*. This novel is but a strong protest against the prevailing social conventions and the rigid authorities which oppressed a lot of people by enforcing laws that seized the free will of men and women in love, sex, and marriage. Thus, a severe attack is set on the Victorian society by making the rebellion of the character's free soul if not the human being's free will declare its victory over the society at the end.

In *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy introduces characters who rebel against society trying to achieve their dreams and prove their own points of view in life. He mainly presents Jude Fawley's intellectual ambitions which are blocked by his sexual ones. Jude's rebellion is waged not only by having great intellectual expectations but also by violating the ethics of his society when leading an unconventional life with his liberal cousin, Sue. Their tragic end presents them as victims of the society which has isolated them for their peculiarities.

Jude the Obscure sheds light on the reasons and the passive consequences of social oppression. Indeed, rebellion against society is necessary to promote freedom and social justice among all people in all times.

Key Words:

Rebellion, society, conventions, traditions, tyranny, religion, marriage, love, ambition and freedom.

Rebellion against Society in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*

This research will explore the theme of rebellion against society in Thomas Hardy's novel *Jude the Obscure* (1895). This novel introduces characters who rebel against their Victorian society and its strict conventional rules. Rebellion is defined as the action or process of resisting an authority, control, or convention, and rebels often make great choices to free themselves from social conventions. Such revolting acts may help them to build or destroy their life and future. In the Victorian Age, there were so many social, political and moral problems such as poverty, ugliness and doubts concerning morals and faith. Therefore, Thomas Hardy successfully examines such social problems and presents many feminist views by depicting rebellion against society in an attempt to find solutions that may give salvation to those who suffer from the ills of the society.

Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* sums up his views concerning education, love, marriage and morality. Hardy presents people's struggle to prove themselves and achieve their dreams; "Hardy's novels...are about becoming complete, or about the failure to become complete" (Alcorn 19). David Lodge says: "*Jude the Obscure* is about frustration and failure in two areas of life - sex and education. It is about Jude Fawley's failure to get to the University,

and about his disastrous relationships with women” (106). It is viewed as Hardy’s social critique of marriage, class and systematic education. This novel began as a magazine serial in 1894 and was first published in a book form in 1895. It is Hardy’s last completed novel in which he criticizes the Victorian Society and its rules which hinder the development of the individual human being and consequently cause the destruction of its members. Hardy has a very distinct view of marriage and its implications as well as the social inequalities among people. He was not against marriage but against the idea of forcing people to live together forever against their will. Merryn Williams in his *Preface to Hardy* states that “*Jude the Obscure* (which Hardy at first called *The Recalcitrants*) is all about this ‘tyranny of the prevailing opinions and feelings. The characters are all unconventional people who behave in unorthodox ways” (84). The law of the country was not equal for all classes of people, and religion had a great influence on people’s life. Thus, Hardy, in *Jude the Obscure*, moves in a completely different direction from his society.

Thomas Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure* is a severe criticism on the nineteenth century England whose society was controlled by strict social conventions and rigid religious beliefs. Britain’s cultural imperialism was in its last years during Hardy’s lifetime. The oppressive atmosphere in this novel is a symptom of a culture in its death throes. The Victorian Era in Britain was dominated by the reign of Queen Victoria (1837- 1901). Britain drew heavily on its

colonies for the raw materials to lead the Industrial Revolution which began in Britain in the 18th century. Consequently, varied changes took place economically, socially, politically and culturally. The structure of the society was marked for its class distinction between the upper class, the middle class and the lower class. Social classes can be considered as different racial communities. Although there was a huge increase in Britain economically, the gap between the rich and the poor increased especially that the middle class and working class people suffered so much. Moreover, the poor were denied any access to education unlike the upper class people. Hardy was in agreement with John Stewart Mill, who published his principles of individualism and social injustice in *The Subjection of Women* in 1869. Mill addresses the problem of women's subordination and replaces it with equality between the sexes. Hardy, therefore, takes up Mill's question of marriage and personal liberty in his novel. Roland Carter and John McRay in *The Routledge History of Literature in English* assert that "The social issues...became highly controversial in the 1890s...[and that] the major novels of Thomas Hardy were practically burned because of the moral outrage they caused" (313). In addition, the Industrial Revolution and its economic development affected the life of many people who became sceptical about the existence of God and the beliefs of religion. However, the Victorian Age was marked for its stress on morality and the dominance of rigid social and religious beliefs. For instance, the prevailing religious and social codes

prevented sexual interaction between men and women outside marriage. The Victorians lived with a sexual double-standard society as well as polarized gender roles that few ever were questioned before the end of the period. Therefore, the status of women in that society was unfair concerning their rights at work and home as well as their freedom in marriage and expressing their emotions. Lois Tyson asserts that the “Victorian society [had a] rigid definition of gender roles, which was used to oppress females of all ages and to elevate males to positions of dominance in all spheres of human activity” (26). As a patriarchal society, it “privileges men by promoting traditional gender roles [which] cast men as rational, strong, protective, and decisive; they cast women as emotional (irrational), weak, nurturing, and submissive” (Tyson 85). Women were generally expected to be housekeepers and housewives. They also had to stay pure until marriage whereas their properties as well as their rights belonged to their husbands. Thus, women were abused and oppressed in many different ways. Moreover, the Victorian law was unfair to women, and it was men who took advantages of the marital laws. So women remained subordinate to their husbands who had the sole control over the family’s property and inheritance. As Jeremy Hawthorn in *Studying the Novel* says, Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure* “involves an attack upon certain social conventions which are seen as repressive and although in a sense it clearly ‘calls for’ a change in society so that women and working people have greater opportunities for self-development

and for education” (162). Hardy sees an opposition between the individual human being and the legal rigidities of social institutions and conventions. Thus, Hardy criticizes the hypocrisy of people concerning religion and morality by showing the social and economic factors which cause the suffering and the destruction of Jude Fawley, Sue Bridehead and his schoolmaster, Richard Phillotson, who follow their desires and consequently are being rejected by their society.

Jude Fawley rebels against the standards of his society when determining to acquire the knowledge which enables him to stand among the educated people of his time. He does not accept to stay imprisoned inside his social class, so he continually works hard to change his destiny and become a learned man. Jude Fawley’s story begins with his intellectual ambitions which pass through many stages of tragedy. Because education was preserved for the wealthy in the nineteenth century, Jude’s longing for learning shows his desire to improve his position in the society. Jude’s idealism springs from his academic ambition which reflects his strong desire to learn for the sake of learning. He is able to access great literary works because of his determination to learn. He represents many working class men doomed to failure and obscurity in his time. As explained by John Alcorn, “Jude’s determination to learn is itself the instrument of his destruction in the closed world of Christminster. Wilfulness for Hardy is the epitome of disembodied consciousness; it springs from self delusion and ends in self-

destruction” (15). Actually, education is not only what Jude aspires to for the sake of social mobility, but it is also one of the institutions which obscure him. Jude is an orphan living with his aunt, Drusella, and has to work as a baker’s boy to earn a living. As a hero, Jude is “clever, purposeful and tenacious; he formulates honourable goals; he is physically attractive and sexually straightforward” (Stewart 196). As a boy of eleven years, Jude finds his village, Marygreen, a boring place. Like the birds which he scares for Farmer Troutham, he has a world of his own. Alcorn asserts: “Hardy’s originality in dealing with landscape involves...a new way of relating landscape and the organic life upon it to his characters...The opening chapters of *Jude the Obscure* deal with his experiences with animals: Jude’s job as a scare corn, where he identifies himself with the birds” (12). From the very beginning of story, Jude has a peculiarity not existent in others. Jude does hard jobs daily, so one can see on his face “the fixity of a thoughtful child who has felt the pricks of life somewhat before his time.” (Hardy 6). He has a kind heart and does not like to hurt others especially animals. Even the birds seem “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 friends and prisoners- the only friends...interested in him, for his aunt had often told him that she was not” (Hardy 6). His aunt always talks about him as a useless, unwanted child. Although Jude is alone and isolated from society, he is ambitious and always tries to change his life to the best. All the students in his class are

indifferent to the teacher's departure but only Jude comes to help his schoolmaster, Mr. Phillotson, when moving to the city. His schoolmaster's final advice directs him towards the future which he will work hard to accomplish. Richard Phillotson addresses him saying:

You know what a university is, and a university degree? It is the necessary hall-mark of a man who wants to do anything in teaching. My scheme, or dream, is to be a university graduate, and then to be ordained. By going to live at Christminster, or near it, I shall be at headquarters...Be a good boy, remember; and be kind to animals and birds, and read all you can. And if you ever come to Christminster remember you hunt me out for old acquaintance' sake. (Hardy 5)

Therefore, Jude shares his schoolmaster's ambition of going to study at Christminster, which Jude considers as "the heavenly Jerusalem" (Hardy 16). He continually asks others about the location of Christminster trying to collect some information about this city. After so many inquiries, he concludes that "Christminster is a city of light...The tree of knowledge grows there...It is a place that teachers of men spring from and go to...It is what you may call a castle, manned by scholarship and religion...It would just suit me" (Hardy 21). Jude, therefore, decides to follow his schoolmaster's advice. He makes use of Mr. Phillotson's parting gift which is a

book and some other books sent some weeks later. At the beginning, Jude is unable to comprehend those complex grammars. Later, he continues his private study and manages to learn Latin and Greek in order to achieve his dreams of going to university and becoming a Doctor of Divinity. The more Jude grows up, the more his responsibilities in life increase, and he is obliged to face them as an adult person. By the age of 19, he starts thinking of learning another work that suits life in the city. So, he starts working as a stone-mason in Alfredston. He believes that he must save more money to be able to settle in Christminster where he can buy more books to improve his knowledge. Actually, he finds a refuge from the cruelty of the world through his dream. Alcorn says: "Jude is trapped, dreaming of escape: Jude longs for Christminster (Oxford), repository of ancient wisdom, where language is the key to the gate of freedom. But he finds the gate locked against his entrance" (82-83). Unfortunately, Jude spends his whole life in search of acceptance by the community in Wessex where he is always rejected.

Jude the obscure is mainly a protest against the exclusiveness of the educational system which prevents the poor from knowledge and progress; Jude finds himself faced with a rigid educational system. He struggles with the limitations of his social class. He is considered an outsider by virtue of his class. He cannot establish himself as an educated man, a scholar. For Hardy, "modern intellectual life is sterile because it is cut off from its affective roots,

and modern affective life is neurotic because it is smothered by cruelly arbitrary social conventions and institutions” (Alcorn 83). A few years later, Jude leaves Marygreen to Christminster. He plans to continue his study at the university besides his work as a stonemason apprentice. However, his humble origin and poverty hinder his access to study at Christminster. Being rejected by Christminster University, Jude starts studying for the Church. He comforts himself saying; “I know I have been a fool...And I don’t regret the collapse of my university hopes one jot. I would begin again if I were sure to succeed. I don’t care for social success anymore at all...I should like to do some good thing; and I bitterly regret the church, and the loss of my chance of being her ordained minister” (Hardy 121). Jude is treated unlike the elite undergraduates who do not know Latin and Greek although he can recite *The Bible* even when he is drunk. This shows the injustice of his society which treats the poor discriminately.

Arabella Donn appears in Jude’s way suddenly and this will make him delay his previous plans which he has been working hard to achieve. Thus, “The intentions as to reading, working and learning, which he had so precisely formulated only a few minutes earlier, were suffering a curious collapse into a corner, he knew not how [and what seemed to him at first] ‘only a bit of fun’ [will be the first block to his dreams]” (Hardy 37). Arabella is the first disastrous seduction in Jude’s life. Jude is trapped by her into a sexual relationship and a marriage through her fake pretence of

pregnancy. Arabella represents the unvoiced call of woman to man, and this leads Jude to the spot against his intention and his will. As Stewart says: "Some recent commentators assert that Arabella was the girl for Jude; that he needed quick and unassuming sex, just as he needed an occasional quart of ale, to cheer him up on his lonely intellectual road" (196). His high expectations turn to be illusions especially after he discovers that his schoolmaster, his ideal, is still a village schoolmaster living in Lumsdon in the country and that he has given up his dreams. Falling in love with his cousin Sue, Jude, with his contempt for hypocrisy, decides to live openly as a sinner. His ambitions receive a severe setback that he "has a centrality of importance, but it arises very different reasons; here there is no piling-up of malignant outside forces and ill chance. Apart from the *existence* of Arabella, there is no one to blame for Jude's seduction but his own lustful self" (Wing 75). Indeed, this novel is not about a great man but about one who remains obscure in spite of his dreams and talents.

Jude the Obscure is a direct attack on the established church. Hardy criticizes religion which plays a major role in Jude's life when he is young. Although his first dream is going to Christminster to be a classical scholar, he eventually wants to achieve religious aims. The Victorian period reflected Christian values such as moral responsibility and proper sexual behaviour. There were double standards regarding sex, and the Victorian view of sexuality was based on two types of women, the Madonna and

the whore. One is fit for sex and the other for life. Because social conventions govern the relations between men and women, sexual interaction between the sexes was forbidden outside wedlock. Women had to remain pure for their future husbands that their reputation was dependant on their sexual status and virginity. Alcorn asserts: "The question of the day is... marriage and the family system... [and Hardy's novels continue] the attack upon the legal bondage of woman...Hardy approaches the questions of marriage and family with a new intensity achieved through a sharper and more sustained insight into the inner life of his characters" (17). Therefore, Jude finds himself compelled to marry Arabella Donn to whom his body not his heart aspires. Jude and Arabella's aimless marriage is only for the sake of getting the social acceptance. Thus, Hardy expresses his opposition to marriage as a contract that forces two people to live together only for the sake of obeying social or religious customs. While Sue is introduced as a kind of pre-Christian, an ethereal, Jude hopes to join the clergy as one of his intellectual aims. He also gets most of his work as a stone mason in religious places and churches. However, the religious morals of his time make his relationship with Sue a sinful one. Thus, Hardy shows religion as a matter of superstition rather than morality. His objection to religion is mainly for its excessive concern with laws and traditions; Hardy "shifts his emphasis from the determination of the gods to the determination of social prejudices" (Alcorn 73). Hardy affirms that religion offers no help

to his characters in their suffering, and it often lays additional burdens on them.

The theme of love and marriage dominates Hardy's last and most controversial novel, *Jude the Obscure*. In his novel, Hardy presents a strong argument against the waste and heartbreak which bad marriages cause to men as well as women. He mainly portrays three relationships: the marriage between Jude and Arabella, Sue's marriage to Phillotson, and the union of Jude and Sue. The writing of women's issues was a trend in the late nineteenth century, so Thomas Hardy repeatedly shaped his characters and plots to show his sympathy with women and his awareness of the disadvantages society laid upon them. Hardy criticises the Victorian ideology of considering marriage as a deal that gives women their position in their patriarchal society in which the husband is the leader of the family and his wife. Consequently, their society is responsible for shaping women's characters and the loss of their identity whereas social codes must fit both men and women and give women the chance to participate in life freely; laws must be accommodated to save women's dignities.

The first disastrous seduction and blow to Jude's intellectual ambitions is given by Arabella Donn. She is a "fine-eyed dark girl [and has] a round and prominent bosom, full lips, perfect teeth, and the rich complexion of a Cochin hen's egg, [and she] was a complete and substantial female animal-no more, no less" (Hardy

35). Her animalistic nature exposes her real sexual side. She is deceitful in her nature. However, she is a powerless person who cannot survive on her own. She is also a victim of her society, and her sexuality is the only means to catch a suitable husband. Although Arabella is an ignorant girl, Jude surrenders himself to her charm and physical attraction enjoying an illicit love affair with her at the beginning of their relationship. She has no intellectual interests and shows no respect to Jude's books or to his ambitions. She manages to get everything she wants including Jude and other rich men. She remains deceitful using her body to manipulate men. Jude's job as a stone-mason's apprentice goes well, but he is in need for someone to love and break down his loneliness. After spending a day with Arabella, Jude starts questioning his ideals; "He felt himself to be another man from the Jude of yesterday...[as if] he was just living for the first time: not wasting life. It was better to love a woman than to be a graduate, or a parson; ay, or a pope!" (Hardy 44). Thus, Arabella cunningly makes use of the prevailing social codes just to force Jude into marriage. Arabella and Jude's marriage seems to be satisfactory by all the people surrounding them that nobody in the village or the church objects to it. Unfortunately, their marriage does not go well, and Jude perceives "well, too well, in the secret centre of his brain, that Arabella was not worth a great deal as a specimen of womankind" (Hardy 54). When Jude knows that she has never been pregnant, he perceives that he is deceived and that he has no choice but to live

with such a woman. The cause of their marriage becomes nonexistent anymore. On the other hand, Arabella gets bored of her bookish husband and leaves his house upon their frequent quarrels. Unexpectedly, Jude figures out that Arabella has sold everything belong to him including his picture which he has once given to her on their wedding day. This shows the death of emotion between them and makes Jude convinced that:

Their lives were ruined...by the fundamental error of their matrimonial union: that of having based a permanent contract on a temporary feeling which had no necessary connection with affinities that alone render a life-long comradeship tolerable...[he remembers] his aunt's saying : The Fawleys were not made for wedlock: it never seemed to sit well upon us. There's somat in our blood that won't take kindly to the notion of being bound to do what we do readily enough if not bound. That's why you ought to have hearkened to me, and not has married. (Hardy 66-67)

Many years later, Arabella, who is working as a servant in a bar in Christminster, appears to him again. He does not hesitate to be with her despite her previous fake pretences because of his weakness towards his sexual desires. In brief, Arabella Donn's role in the novel is significant because she does not only test Jude's power of resistance of his emotions and desires but also the strength of his academic ambition. She does not change throughout the

novel making Jude's life more depressing. She is selfish and seeks her own happiness.

The central love relationship in the novel explores the relationship between Jude and his cousin, Sue Bridehead, who is so pretty and attractive. Jude and Sue establish their rebellion through their decision to live together as lovers and have children outside marriage. Hardy suggests their union as an alternative of the cruel institution of marriage. Their union is free from obligation, suppression, as well as legal and financial benefits. As soon as Jude meets Sue, he falls in love with her and starts thinking that she should belong to him. She seems to be an ideal mate for him. She is attractive to the extent that no man can easily ignore her charm and beauty. She is an intellectual painter and a well-educated woman who has read most of the Greek and Latin books through translation and other books. She has some qualities attributed to women in general. However, she is proud of her ability in resisting her ex-lovers and mixing with men. As Stewart affirms in his book *Thomas Hardy*, "Jude and Sue have an extraordinary affinity for each other, which is remarked both by themselves and by others. This, however, seems in part a consequence of their blood relationship, and unfortunately their family in which 'marriage usually meant a tragic sadness'" (186). Although Jude thinks of Sue day and night, he cannot think of marriage again for three reasons: he is still married to Arabella Donn, they are cousins and the tragic history of marriage in his and her family that "marriage with a blood

relation would duplicate the adverse conditions, and a tragic sadness might be intensified to a tragic horror” (Hardy 86). Therefore, he decides to think of her as a friend. Jude does not tell her about his shameful marriage at the beginning of their relationship that “to keep Sue Bridehead near him was now a desire which operated without regard of consequences” (Hardy 99). Sue is less religious than Jude and seems to be an unbeliever with liberated views and actions. She questions the absolute authority and even the relevance of the church. For Sue Bridehead, the church is a “horrid [place]...gloomy and inauspicious in its association” (Hardy 96). As a pagan woman, Sue has brought Pagan deities into the most Christian city and kept them in her room. Miss Fontover gets angry for such unusual behaviour and destroys Sue’s statues. Sue then leaves her job and moves to Melchester, where she has joined a training college which dismissed her later because of her conduct with Jude during his visits to her.

Another victim of social conventions is Richard Phillotson, who tries to rebel against social conventions, but he is punished severely by his society. Phillotson is Jude’s schoolmaster, who leaves Marygreen in a hope of getting a university degree and becoming ordained as a minister. However, he fails to carry on his dream and continues his normal teaching job. Unfortunately, he becomes a rival for Sue’s love and an obstacle to his aspirations. Jude helps Sue in getting a new teaching job by the help of his schoolmaster, Mr. Phillotson. However, Phillotson marries her though he is

twenty years her senior. It appears that “Phillotson was a man who wanted no marriage whatsoever with the female. Sexually, he wanted her as an instrument through which he obtained relief, and some gratification” (Guerard 75). He wants her to be like the piano, which he has bought, but has never learnt how to play music on. He is a good example of the theory of natural selection and of the survival of the fittest. In taking up Phillotson’s name after marriage, Sue becomes enslaved to her husband, conventions and society. Phillotson’s age and intellect do not match with her views, so she is incapable of playing the role of the virtuous wife with a man she dislikes physically and emotionally. She finds herself trapped in a loveless marriage. Thus, Sue’s life with Phillotson is aimless and has no sense. Stewart describes their marriage saying: [Sue’s] marriage is a disaster. She cannot bear the thought of physical relations with Phillotson, and she begs to be allowed to leave him. He agrees, and she goes to live with Jude” (178). Sue’s marriage to Phillotson is not an outcome of love but of retaliation. In fact, she has got married to him under pressure like so many women of her time. Liberating Sue by Phillotson is a challenge to social conventions and a rebellion against society because her departure to Jude is a rebellion against marriage as an institution. Sue perceives that her hasty marriage is a big mistake, and Jude notices her loss of identity and happiness. When she comes back to Phillotson, She asks for permission to go back to Jude. She inquires about “the use of thinking of laws and ordinances...if they make us miserable

when you know you are committing no sin?" (Hardy 219). She believes that every man and woman has the right to live by their free will and to choose their own path in life. She expresses her disappointment at the institution of marriage which suppresses, subordinates and enslaves women to men. Sue, who was once independent, active and free-thinking, becomes uncomfortable in her status in marriage. She even dislikes performing the marital rituals and her rejection to perform her sexual obligation to her husband is one of the reasons which lead their marriage to failure. At the beginning, Phillotson doesn't agree to her request insisting on the idea that he wants her to be happy and comfortable, and he doesn't want her to lose people's respect. So, she asks him to live separately in his house. However, his sudden entrance to her bedroom one night makes her frightened, so she jumps out from the window without caring for her safety. Her terror of the sexual obligation of marriage reflects her objection to marriage which may take her free will. Actually, Phillotson fails to realize Sue's terror of a sexual intercourse with him. For him, the wife is obliged to perform her sexual duty. For Sue, sex is not the ultimate goal of marriage. Phillotson's discussion with his friend, Gillingham, about the issue of individual morality in relation to the social scene shows that he would die for Sue's sake despite his friend's advice of obeying the social laws and traditions. Mr. Phillotson says: "My liberating her can do her no possible harm, and will open up a chance of happiness for her which she has never dreamt hitherto"

(Hardy 249). He wants her to live happily. Unfortunately, Phillotson is punished by social conventions as a man without morals because it is a crime for a husband to let his wife go to her lover. All the respectable people of the town are against him, so he is asked by the school chairman to “send in [his] resignation on account of [his] scandalous conduct in giving [his] tortured wife her liberty – or, as they call it, conducting her adultery” (Hardy 243). This incident shows how this conventional society treats its members in an oppressive way preventing them from following their free will and forcing them to be blind followers to traditions. Phillotson becomes convinced that: “she’s another man’s except in name and law...What’s the use of keeping her chained on me if she doesn’t belong to me?...For though as fellow-creature she sympathizes with, and pities me, and even weeps for me, as a husband she cannot endure me...and for worldly reason, too, it will be better for her to be independent” (Hardy 249). Hardy considers Phillotson a victim of the society. He is liberal when letting his wife go to her lover without punishment. Although he is conscious of the consequences of his action, he refuses to take advantages of the law and force her to live with him. In fact, Phillotson seems unable to cope with his world in which one’s position is determined by the social landscape. His sympathy with Sue makes him lose his job and his social position. Later, Phillotson sends her a letter to come and stay with him when he knows about her and Jude’s separation. Sue and Phillotson are married again at the end, and she

goes to sleep with him surrendering her body sexually to him and trying to become an obedient wife.

Jude and Sue are seen as rebels by their Victorian society which witnessed great changes and advances that a lot of people began to re-evaluate their own perspectives and principles of the world. Like Jude and Sue, such individuals are obscured as a result of their unusual actions or the others' rejection and are forced to live deprived of happiness and the fulfilment of their hopes and dreams. Many critics affirm that Sue can be described as the first representation of a new social type of woman who becomes more common later. Sue is ahead of her time and wants to take on a life of her own. From the very beginning, Sue tells Jude about her experience with men; she says: "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...almost as one of their own sex...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" (Hardy 143-144). Sue admits that she has broken her university scholar's heart. Even when she tells him about her past bad deeds, Jude replies: "However you have lived Sue, I believe you are as innocent as you are unconventional" (Hardy 145). It is clear that he adores her. However, Sue gives Jude a blow to his sexual aims when she suggests their being just friends. Furthermore, Sue is opposed to marriage when leading an unconventional life with Jude because she perceives marriage as "an

iron contract” (Hardy 254) that seizes women’s free will. Actually, her advanced views are but a projection of Hardy’s objection to the formalized marriage system. Thus, “In Sue Bridehead Hardy creates the first ‘modern woman’ in English fiction” (Alcorn 86). While a spokesperson of Hardy, she reflects a woman’s attempts to discover her individual identity and prove her independence. She refuses to be a stereotype of traditional woman who is only a body restricted to certain roles in life. She expresses her attitude when she addresses Jude saying: “I think I should begin to be afraid of you, Jude, the moment you had contracted to cherish me under a Government stamp, and I was licensed to be loved on the promises by you—Ugh, how horrible and sordid! Although as you are, free, I trust you more than any other man in the world” (Hardy 254). Sue prefers to live by her free will and not to be controlled by any man. So, her love for Jude will be greater as long as it is free from the legal obligations of marriage. The reader can clearly see Jude’s attachment to Sue as he says: “So that I am near you, I am comparatively happy. It is more than this earthly wretch called Me deserves- you spirit, you disembodied creature, you dear, sweet, tantalizing phantom- hardly flesh at all; so that when I put my arms round you I almost expect them to pass through you as through air!” (Hardy 241). Consequently, Sue lives with Jude outside wedlock. Sue does not want him to have any legal claim on her body while Jude has never taken possession of her as freely as he longs for. Jude tries to convince her to legalize their marriage, but she refuses

because she wants to preserve her freedom and not to be controlled by a man like the other women of her time. She thinks that marriage is a legal obligation that destroys love. Thus, Jude ignores his aunt's advice that she has warned him to do saying: "If your cousin is civil to you, take her civility for what it is worth. But anything more than a relation's good wishes it is stark madness for 'ee to give her. If she's to wish and wanton it med bring 'ee to ruin" (Hardy 107). Challenging their conventional society, Jude and Sue live together without being married. Contrary to Jude's expectations and hopes, she never surrenders her body to him completely. As Albert J. Guerard maintains in his *Hardy: A Collection of Critical Essays*, "With Sue, however, the marriage was no marriage, but a submission, a service, a slavery. Her female spirit did not wed with the male spirit: she could not prophesy...That which was female in her, resistant, gave her only her critical faculty" (73). Her rejection of the conventional marriage makes her a rebellious representative of all women.

Hardy promotes Sue and Jude's relationship as a successful relationship that can exist beyond matrimony despite social disapproval. He affirms that people can be good without being religious suggesting another alternative way to find happiness such as cohabitation. Sue and Jude are a good match for one another. Indecision is a shared personality trait that both of them are indecisive: Jude is unable to commit to a career and cannot give up his academic dreams, and Sue hesitates unable to go away with

Phyllotson or to cut off her contact with Jude. However, Sue refuses marriage after divorce because marriage kills love. Sue is intellectually liberated and has strange ideas about marriage which she hopelessly sees as “A sort of trap to catch a man [and a] vulgar institution” (Hardy 266). She feels afraid of the traditional marriage and the oppression it imposes on women. Having modern ideas about the ideal relationship between men and women, she prefers to live a happy relationship based on love and her free will than being married and unhappy. As a woman of her time, she is ready to accept new social and moral changes unlike her Victorian society. She does not believe in marriage and is deprived of animal passion; Jude surrenders to her will saying: “People go on marrying because they can’t resist natural forces, although many of them may know perfectly well that they are possibly buying a month’s pleasure with a life’s discomfort...But you, Sue, such a phantasmal, bodiless creature, one who...has so little animal passion” (Hardy 255). Indeed, she is a product of nature, and this puts her in conflict with her society. Thus, what Jude does not find in Arabella is there in Sue’s character. As it is mentioned in Ghassan Maleh’s *Studies in the Novel*,

Sue and Arabella are, in fact, like the white and the black horses, the noble and base instincts, which drew Plato’s chariot of the soul. But because Hardy too had a passion for Sue’s kind of frigid purity (“She is, he wrote, “a type of woman which has always had an

attraction for me”), he exaggerated the case against Arabella almost to the point of parody. (116)

Arabella is the woman who satisfies Jude sexually whereas Sue is the one who satisfies him spiritually. As George Wing states in his book *Hardy*, “No matter with whom Jude and Sue settle, a mismatch is inevitable. They both aspire to some form of higher life, whereas Arabella and Phillotson seek only suitable social niche” (76). Sue shares Jude’s appreciation of knowledge. Both of them are crazy for books. However, Jude is controlled by his gross impulses, so his sexual inexperience is easily attracted by Arabella’s sexuality. His passion for her is “considerably more human and spontaneous’ than his passion for Sue” (Hardy 196). If Sue is equal to men in education, Arabella is equal to them in her maleness that she does the work of men. For her, marriage matters only for financial security. George Wing says: “Thomas Hardy’s novel, *Jude The Obscure*, is the story of Jude Fawley, a lonely individual, involved in a personal terrible struggle, but, in this case, much of Jude Fawley’s fight is within himself: there is a constant conflict between his bright- eyed idealism and his grosser desires” (74). His desires are more powerful than his academic ambition, and his loneliness makes him weak towards women. Whenever he fails or feels upset, he turns to alcohol. Thus, Jude ends up as a man achieving neither of what he aspires for.

Jude and Sue's rebellion against social conventions starts when she leaves her husband and comes to live with Jude. Out of her jealousy of Arabella, Sue accepts to have sex with Jude saying: "I am not a cold-natured, sexless creature, am I, for keeping you at such a distance? I am sure you don't think so! Wait and see! I do belong to you, don't I! I give in." (Hardy 262). Sue's life with him becomes sex without marriage unlike hers with Phillotson which has been marriage without sex. It becomes clear that Sue's responses to Jude and Phillotson are complex and frustrating whereas Jude's feelings towards her are permanent. Therefore, she succeeds in convincing him of her views when he tries to legalize their marriage; she addresses him saying: "Jude, do you think that when you must have me with you by law, we shall be so happy as we are now? Don't you dread the attitude that insensibly arises out of legal obligation? Don't you think it is destructive to a passion whose essence is its gratuitousness?" (Hardy 267). Sue here speaks on behalf of her sex that the Victorian women had to surrender their legal existence on marriage. Women were ill-treated and considered as secondary citizens. Accordingly, men wanted and needed sex while women were free of sexual desires and submitted to sex only to please their husbands. Actually, Jude and Sue are rebels and they carry out their rebellion against marriage by breaking down the barriers of conventional marriage and morality. Williams also comments on their unusual relationship saying: "Sue believes that she and Jude are ahead of their time...Sue at the

beginning of the novel, and Jude at the end, are both shown as people with enlightened ideas” (86-87). She wants to prove her independence, and it is her passion for freedom that leads her to violate the ethics of her society: “Sue Bridehead, who wavers between the sexual attitudes of a normal child-bearing mother and those of the ‘new woman,’ with her bachelor girl independence and epicene tendencies, has within her own complex make-up an unresolved conflict which has a parallel with Jude’s but is essentially different” (Wing 74). However, her fragility and constant attempts to keep her identity intact make them unhappy and weak in the face of the social opposition to their queer union.

Unfortunately, Jude and Sue’s troubles begin with the coming of Little Father Time into their life. Arabella’s son comes to live with his father, Jude. Little Father Time is a symbolic character who draws the attention to the cruel terms and laws of his society which has always mistreated children as much as women. When Sue meets Little Father Time, she feels jealous because she sees Arabella in the child’s features. Jude has new dreams of sending his son to the university because it is easier these days. Besides Arabella’s son, Little Father Time, a queer and joyless boy, Sue gives birth to two children and that Jude becomes responsible for a big family:

Sue...now openly adopted the name of Mrs. Fawley...The society of Spring Street and the neighbourhood generally did not understand...Sue and Jude’s private minds, emotions, positions, and fears.

The curious facts of a child coming to them unexpectedly...bore only one translation to plain minds [and] Little Time – for though he was formally turned into ‘Jude’...would come home from school in the evening, and repeat inquiries and remarks that had been made to him by the other boys; and cause Sue, and Jude when he heard them, a great deal of pain and sadness. (Hardy 293)

The neighbourhood start suspecting this queer couple, too. It becomes so difficult to find accommodation for such a strange family especially that Sue suffers from the society’s low view of women and their work that women were given the low-paid jobs:

Sue, who is far more intelligent, daring, and original than Jude, has at the same time—simply because she is a woman—far less power to take her destiny into her own hands. Jude can work at his masonry—a craft the superior branches of which he likes and respects—whereas Sue must hold done jobs she despises or is superior to. She is under a strong economic compulsion to exploit her sex”. (Stewart 199)

The disastrous fate of both Jude and Sue symbolizes the destruction of the society which neglects the mental and emotional aspirations of its members. Jude and Sue are dismissed from the

church repairs because somebody has complained about their illegal relationship and family. In addition, Jude resigns his office at the aforesaid committee because they no longer welcome his presence. They start looking at him suspiciously insisting on the respect of the standards; “It behoved them to look well into their institution; for if the committee were not respected, and had not at last, in their differences, a common standard of conduct, they would bring the institution onto the ground” (Hardy 294).

Jude the Obscure is the tragedy of unfulfilled aims: Jude’s intellectual and sexual ambitions. Jude replaces his unfulfilled intellectual aims with his sexual desires following Sue’s advanced ideas and progressive outlook. Their society objects to their illegal family and they consequently lose their lodging and work. Their responsibilities towards their children increase especially after the refusal of their surroundings to their existence among them. Little Father Time, who stands for the nineteenth-century unwanted child, starts asking questions which show his disappointment. He tells Sue: “I troubled ’em in Australia, and I trouble folk here. I wish I hadn’t been born!...I think whenever children born that are not wanted they should be killed directly, before their souls come to ’em and not allowed to grow big and walk about!” (Hardy 329). Unfortunately, Sue commits a mistake when telling the boy about the expected baby and that increases his pessimism. Little Father Time comprehends that his parents’ problem is children, so he feels that children are unwanted and he has to help his parents.

Therefore, he makes use of Jude and Sue's absence and hangs his siblings and himself. His note "Done because we are too menny" (Hardy 323) shows that he reduces the number of the family members in order to cut down its troubles. Hardy sums up all the miseries of his age through the character of this child. Alcorn says:

The creation of Father Time marks a turning-point in the English novel: he symbolizes both an end and a beginning. Born an old man, he represents the death of the special sensual joy of childhood...Hardy's attack upon abstract morality reaches its apotheosis in the murder-suicide of Little Father Time. This child represents a growing' universal wish not to live...the result of centuries of enervating, repressive civilization. (21)

Jude the obscure highlights the connection between the individual and the dominance of religion over the Victorian society. Despite their rejection of religion, the characters see what happens to them in biblical terms. The death of Jude and Sue's children marks a big change in Sue's character as well as a turning point in Jude's fate. She returns to Christianity to repent for her sinful life with Jude. Sue cannot understand why the boy has killed her children. Sue goes to the hospital and gives birth to a dead child, too. She begins to see Arabella as Jude's wife and that she is Phillotson's. She says: "I see marriage differently now. My babies

have been taken from me to show me this! Arabella's child killing mine was a judgment – the right slaying the wrong. What, what shall I do! I am such a vile creature – too worthless to mix with ordinary human beings!”(Hardy 346). Sue begins to believe that legal marriage is more important than individuals' feelings. The children are a burden only because Sue and Jude cannot make their way in society while ignoring the class structure. Sue begins to understand this hard truth, and she thinks that her children are dead because she has lived freely and rejected the laws supposed to be followed by women in her society. She punishes herself for her illegal relationship with Jude, which has brought her only death and tragedy. Thus, “in creating Sue, [Hardy] gives his own impression of the difficulties faced by the ‘new woman’ having to live in a society dominated by an oppressive and hypocritical moral code and a religion of sin, sacrifice and punishment” (Gibson 131). Sue feels guilty for her sinful life with Jude who begs her not to leave him saying: “O Sue! Do not do an immoral thing for moral reasons! You have been my social salvation. Stay with me for humanity's sake!...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” (Hardy 349). They farewell each other by calling him “fellow-sinner, and kindest friend!” and calling her “mistaken wife” (Hardy 357). Their final meeting raises many questions of what constitutes a real marriage. Marriage is a morally bankrupt institution that harms both men and women. By

leaving Jude, Sue gives a blow to his sexual aims again. Sue surrenders to the social code and becomes enslaved like the other women of her time. She goes back to Phillotson leading herself to his bed obediently. Religion is the real reason for her return to Phillotson. After she has brought Jude to her line of thinking regarding the church, she seeks to find refuge in it. John S. Mill concludes:

Sue's [end] is spiritually a more dreadful end than Jude's, because it is blinder. She believes that religious enlightenment has come to her. It tells her that her children have not died in vain, since their killing has been divinely appointed to bring home to her the error of her views and achieve a 'first stage' of her 'purification'. It makes her reject Jude's supreme plea that abandonment of him will mean his certain destruction. (201)

In the end, her feeling of guilt transforms her into a new person completely different from the Sue Bridehead who has been loved by Jude. The tragedy of Sue goes beyond the tragic death of her children. Actually, the true tragedy comes in the end when she changes completely; she embraces the same rigid religious views criticized by her when she was younger. Indeed, religion makes people emotionally numb. Sue seeks solace in religion and Jude in

alcohol. Both turn to external distractions instead of dealing with their emotions directly. Alcorn comments on their fate saying:

Sue and Jude begin the novel at opposite poles; at the end of the novel they are again at opposite poles, but they have changed places. Sue begins as a pagan, Jude as a compliant Christian. Jude is first presented wholly in spiritual terms, free of fleshly preoccupation: bird-like innocence, naive reverence, great expectations. Sue first appears to Jude in an ambience of sensuality, freedom, vitality. But step by step, Sue becomes the symbol of law over life, convention over freedom; while Jude has moved through disenchantment to rebellion and finally to despair. (85)

In fact, Sue runs back to the security of the conventional middle class life with Phillotson. She tells Phillotson: “My children are dead-are dead- and it is right that they should be! I am glad-almost. They were sin-begotten. They were sacrificed to teach me how to live!- their death was the first stage of my purification. That’s why they have not died in vain!” (Hardy 259). She returns to religion to find a refuge from her feeling of guilt. Actually, “Hardy’s Father Time is a symbol of the death of physical sensibility in both Jude and Sue” (Alcorn 88). Rebels often sacrifice their life or property for the sake of their rebellion, but Jude and Sue fail to continue their

rebellion after losing their children and failure to live by their free will. Jude gives himself to drinking. Therefore, Arabella seems preparing a new husband during Jude's illness. She finds Dr. Vilbert a suitable option because she believes that "one must take the old if one can't get the young" (Hardy 397). Jude is suffering and facing his death alone while his wife is busy with her lover. Unlike Sue, she is not affected by her only son's tragic death; She is but a selfish, material woman. At the end, Jude dies of sadness in solitude, and this stresses the idea that "The essence of this tragedy is Jude's loneliness. He is isolated from society because his ambitions, abilities, and sensibility separate him from his own class while winning him no place in any other. He is isolated in his marriage to Arabella...He is isolated in his marriage to Sue because she is frigid" (Maleh 120). His struggles end when he dies. Unable to find a place in his society, he leaves it letting his love of learning, of Christianity and of Sue fall away. Thus, Hardy ends up his novel tragically in order to emphasize the cruelty of social conventions and the institution of marriage which extends from people to their children.

All the marriages and relationships in this novel end in tragedy and have fatal consequences. Jude is destroyed because of his two weaknesses: drink and women. Thus, the novel shows Hardy's view of marriage and its negative effects on people in the Victorian patriarchal society and the hypocritical morality. Hardy, also, shows that religion and certain social codes limit women's

aspirations and their roles as influential figures in the society. Sue is Hardy's most intellectual and unconventional heroine. She symbolizes every woman's journey towards her identity. Stewart, in his *Thomas Hardy*, states that "It is possible to view *Jude the Obscure* as a 'purpose novel'. In the preface (or 'postscript') of 1912 Hardy speaks of 'the marriage laws being used in great part as the tragic machinery of the tale', and goes on to give his own views on a rational attitude to divorce" (193). Hardy encourages women to rebel and free themselves from religion and 'the Cult of Domesticity' which restricts their pursuit of happiness and self-realization. In spite of their fatal end, Jude and Sue's rebellion will always inspire readers not to be submissive in life. Indeed, Hardy's characters strive for accomplishing something beyond their reach. Jude suffers when losing his academic dreams, his job and his children. Despite his loss, Jude realizes that he has done something extraordinary in his life. He concludes: "However, it was my poverty and not my will that consented to be defeated. It takes two or three generations to do what I tried to do in one; and my impulses- affection- vices perhaps they should be called- were too strong not to hamper a man without advantages" (Hardy 321). This statement by Jude makes David Lodge assert that "there is some justification in the text for such a reading, which sees Jude and Sue as martyrs in the cause of progress and enlightenment" (106). Through the tragic romance of Jude and Sue, Hardy anticipates the change of social codes, which will save people from scandals. Both

women and men are victims of the cruelty of their society, religion and the institution of marriage. Jude's death can be seen as a sacrifice that may open an era of new opportunities regardless of class and social conventions. Phillotson, as well, is a victim of his passion for Sue. Although he tries to rebel against his society when treating her mercifully, he finds "only dire poverty ahead from [his] feet to the grave; for [he] can be accepted as teacher no more" (Hardy 924). Thus, he can survive only by adopting the methods of his world.

Jude the Obscure, indeed, sums up Hardy's social protest against educational and social disadvantages, marriage and divorce as well as the position of women in the sacred institution of marriage in the late nineteenth century in England. This novel inspires readers and the people of its time to question their ideals as well as their ethics; are they wrong or right? Do they really abide their actions to those rules? And many other urgent questions related to their life and society. Obviously, Thomas Hardy wrote this novel on purpose and, it shows that he had been keeping a keen eye on his society; "Hardy clearly wanted a radical reorganization of society" (Alcorn 22). Indeed, his novel successfully achieves his aim that: "It's publication in 1895 provoked an outcry. What caused the uproar? It was Hardy's fatalism;...his attack on social and religious hypocrisy [and] his criticism of those two almost equally venerable institutions: marriage and Oxford" (Maleh 113). Hardy successfully addresses social issues related to women and feminism. He was a

sensitive writer and loved free, independent and strong- minded women who rebel against oppression. He was aware of the changing world at the end of the Victorian Age. Women faced so many difficulties at that time in their evolution from the submissive role of wives to that of new women in their struggle for equality and recognition. In comparison with Arabella and Jude, Sue and Phillotson, Hardy portrays the successful and free union of the non-marital relationship between Jude and Sue. They rebel against their society and face hard consequences in return. Arabella Donn and Sue Bridehead represent Hardy's criticism of the social system and its oppressive laws. Sue becomes the spokeswoman against the suppression of her society which offers marriage not as a romantic choice based on mutual love but as an institution of control .

Thomas Hardy mainly sets a sever attack on the restrictions of the Victorian society which allowed the rich to enjoy all the good things of the country while the common people were deprived of due shares. "Jude Fawley's 'crime' is to want an education. The university town of Christminster is always just beyond his reach. Poverty, marriage and family combine to keep him from his ambition" (Carter and McRay 288). Hardy obviously says that the society contributes to the success or the failure of its members. He "arranges events with emphasis on causality...His characters are involved in various snares, they are finally bound hand and foot, there is ceaseless emphasis on fate" (Forster 92). Hardy cares for the sufferings of the poor and innocent people that most of his

“novels are tragedies, or they reveal the cosmic indifferences or malevolent ironies which life has in store for everyone, particularly for those unable to curb the demands of their own natures” (Carter and McRay 287). He was very much influenced by the thinker John Stewart Mill, and this is obvious in *Jude the Obscure* through his call for freedom that “Hardy emerges from any study of his ideas as a man of the left, extremely suspicious of all conventional ideas about politics and religion” (Williams 62). Hardy wants to say that the honour of starting something new, of thinking differently and of taking the risk is a success in itself.

Indeed, *Jude the Obscure* is a strong protest against the Victorian society because of Hardy’s adoption of critical and radical views attacking the failure of the social institutions to bring happiness to the lives of its people. Jude and Arabella, Sue and Phillotson face the devastating consequences of their unhappy marriages and their relationships fall apart. Hardy sums up his views when saying that the marital ceremonies kill love and bring sadness to people: “weddings be funerals” (Hardy 393). Thus, Hardy strives for an ideal union of mind, soul and body and wishes a real change. Although Jude and Sue appear as victims at the end, they will be always remembered as rebellious figures whose downfall forms a cry for social justice, freedom and equality between all people in all times. They cannot be blamed for what has happened to them. They face something greater than themselves and deeply rooted in the lives of their societies. They fight to live by their own

standards, so they look courageous, decisive and purposeful. Jude and Sue are not only the ambassadors of love in the novel but also the rebels whose challenge to their tyrannical society will motivate the next generations to establish a modern just world.

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